

**LEADING THE CHANGE YOU WISH TO SEE IN YOUR
SCHOOL: LIVED EXPERIENCES OF TEACHER LEADERS IN
PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SCHOOLS**

BY

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DATE: MARCH 2017

DECLARATION

I, Erin Rae Ballard, declare that:

- (i) The research reported in this dissertation, except where otherwise indicated, is my original work.
- (ii) This dissertation has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university.
- (iii) This dissertation does not contain other persons' data, pictures, graphs, or other information, unless specifically acknowledged as being sourced from other persons.
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Signed.....

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Date: _____

ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE



8 February 2016

Mrs Erin Rae Ballard 204502865
School of Education
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Dear Mrs Ballard

Protocol reference number: HSS/0047/016M

Project Title: To lead or not to lead: Lived experiences of teacher leaders in public and private schools

Full Approval – Expedited Application

In response to your application received 8 January 2016, 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)
Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

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SUPERVISOR'S AUTHORISATION

This dissertation is submitted with my approval.

Supervisor: Dr I. Naicker

Date

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They say it takes a village to raise a child. For me, this has also been true for this dissertation. It has taken the most wonderful village, a village for which I am most grateful, to raise this work from its infancy to its final state of maturity. It is the incredible people that make up this village who I would like to take this opportunity to thank.

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ABSTRACT

In the quest to improve school leadership there is a growing academic scholarship around the notion of teacher leadership and mobilising the leadership capabilities of teachers. The literature does not, however, seem to be as rich with regards to the day-to-day lived experiences of teacher leaders, especially in the South African and the private (independent) school contexts. Furthermore, empirical evidence suggests that where teacher leadership exists in South African schools, in the majority of schools it is only being practiced in a restricted way. In the light of this, the purpose of this study is to explore the lived experiences of teacher leaders in public and private schools in Kwazulu-Natal, South Africa. Grounded within the interpretivist paradigm and using a qualitative research approach, this narrative inquiry sought to gain a nuanced understanding of the identities of teacher leaders in private and public schools; how they enact teacher leadership; and the enabling factors and barriers to teacher leadership in these schools. Data was generated through narrative interviews, artefact inquiry and a unique, non-traditional form of collage inquiry. This study took place in two private secondary schools, one former Black public school and one former Indian public school from May to July 2016 in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. Four post-Level One teachers were purposively selected as research participants. Using Social Identity Theory, distributed leadership theory, and Grant's model of teacher leadership to frame the study, the generated data was analysed in two stages. Firstly, in collaboration with the participants, the data was 're-storied' into four different narrative accounts. Thereafter the stories were deconstructed by identifying common plotlines and unique, yet interesting, threads that emerged from the narratives, using the study's theoretical framework to guide the analysis.

The findings of this study suggest that teacher leadership across public and private schools is most prevalent within the realm of the classroom and non-existent at the whole-school level. It is also evident that the day-to-day practice of teacher leadership is, in many ways, contingent upon teachers' specific school context. In addition, formal leaders, along with the existing school structure and culture, act as gatekeepers to teacher leadership. The success of teacher leadership in schools therefore relies both on teachers who are courageous enough to 'go against the grain' and proactively pursue positive change at all levels within their schools, as well as formal leaders who intentionally and unintentionally support teacher leadership.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS/ACRONYMS

- SASA - South African Schools Act
- PLC - Professional Learning Community
- SIT - Social Identity Theory

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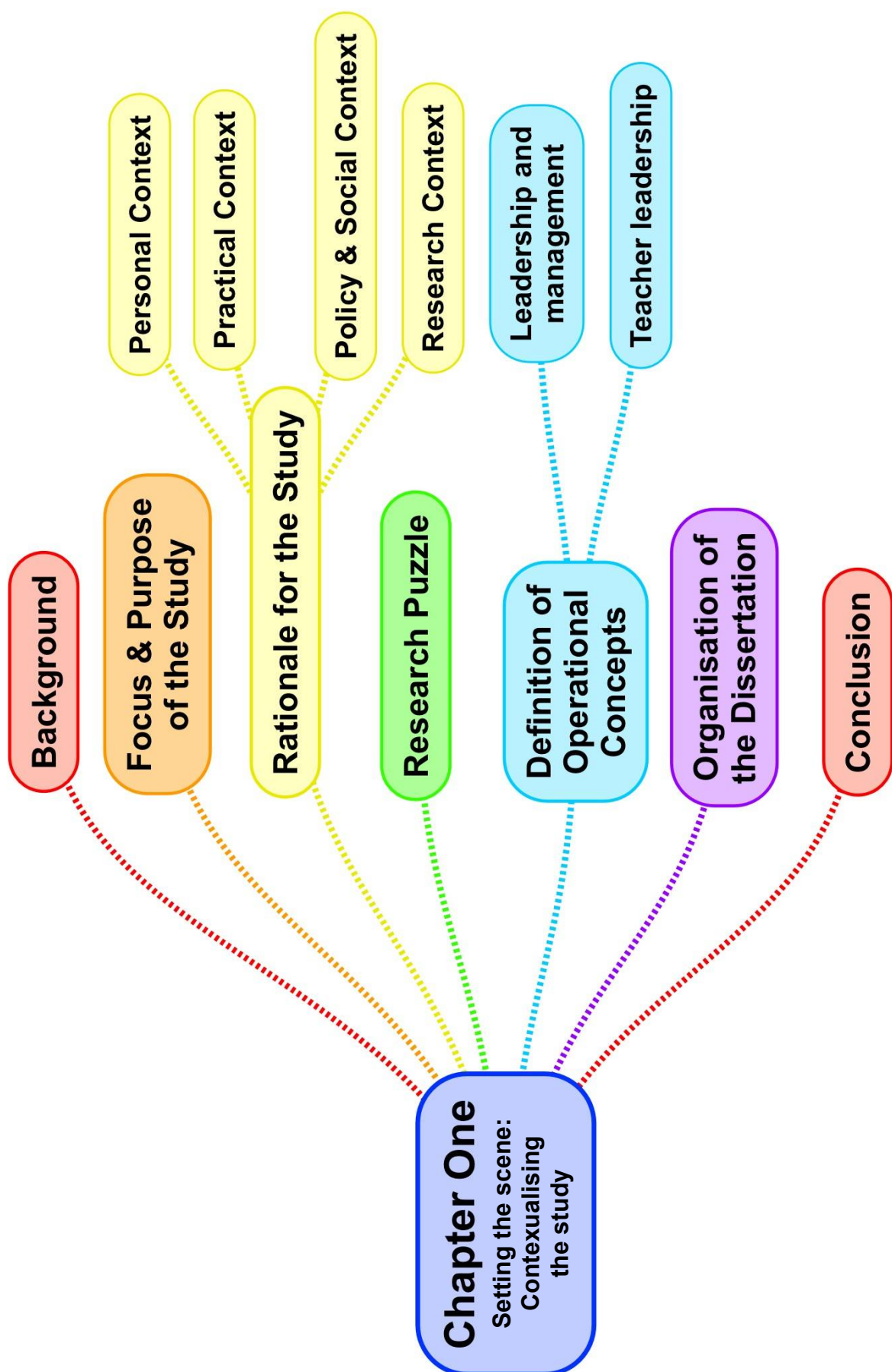
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CHAPTER ONE

SETTING THE SCENE: CONTEXTUALISING THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This introductory chapter serves to provide a context for the study, explain the focus and purpose of the study and present a rationale for the study. It then goes on to present the research puzzle that guides this study, definitions of operational concepts and an organisation of the dissertation. At the beginning of each chapter in this study I provide a mind map to serve as an advance organiser.

1.2 BACKGROUND

The South African education system prior to 1994 was steeped in a culture of inequality, racial segregation, autocratic bureaucracy and rigid control. The introduction of democracy in 1994 paved the way for the implementation of new educational policies based on a constitution rooted in values of democracy, equality, freedom and the protection of human rights (Williams, 2011). Unfortunately, 21 years later, the transformation of our education system is still proving to be a complex and elusive ideal.

Although in 2015 the South African government devoted 20% of the national budget to the education sector (Nene, 2015), the Global Competitiveness Report ranks the quality of South African education 120th out of 140 countries and suggests that “the higher secondary enrolment rates will not be enough to create the skills needed for a competitive economy” (Schwab, 2015, p. 30). Furthermore, this report suggests that one of the top five most problematic factors for doing business in South Africa is a poorly educated workforce (Schwab, 2015, p. 30). For the sake of South Africa’s economy, our schools are therefore in need of strategies that will enhance school improvement.

Last year (2015) was also a year that was marked by significant and effective civil action in education. This year saw ordinary citizens who were disillusioned with the decisions made by formal leaders, rise up and lead the change that they wished to see in their world. These two student-lead campaigns, the ‘Rhodes Must Fall’ and the ‘Fees Must Fall’ campaigns, elicited the support of citizens throughout the country and led to positive transformation in South Africa (Msila, 2016). It would seem that South African citizens are no longer satisfied with continuing to wait for their formal leaders to make transformation a reality in our country.

Ordinary citizens are acting as leaders of transformation on a country-wide scale. Similarly, “within every school there is a *sleeping giant* of teacher leadership that can be a strong catalyst for making changes to improve student learning” (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009, p. 3). If we want to see change in our schools perhaps we, as teachers, also need to rise up and lead the change we wish to see in our world (Grant, 2006). Perhaps it is time for post-Level One (teachers who do not occupy formal leadership positions) teachers themselves to become leaders of school transformation on a wider scale.

1.3 FOCUS AND PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

There is a significant relationship between school effectiveness, which is most often characterised by learner achievement, and the quality of the leadership within a school (Bush & Middlewood, 2013, Rhodes & Brundrett, 2010). In the light of South Africa’s current political and educational milieu, however, perhaps we should not only be looking for effective leadership from those in formal leadership positions in schools. The idea of post-Level One teachers acting as leaders of transformation rejects the traditional, hierarchical understanding of leadership and acknowledges the leadership potential of all staff members (Grant, Gardner, Kajee, Moodley & Somaroo, 2010). Post-Level One teachers acting as leaders may be “critical [to the] transformation” we wish to see in our schools (Grant, 2006, p. 514).

In the quest to improve school leadership there is a large and growing academic scholarship around the ideas of teacher leadership, and mobilising the leadership capability of teachers (Helterbran, 2010; Naicker & Somdut, 2014). The literature does not, however, seem to be as rich with regards to the day-to-day lived experiences of teacher leaders, especially in the South African context (Helterbran, 2010; Naicker & Somdut, 2014). Furthermore, empirical evidence suggests that where teacher leadership exists in South African schools, it is only being practiced in a restricted way. This research is, however, exclusive to the public school sector. There is a dearth of research conducted on the topic of teacher leadership in the significant and growing number of private (independent) schools in South Africa. In the light of this, the purpose of this study is to explore the lived experiences of teacher leaders in public and private schools in Kwazulu-Natal, South Africa. More specifically, I would like to understand the different ways in which teacher leadership can be enacted within a school community. In addition, I would like to understand how teacher leadership can be encouraged as well as how it is constrained in South African schools.

1.4 RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

According to Clandinin (2013), narrative inquirers must be able to clearly justify their research in three ways: personally, practically and socially or theoretically. A clear justification is particularly necessary for studies using narrative inquiry because it is a relatively new methodology, particularly in South Africa (Naicker & Chikoko, 2015), and as such, is sometimes viewed as a “simplistic process” (Clandinin, 2013, p. 35).

PERSONAL CONTEXT

In the past seven years of teaching experience that I have had, I have often felt frustrated when, as a post-Level One teacher, my efforts to initiate change beyond the realm of my classroom have been thwarted by existing formal leaders or leadership structures. I have also witnessed the leadership potential of many of my fellow teachers remain unrealised despite the incompetence of existing leaders in formal positions of authority. Despite this power play that I have experienced, I have noticed that some of the post-Level One teachers that I have worked with do not allow formal school leaders to hinder their ability to lead new initiatives in the school. Instead, they are very successful in implementing change within their school, even on a whole school level. This has piqued my interest in teacher leadership, and how it is experienced and enacted by post-Level One teachers.

Furthermore, this past year (2015) I have been inspired by the power that ordinary citizens have in effecting change in our country. This gives me hope that there is much potential for change lying dormant in the body of post-Level One teachers in our country. It is therefore important to me to find out about the experiences of teacher leaders in different school contexts.

PRACTICAL CONTEXT

Although there is a vast corpus of literature that *theoretically* agrees with the notion of teacher leadership, empirical evidence, both internationally and locally, reveals that teacher leadership in practice is still enacted in only a very limited way. Where teacher leadership is practised, it is largely confined to the walls of one’s classroom (Grant, 2006, 2008, 2012; Grant et al., 2010; Grant & Singh, 2009; Helterbran, 2010; Naicker & Somdut, 2014). On the level of teaching practice, I am hopeful that this study will provide a deeper understanding of the enactment of teacher leadership, and that this knowledge will be able to guide, modify and improve existing practices in schools (Grant, 2006, 2008, 2012; Naicker & Somdut, 2014). I aim to identify and explore both the factors which enable teacher leadership, and

those factors which discourage and constrain it. I hope that the understanding gained through this study may be used to help heads of department, school governing bodies (SGB), and school management teams to modify school practices and to empower teachers to be transformative leaders.

POLICY & SOCIAL CONTEXT

It is also the intention of this research that the knowledge gained will be able to guide policy reformulations that will help unlock the leadership potential in schools where it has been smothered by bureaucracy, and aid much-needed school transformation that may, in turn, help work towards social equality in South Africa (Grant, 2006, 2008, 2012; Grant et al., 2010; Grant & Singh, 2009; Helterbran, 2010; Naicker & Somdut, 2014).

The South African education system prior to 1994 was steeped in a culture of inequality, racial segregation, autocratic bureaucracy and rigid control. The introduction of democracy in 1994 paved the way for the implementation of new educational policies based on a constitution rooted in values of democracy, equality, freedom and the protection of human rights (Williams, 2011). In South Africa policies such as the *South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 (SASA)*, the *Norms and Standards for Educators*, the *Revised Policy on the Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education Qualifications* and documents such as *Professional Learning Communities: A Guideline for South African Schools* (Department of Education, 2015; Republic of South Africa, 1996, 2000, 2015) have laid the foundation for the introduction and implementation of a more distributed form of leadership, the development of teacher leadership and “the decentralisation of decision-making” within South African schools (Grant et al., 2010, p. 401). This has been manifested in the introduction of democratically elected SGBs, the development of school management teams, the formulation of the seven roles of educators, as well as the development of professional learning communities (PLC) in schools (Department of Education, 2015; Republic of South Africa, 1996, 2000, 2015; van der Mescht & Tyala, 2008).

The policies and guidelines described above clearly support the practice of distributed, and therefore teacher leadership, in schools. The most current revision of the *Norms and Standards for Educators* (the *Revised Policy on the Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education Qualifications*) has, however, resulted in a ‘watering down’ of the expectation of teachers to act as leaders in their schools. According to the *Norms and Standards for Educators* (Republic of South Africa, 2000, p. 13), the teacher as “leader, administrator and

manager” was one of the seven roles *every* quality educator was expected to embody. The subsequent policy, the *Revised Policy on the Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education Qualifications* (Republic of South Africa, 2015), has changed the title of these roles to the “Collective Roles of Teachers in a School”. This policy reflects a subtle but significant shift in expectations of teachers, replacing a structure in which *every* teacher is expected to assume some kind of leadership role, with one in which leadership roles need only be fulfilled a few, or even one member of the collective staff body. Thus, those teachers who are hesitant about acting as leaders in their school, are no longer mandated by policy to explore this role, and can legitimately rely on other teachers to fulfil the requisite leadership roles within the school. In addition, those formal school leaders who are wary of, or threatened by post-Level One teachers taking on leadership roles, may be able to exploit this policy by claiming that only those in formal leadership positions should act as leaders within a school. My intention is that the findings of this study will inform the reformulation of this policy in order to emphasise the importance of every teacher playing a leadership role within their school.

RESEARCH CONTEXT

Although teacher leadership is supported by South African policy (Republic of South Africa, 2000, 2015), teacher leadership is a relatively new area of study in South Africa, particularly in the practical and methodological realms, respectively, of private schools and narrative inquiry. It is hoped that this study will be able to add to the growing empirical research by offering a fairly unique methodological outlook as well as offering an insight into how teacher leadership is experienced and enacted by teachers in private schools.

Internationally, there is a large body of literature that theoretically agrees with the notion of teacher leadership. Empirical evidence, however, both internationally and locally, reveals that teacher leadership is still enacted to a very limited degree (Grant, 2006, 2008, 2012; Grant et al., 2010; Grant & Singh, 2009; Helterbran, 2010; Naicker & Somdut, 2014). The limited existing research suggests that some of the causes of this are: entrenched hierarchical leadership structures in school; lack of collaboration and shared vision; principals’ unwillingness to entrust teachers with authority to lead; and teachers’ resistance to change (Grant, 2006, 2008, 2012; Grant et al., 2010; Grant & Singh, 2009; Helterbran, 2010; Naicker & Somdut, 2014). If meaningful transformation in South African schools is to be achieved, both policy and practice need to be informed by a richer and more nuanced understanding of the lived experiences of teacher leaders.

1.5 RESEARCH PUZZLE

The methodology of this study is narrative inquiry. Instead of a list of possible research questions, the starting point of this methodology is the identification of a ‘research puzzle’. This is a key area in which narrative inquiry makes itself distinct from other methodologies (Clandinin, 2013). The term ‘research puzzle’ emphasises the reflexive nature of narrative inquiry. Instead of formulating very specific questions that may anticipate, and possibly even direct the results, the intention here is to generate more open questions around a particular area of interest or “wonder” without allowing them to necessarily confine the research (Clandinin, 2013). I have decided, however, to use three questions to help me focus my study and to help me present the study in a clear manner.

My research puzzle emerged out of a desire to better understand how the experiences, and thus the stories, of teacher leaders are influenced by both their personal and professional lives. My research puzzle, therefore, begins with a question which explores the identity of teacher leaders: who are the teacher leaders in public and private secondary schools? Exploring the stories of teacher leaders’ identities allows me to gain a richer understanding of who these teacher leaders are, and the factors and experiences that have shaped them into the people they are today.

The second part of my research puzzle refers to the question: how is teacher leadership enacted on a day-to-day basis in public and private secondary schools? Inquiring into the stories of how teacher leadership is enacted, enables me to gain insight into the different ways in which teachers behave as leaders within their school communities.

The third part of my research puzzle is concerned with the question: what are the enabling and constraining factors for teacher leadership in public and private secondary schools? Exploring the stories around enabling and constraining factors for teacher leadership allows me to gain a richer understanding of what encourages teachers to act as leaders and what discourages or constrains teachers’ ability to act as leaders.

In summary, my study collectively seeks to address the following questions:

- Who are the teacher leaders in public and private secondary schools?
- How is teacher leadership enacted on a day-to-day basis in public and private secondary schools?

- What are the enabling and constraining factors for teacher leadership in public and private secondary schools?

1.6 DEFINITION OF OPERATIONAL CONCEPTS

In this section I explain the following key concepts that I will be using in this study: leadership, management, and teacher leadership. Because this study explores the lived experiences of teacher leaders, it is grounded in the discipline of leadership. The term, ‘leadership,’ is also very closely linked, and sometimes confused with, ‘management,’ and so it is important that both concepts are clearly defined and differentiated. More specifically, the focus of this study is on teacher leadership – a concept with a variety of different uses in academic literature. It is therefore also necessary to define clearly how the term, ‘teacher leadership,’ is used in this study.

1.6.1 LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Whilst there is some overlap and interconnection between the concepts of educational leadership and management, the two concepts are distinct from one another. For the purposes of this study, leadership is the process of creating, re-creating and articulating a clear organisational vision based on sound personal and professional values. It also includes the act of influencing other members of the organisation to share in that vision and to accomplish the goals and purposes associated with it (Bush & Glover, 2003; Bush & Middlewood, 2013). While leadership is associated with school improvement, management is seen as a maintenance activity (Bush & Middlewood, 2013; Grant, 2012). Educational management is therefore the process of implementing and monitoring policies and innovations through particular systems and structures (Bush, 2008). Management in education is concerned with efficiency but must also be closely aligned with the organisation’s agreed purposes (Bush & Middlewood, 2013).

1.6.2 TEACHER LEADERSHIP

Whilst teacher leadership can be both formally mandated and informal, it emerges in schools when teachers “lead within and beyond the classroom; identify with and contribute to a community of teacher learners and leaders; influence others towards improved educational practice; and accept responsibility for achieving the outcomes of the leadership” (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2011, p. 6). The concept of teacher leadership therefore rejects the traditional, individualised and positional understanding of leadership and acknowledges the leadership potential of all staff members (Grant et al., 2010).

The idea of teachers acting as leaders was first brought to the fore in international literature by Katzenmeyer and Moller (1996). These authors propose that, in the quest for improved student learning, schools need to tap into the leadership potential of teachers which lies dormant in most schools (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2011). This view of teacher leadership is theoretically underpinned by the theory of distributed leadership which has found favour with many contemporary academics (Bush, 2003; Bush & Glover, 2012; Bush & Middlewood, 2013; Harris, 2012, 2013; Harris & Spillane, 2008) because of its ability to promote the school improvement which is an urgent necessity in many SA schools (Harris & Muijs, 2005). Distributed leadership and teacher leadership are also critical to the creation of professional learning communities (PLC). This is another well-supported strategy for facilitating school transformation (Botha, 2012; Feldman & Fataar, 2014; Grant, 2006; Stoll & Seashore Louis, 2007; Watson, 2014), where teachers are seen as “sharing and critically interrogating their practice in an ongoing, reflective, collaborative, inclusive, learning-oriented, growth-promoting way” (Stoll & Seashore Louis, 2007, p. 2).

1.7 ORGANISATION OF THE DISSERTATION: OVERVIEW OF THE CHAPTERS

This introductory chapter provides the context for this study. I do this by describing the educational, political and personal milieu in which my research takes place. From there, I explain the focus and purpose of this study. In addition, I provide a personal, practical and theoretical rationale for my study, and describe my research puzzle, together with the questions of which it is comprised. Finally, I present my definitions of some of the important terms that will be used in my study.

The second chapter of this dissertation takes the form of a review of literature. I lay out existing empirical findings, theoretical discussions, and debates that are relevant to the area of teacher leadership. I also describe the three theories that constitute my theoretical framework and explain how these theories interrelate using the analogy of a pair of spectacles.

The third chapter describes and explains the research design that I have used in this study. It begins by explaining that this research is grounded within the interpretivist research paradigm and takes on a qualitative research approach. The chapter then goes on to describe and justify the use of narrative inquiry as the methodology for this study; the choice of research setting; the selection of participants; as well as the data generation tools that are used – narrative interviews, collage inquiry and artefact retrieval. I also describe my experiences in the field

and how the data analysis was undertaken. I then explain how the issues of ethics, trustworthiness and rigour were addressed and conclude the chapter by discussing the limitations of the study.

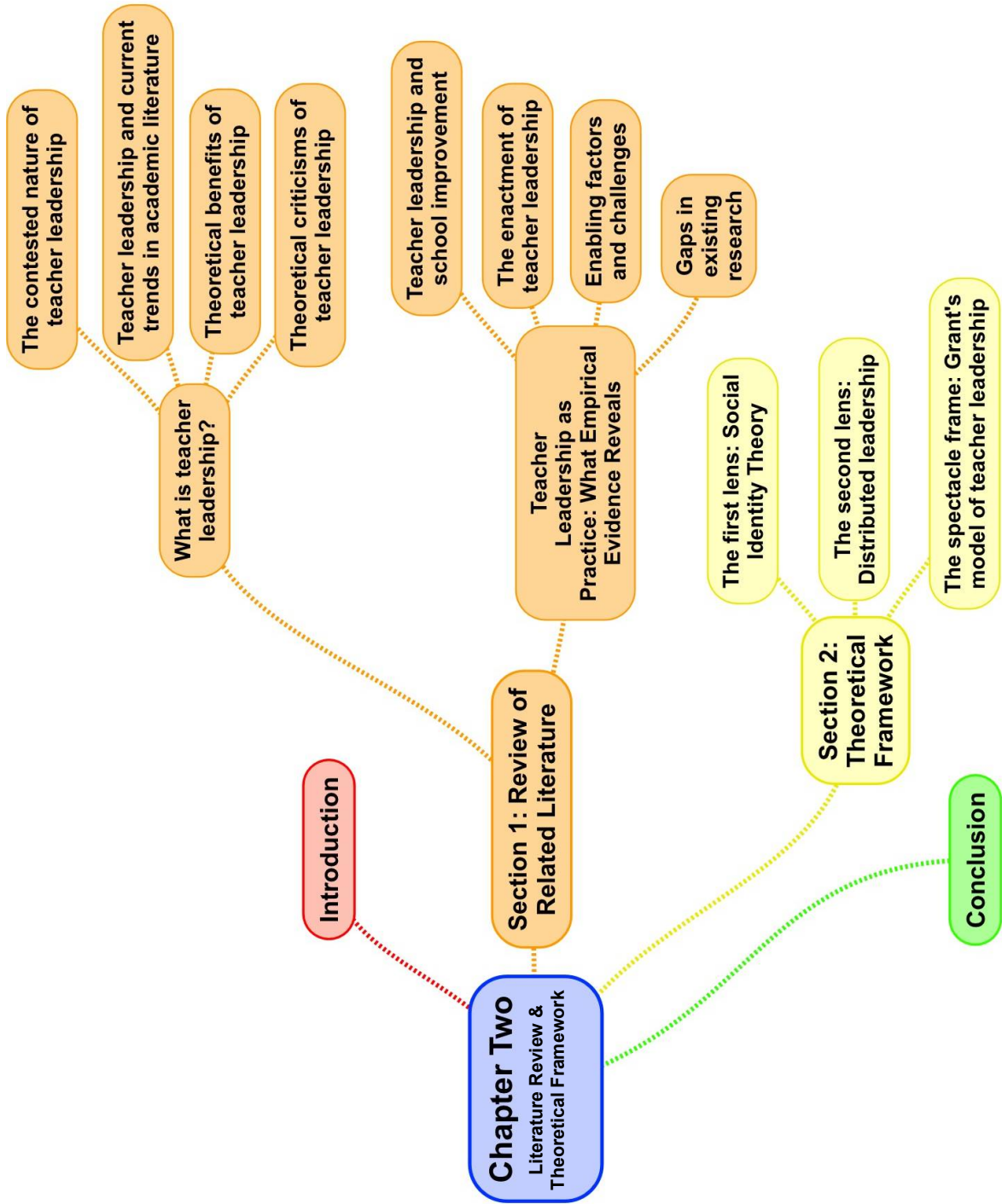
The fourth chapter comprises of the narratives of the four research participants that were written from the field texts. These texts are made up of interview transcripts, interview notes, collage inquiry pin boards and artefacts. I co-constructed these narratives together with each participant through a relational and reflexive process. The narratives give insight into the lived experiences of these four teacher leaders and how they view and understand themselves and their individual realities.

Chapter Five focuses on my analysis of the four narratives in response to the questions that constitute my research puzzle. This is done by identifying common themes and unique threads which run through the narratives. I use my theoretical framework, made up of Social Identity Theory, the theory of distributed leadership and Grant's (2012) model of teacher leadership, to make sense of the findings that emerge.

The concluding chapter of this study, Chapter Six, begins with a summary of each chapter in the study and the main learnings thereof. I then present my conclusions with regards to each of the questions that make up my research puzzle. Firstly, I present my conclusions regarding teacher leader identities. I then go on to present my conclusions around how teacher leadership is enacted on a day-to-day basis in public and private schools. Lastly, I present my conclusions around the enabling factors and barriers to teacher leadership in these schools. Following my conclusions, I then describe my reflections on my research journey and finally, I make a number of recommendations based on the findings of this study.

1.8 CONCLUSION

In this chapter I have sketched the social and historical context of this study of teacher leadership, and outlined its focus and purpose. I have provided a comprehensive rationale, incorporating personal, practical, policy, social, and research concerns. I presented the questions which guide this study and make up my research puzzle. I explained and differentiated key terms such as leadership, management and teacher leadership. Finally, I have given a chapter outline of my study, in which I explore the lived experiences of teacher leaders in public and private secondary schools.



CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW & THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter I provided context for the study by providing a background, outlining the focus and purpose of the study and by providing a rationale for the study. I also described the research puzzle, explained important operational concepts that will be used in the study and provided a summary of the chapters that comprise this dissertation. As was explained in the previous chapter, teacher leadership is a concept that was first advocated in the 1990s by Katzenmeyer and Moller (1996) and has since found increasing support from both academics and policy makers. That being said, it is not free from criticism or challenge, and these points of view must also be acknowledged. This chapter is divided into two sections: in the first section relevant literature around teacher leadership is reviewed and in the second section the theoretical framework for the study is described and explained.

In the first section, the literature review, I begin by looking at a broad, theoretical perspective of the origins of teacher leadership and its current definitions, as well as what theory is saying about the important role that teacher leadership can play in the transformation of schools. In order to examine how current theory is being translated into practice, I then narrow my focus to examine both international and national empirical studies around teacher leadership and the state of teacher leadership in international and local schools. I also critique the government policies which (are supposed to) support teacher leadership in schools. Finally, I conclude the chapter by arguing for the relevance of the present study in the light of the apparent gaps in current academic knowledge and empirical findings.

In the second section of this chapter I explain the theoretical framework that guides this study. This framework is made up of 3 theories which interconnect and together provide the lens through which this study and its findings are viewed. I then conclude the chapter with a summary of what has been discussed.

2.2 SECTION 1: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

In this section I unpack the existing scholarship around teacher leadership, focusing on those aspects which are particularly relevant to this study.

2.2.1 WHAT IS TEACHER LEADERSHIP?

Although teacher leadership is becoming a term that is used more and more frequently, defining it is not as simple as it may at first seem. The development of teacher leadership as a leadership model does, however, reflect current trends in academic literature. It finds support from concepts such as distributed leadership and professional learning communities (PLCs), as well as its potential to act as a mechanism for change, model democratic principles and aid improved student learning.

2.2.1.1 *THE CONTESTED NATURE OF TEACHER LEADERSHIP*

The concept of teachers exercising their autonomy and acting as leaders within their own classrooms is a familiar notion, acknowledged by many for a long period of time (Lai & Cheung, 2015). In recent quests to improve school leadership there is, however, a large and growing academic scholarship around the notion of teacher leadership and mobilising the leadership capability of teachers in the context of the wider school community (Helterbran, 2010; Naicker & Somdut, 2014). Although the notion of teacher leadership has grown significantly in popularity over the last 2 decades, the popularisation of the term in both teacher training and in the teaching profession has led to a widespread belief that we all know what the term '*teacher leadership*' means (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2011). The nature of this term is, however, a contested debate in both theory and practice.

Whilst there is a wide variety of definitions for teacher leadership (Lai & Cheung, 2015; Torrance & Humes, 2015), a fundamental commonality that can be found amongst them is that the notion of teacher leadership views leadership as something which is practiced rather than as a title or formal role one takes on (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2011; Harris & Spillane, 2008). Another common element found amongst these definitions is that teacher leadership is born out of a desire within teachers to improve student learning and is thus associated with teachers initiating positive change within their school community (Fairman & Mackenzie, 2014; Grant, 2012; Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2011). There also seems to be some agreement between authors that this form of leadership is exercised by teachers through the positive relationships that they have built with their colleagues over time and which are characterised by mutual trust and respect for one another's professional expertise (Fairman & Mackenzie, 2014; Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2011).

In contrast to the commonalities described above, there are two schools of thought that exist with regards to the formality of teacher leadership in schools (Lai & Cheung, 2015).

Although some authors view teacher leadership as a naturally and spontaneously evolving role that classroom-based teachers play, others view teacher leaders as those who are given some kind of formal, administrative leadership role within the school (Fairman & Mackenzie, 2014; Lai & Cheung, 2015; Struyve, Meredith & Gielen, 2014). Perhaps the most significant difference between these two views of teacher leadership is in how formal and informal teacher leaders gain their legitimacy as leaders within their school (Lai & Cheung, 2015). Whilst formal teacher leaders gain power to lead and influence others through their assigned position within the school, informal teacher leaders gain their power to influence by earning the trust and respect of their leaders, managers, fellow colleagues and students as a result of their expertise, practice and experience (Lai & Cheung, 2015).

After initially favouring a more informal form of teacher leadership, pioneers of the concept of teacher leaders, Katzenmeyer and Moller (2011), now acknowledge that teacher leadership can be either informal, classroom-based teachers who lead within their school or those who take on a more full-time, formal leadership role. Hunzicker (2013) reiterates Katzenmeyer and Moller's (2011) viewpoint by explaining that teacher leadership can be both informal, where teacher leaders are full-time classroom-based teachers who accept additional leadership responsibilities; or formal, where teacher leaders work entirely outside of the classroom and occupy the space somewhere between teaching and formal leadership and management. This understanding of teacher leadership as being both informal or formal fits in comfortably with the theory of distributed leadership – a model that underpins teacher leadership and which will be explained in further detail later in this chapter.

2.2.1.2 TEACHER LEADERSHIP AND CURRENT TRENDS IN ACADEMIC LITERATURE

The notion of teacher leadership both underpins and is underpinned by, other popular theories and concepts, which are argued to be very useful tools to implement within the school context, particularly when it comes to striving for school improvement. Thus, teacher leadership supports and is supported by, current trends in academic literature around school leadership and change. The two concepts that will be discussed here are: distributed leadership and professional learning communities.

Distributed leadership

The theory of distributed leadership is explained here in order to explain its relevance in subsequent discussions around different aspects of teacher leadership. This theory will, however, also be explicated in greater detail in the theoretical framework section of this

chapter. Spillane's (2006) notion of distributed leadership which Harris (2012, p. 7) defines as "the expansion of leadership roles in schools, beyond those in formal leadership or administrative posts" seems to be the widely preferred leadership model of today (Harris, 2012; Lumby, 2013). It seems that this perspective of leadership has found favour with many contemporary academics (Bush & Glover, 2012; Bush & Middlewood, 2013; Harris, 2013; Harris & Spillane, 2008) because of its proposed ability to encourage staff motivation and commitment, ownership of decisions, promote school improvement (Day et al., 2009; Harris, 2013) and to provide a model that is suitable to the broadened leadership responsibilities of multifaceted institutions, like many schools, that include a very large variety of activities (Harris, 2013; Harris & Spillane, 2008; Hulpia, Devos & Van Keer, 2011; Struyve et al., 2014).

This understanding of distributed leadership and its ability to support positive transformation in schools underpins the notion of teacher leadership and teachers acting as agents of change in their schools (Harris, 2003; Bush & Glover, 2014). A distributed view of leadership in schools means that staff members at all levels are potential leaders and leadership capacity at all levels should therefore be developed (Harris, 2012). As Williams (2011, p. 192) expresses it, "distributed leadership is based on the premise that all teachers can and must lead".

Professional Learning Communities (PLC)

The concepts of both distributed leadership and teacher leadership are critical to the creation of PLCs (Harris, 2003). In fact, the *Guideline for PLCs*, a document published by the South African Department of Education, explicitly states that one of the prerequisites for the development of a PLC is teachers acting as leaders within their schools (Department of Education, 2015). The development of PLCs is a popular strategy for facilitating school transformation that some authors propose (Botha, 2012; Feldman & Fataar, 2014; Grant, 2012; Stoll & Seashore Louis, 2007; Watson, 2014) in which one sees "teachers sharing and critically interrogating their practice in an ongoing, reflective, collaborative, inclusive, learning-oriented, growth-promoting way" (Stoll & Seashore Louis, 2007, p. 2). Thus, PLCs are about mobilising teacher leadership and agency (Watson, 2014) by creating a culture of continuous, collaborative reflexivity, reform and transformation within a school with the aim of improving teaching and learning. This further supports the notion of teacher leadership and suggests that teacher leadership is an integral part of continuing school improvement.

These three concepts, distributed leadership, teacher leadership and PLCs, therefore form symbiotic relationships with one another and together work toward eliciting the skills, expertise and influence of staff members at all levels within a school in the quest for school improvement.

2.2.1.3 THEORETICAL BENEFITS OF TEACHER LEADERSHIP

The recent rise in popularity of teacher leadership can be attributed primarily to the proposal that this model of leadership exploits the vast resources found within ordinary school staff members – the teachers – for the purpose of facilitating change and school improvement (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2011).

A Mechanism for change

Education is undergoing constant changes under the effects of globalisation (Chinnammai, 2005, p. 1). Imposed change is unavoidable, and deliberate change is necessary for the improvement of schools that exist within our ever-changing global society (Theron, 2013). Creating educational institutions which are able to respond quickly, creatively and successfully to these changes, however, poses a significant challenge for educational leaders and managers that accept their place as part of a global society (Torrance & Humes, 2015).

In South Africa the end of apartheid opened up many opportunities for vast and necessary change in the South African education system. It also, however, resulted in South Africa opening up its economy to international trade and foreign investment. Consequently, South Africa is very much a part of the global economy and so must relate and compete with other nations on a global scale. Thus, South Africa is most certainly subject to the forces and effects of globalisation and these effects are placing pressure on South African schools to continuously change in order to keep up with global trends and support a globally competitive economy (Bloom, 2004; Chinnammai, 2005; Christie, 2008).

Unfortunately, the legacy of autocratic, ‘great man’ leadership that was instilled in the South African education system during the apartheid regime still lingers in South African schools today (Williams, 2011). Overcoming this way of thinking about leadership therefore poses a unique challenge to South African schools today. Thus, in the light of South Africa’s poor performance in the area of education, as was explained in Chapter One, the need for educational transformation is particularly pertinent, especially if South Africa is to compete successfully in a globally integrated world.

This task of improving and transforming schools is a daunting one and thus should be shared (Bush & Middlewood, 2013). Participatory approaches to leadership, like teacher leadership, are useful in developing schools that are able to respond appropriately to these ever-changing societal and educational contexts (Helterbran, 2010). Supporters of teacher leadership advocate this model as an effective mechanism for change within schools because it makes use of the talents, experience, knowledge, expertise and influence of a large proportion of school staff – the teachers (Grant, 2012; Helterbran, 2010; Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2011). This improves the success of change strategies because it improves the quality of decision-making and the commitment of teachers, the agents of change, to the implementation of change strategies within the school (Grant, 2012).

Furthermore, not only does teacher leadership help catalyse and support once-off change initiatives, it also helps to sustain coherence and continuity in school improvement initiatives (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2011). During their work with principals and school improvement, Katzenmeyer and Moller (2011) found that when change initiatives are spear-headed by a lone leader, and if that leader leaves the school, school improvement programmes often lose momentum. By distributing the leadership responsibilities to teaching staff, the chance of school improvement efforts being able to continue despite changes in formal leadership, improves (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2011).

Modeling democratic principles

One of the goals of a successful education system is to produce citizens who are able to actively contribute to and become involved in a democratic society (Barth, 2011). It is pertinent here to note, that one of the goals of the *South African Schools Act* is that the post-apartheid education system should “advance the democratic transformation of society” (Republic of South Africa, 1996, p. 1). Barth (2011) therefore suggests that one of the benefits of teacher leadership is that its practice in schools models democratic principles for students, which enables them to learn how to participate in such an environment. In a country such as South Africa, with a relatively young democracy, equipping pupils with the requisite knowledge and skills that will enable them to contribute to their society should be of utmost importance as it is only by having citizens who actively participate in political decision-making that our democracy can reach its full potential (Barth, 2011; Grant, 2012).

Improved student learning

Perhaps one of the most attractive aspects of distributed, and therefore, teacher leadership is its association with improved student learning outcomes (Barth, 2011; Harris, 2012; Helterbran, 2010; Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2011; Williams, 2011). One of the reasons for this is that when teachers lead and therefore assume more responsibilities, they learn, grow and improve and, therefore, their students' learning improves as well (Barth, 2011). Another reason is that when teachers lead their sphere of influence expands beyond their classroom and their own students to other spheres of the school community (Grant, 2012; Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2011). Teacher leaders are able to influence other teachers towards improved practice and this in turn has the potential to improve the learning of students in these other teachers' classes.

In addition to utilising the latent skills that many teachers have in order to help lead initiatives that work towards school transformation and improved student learning, teacher leadership is also a way of acknowledging teachers as skilled professionals and uplifting their self-esteem and morale (Barth, 2011; Grant, 2006; Struyve et al., 2014). Struyve et al. (2014) suggest that one of the reasons for teacher leadership being introduced into school systems was because of the limited opportunities for promotion within schools. Teacher leadership therefore provides a way of creating more opportunities for teachers to increase the scope of their expertise and to prevent highly motivated, skilled teachers from becoming stifled and de-motivated (Struyve et al., 2014). Creating and maintaining positive teacher morale helps to support school improvement.

2.2.1.4 THEORETICAL CRITICISMS OF TEACHER LEADERSHIP

Because teacher leadership is underpinned by the theory of distributed leadership, criticisms aimed at distributed leadership consequently fall simultaneously upon teacher leadership (Bush & Glover, 2014). Whilst it should be acknowledged that some authors criticise the practice of distributed leadership as a recommended leadership strategy in schools because it is idealised and unrealistic, there is reason to argue that the practice of distributed leadership, nevertheless, holds practical value for schools (Bush & Glover, 2014; Day et al., 2009).

Critics of distributed leadership purport that this theory has a seductive allure because it creates a false hope that every staff member within an organisation will have equal opportunity to share in leadership responsibilities and therefore have equal influence over the organisation as a whole (Lumby, 2013). Lumby (2013) criticises much of the existing

distributed leadership literature as overlooking the unequal power dynamics that exist within organisations, especially as a result of race, ethnicity and gender discrimination. This criticism holds significant weight in the context of a country such as South Africa with its history of discrimination and inequality, and should therefore not be taken lightly. Rather than causing us to disregard distributed leadership as a valuable model for leadership, however, critiques such as these are valuable in terms of helping us to understand how we can overcome the practical challenges that we face so that we can implement this leadership model successfully in schools.

Lumby (2013) astutely illuminates the very conspicuous gap in empirical studies around issues of inequality, race, ethnicity and gender in leadership research which must certainly be addressed in further studies. This critique of distributed leadership, however, reveals possible misconceptions around distributed leadership against which we must be cautious. For example, underlying this critique seems to be an assumption that distributed leadership means that “everyone leads or everyone is a leader” (Harris, 2013, p. 547) and that informal leadership trumps, and is therefore incompatible with, formal leadership roles. Contrary to this misconception, distributed leadership values and incorporates both formal and informal leadership (Harris, 2013; Williams, 2011). It does, however, require formal leaders to change the way that they traditionally understand their role so that they become primarily concerned with identifying, encouraging and facilitating leadership in others (Grant, 2012; Harris, 2013). In doing so, distributed leadership acknowledges the significant power that formal leaders have to support or disable informal (teacher) leadership and in this way does address at least one aspect of the unequal power relations that exist within a school (Grant, 2012; Harris, 2012, 2013).

These theoretical criticisms that have been levelled against distributed leadership as a school leadership practice are not unsubstantiated, and are echoed in empirical evidence found in both international and national studies around teacher leadership. This is demonstrated in the next section of this chapter.

2.2.2 TEACHER LEADERSHIP AS PRACTICE: WHAT EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE REVEALS

Empirical studies conducted in Europe, Asia, America and limited parts of Africa provide evidence which seems to concur with some of the benefits and criticisms of teacher leadership that theoretical literature proposes. These empirical findings also offer deeper

insights into what the benefits of teacher leadership might be, how teacher leadership is being enacted in schools, what factors enable the practice of teacher leadership and what factors impede the practice of teacher leadership in schools.

2.2.2.1 TEACHER LEADERSHIP AND SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

One of the key findings of a case study conducted in a disadvantaged yet high performing South African school attributed the school's success to the wide practice of teacher leadership across all levels of the school structure (Naicker, Grant & Pillay, 2016). Nevertheless, because this study is the only one of its kind, there seems to be a significant lack of recent empirical evidence of the suggested positive relationship between teacher leadership and school improvement. In South Africa in particular, the vast majority of studies that have been conducted seem to work from the premise that teacher leadership holds much potential for school improvement and transformation. Perhaps this lack of clear empirical evidence is a contributing reason as to why teacher leadership has not reached its full potential in many, if not most schools around the world (Crowther, Ferguson & Hann, 2009; Grant, 2010, 2012; Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2011; Naicker & Somdut, 2014). Nevertheless, when teachers act as leaders within their school, leadership is more widely distributed. Furthermore, Grant's (2012) model of teacher leadership states distributed leadership as a prerequisite for teacher leadership. This close connection between teacher leadership and distributed leadership suggests that studies around distributed leadership and school improvement could also be applied to the notion of teacher leadership.

The evidence provided by empirical studies that have been conducted around distributed leadership suggests that there is indeed a relationship between leadership distribution, and therefore teachers acting as leaders, and improvements in student learning. At the international level, Day et al. (2009) conducted an extensive mixed methods study of English schools that were deemed successful because of their reported improvement in student attainment levels over a period of three years. The findings of their study reveal that there is a "positive [association] between the increased distribution of leadership roles and responsibilities and the continuing improvement of pupil outcomes" (Day et al., 2009, p. 4). Added to this, Bush and Glover's (2012) study revealed a convergent conclusion when they conducted research on high performing senior leadership teams in nine English schools. This study suggests that there is a clear association between high performing leadership teams and the distribution of leadership (Bush & Glover, 2012).

2.2.2.2 *THE ENACTMENT OF TEACHER LEADERSHIP*

Because this study of teacher leadership is ultimately concerned with the investigation of how teachers influence students, other teachers, the whole school and wider school community, it is important to understand the practical ways in which teachers influence and lead others, beginning with an examination of the characteristics of teacher leaders and their identity.

Who are teacher leaders?

Empirical evidence shows that one of the common characteristics of teacher leaders is a strong, self-motivated desire to see their pupils' performance improve (Fairman & Mackenzie, 2014; Hunzicker, 2013). It is this desire that seems to drive them to put in extra time and effort into influencing those around them towards improved educational practice (Fairman & Mackenzie, 2014; Hunzicker, 2013). Other noteworthy characteristics of teacher leaders is that they are teachers who are willing to take risks, try new teaching or management strategies, they are self-reflective, they have good intrapersonal and interpersonal skills, and they are skilled in developing strong collegial professional relationships (Fairman & Mackenzie, 2014; Hunzicker, 2013).

It is, however, noteworthy, that international studies show that informal teacher leaders are reluctant to identify themselves as leaders within their schools (Fairman & Mackenzie, 2014; Li, 2015; Struyve et al., 2015). This is because these teachers believe that their influence on those around them is more significant when it is exerted informally (Fairman & Mackenzie, 2014). In their study on formal teacher leaders in Flemish schools, Struyve et al. (2014) found that one of the challenges that these formal teacher leaders face was the strain that their formalised leadership role placed on their relationships with their teacher colleagues. These teachers felt that their leadership roles placed strain on their social-professional relationships by making their teacher colleagues suspicious of whether they are still "one of them" (Struyve et al., 2014, p. 219). As a result every one of the 26 teacher leader participants expressed that they did not wish to be elevated within the school hierarchy (Struyve et al., 2014).

In order for teachers to be recognised by others as leaders and, therefore, be able to exert influence as leaders, a high level of teaching competency is required (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2011). In other words, teacher leaders must be recognised by others as being proficient in the skill of teaching. Teaching proficiency should not, however, be confused with a teacher's level of teaching experience. Studies conducted in Hong Kong and Iran show that there is no

relationship between the number of years teaching experience a teacher has and their ability to act as teacher leaders (Aliakbari & Sadeghi, 2014; Li, 2015). It is therefore unfortunate that in South African schools teacher leadership enacted by novice teachers seems to be hindered by the formal leaders within the school and, as a result, is limited to the domain of the classroom (Naicker & Somdut, 2014).

How teacher leadership is enacted

Although various empirical studies define teacher leadership slightly differently, there are some commonalities when it comes to how teachers practice leadership, both formally and informally. In their case study research in America, Fairman and Mackenzie (2014) found that the main motivator behind teachers acting as leaders was a strong desire to improve student learning. These teachers used the following strategies to influence others within the school: modelling professional behaviours that are conducive to commitment, reflection on practice, collaboration and implementing change; coaching colleagues; collaborating with colleagues in planning, co-creating or evaluating curricula; and advocating for change in existing educational practices (Fairman & Mackenzie, 2014).

From a local perspective, Grant's (2006; 2012) research into teacher leadership in South African schools lead her to conclude that teachers can act as leaders within different zones within the school community and context, and can take on different roles within these zones when enacting teacher leadership. These different zones and roles will be explained in greater detail in the theoretical framework section of this chapter (see Chapter 2, section 2.3, p. 28)

The real-life state of teacher leadership practice in schools

As proposed by academics such as Barth (2011), Helderbran (2010), and Katzenmeyer and Moller (2011), the unfortunate reality of teacher leadership in schools is that it is still far from reaching its full potential. Although there is a vast corpus of literature that theoretically agrees with the notion of teacher leadership, empirical evidence from research conducted in South Africa reveals that teacher leadership is still enacted in only a very limited way (Grant, 2006, 2008, 2012; Grant et al., 2010; Grant & Singh, 2009; Helderbran, 2010; Naicker & Somdut, 2014).

A few studies have been conducted using Grant's (2006; 2012) model of teacher leadership as a way of identifying and understanding how teacher leadership is enacted in South African schools. These studies have found that teacher leadership is concentrated within the confines of the classroom. Research conducted by Grant (2008) and Grant and Singh (2009) in

KwaZulu-Natal schools, revealed that teacher leadership was evident in these schools in zones one (*in the classroom*) and two (*working with other teachers and learners outside the classroom in curricular and extra-curricular activities*) and, to a lesser extent, zone four (*between neighbouring schools in the community*). Both studies agree, however, that there was no evidence of teacher leadership in zone three (*outside the classroom in whole school development*) (Grant, 2008; Grant & Singh, 2009). A survey analysis conducted by Grant et al. (2010) of the views of 1055 post-Level one teachers from a variety of different KwaZulu-Natal schools concluded that teacher leadership in these schools was limited to primarily the classroom level (*zone one*) and diminishes as one proceeds from the classroom towards the wider community outside of the school (*zone 4*). This finding is corroborated by Naicker and Somdut's (2014) case study research of teacher leadership enacted by novice teachers in a South African secondary school.

From an international perspective it is interesting, however, that a survey conducted across 22 Iranian schools indicated that teacher leadership was enacted between *sometimes* and *often* (Aliakbari & Sadeghi, 2014). This does not seem to align with the hierarchical school structures that prevail in Iranian schools and so Aliakbari and Sadeghi (2014) propose that, whilst there may be some distribution of leadership within these schools, it most likely remains among the few.

2.2.2.3 *ENABLING FACTORS AND CHALLENGES*

Out of the findings of both international and local studies, emerge a number of factors that can either support or impede the practice of teacher leadership within schools.

Supportive formal leaders and leadership structures

There is convincing evidence to suggest that the nature of formal leadership structures and the attitudes and values of existing formal leaders within a school, play key roles in the success or failure of the teacher leadership within schools (Akert & Martin, 2012; Crowther et al., 2009; Eargle, 2013; Grant, 2010, 2012; Harris, 2013; Helterbran, 2010; Naicker et al., 2016; Naicker & Somdut, 2014). International and local research into both distributed leadership and teacher leadership reveals that principals remain the gatekeepers to the distribution of leadership within the school (Akert & Martin, 2012; Crowther et al., 2009; Eargle, 2013; Grant, 2010, 2012; Harris, 2013; Helterbran, 2010; Naicker & Somdut, 2014). This is because ultimate power and authority still resides firmly with the school principal

(Grant, 2012). Principals can therefore act either as enablers or as barriers to teacher leadership in their school.

Research conducted in South Africa suggests that principals are hesitant to share leadership with teachers (Grant, 2006, 2008, 2012; Grant et al., 2010) and therefore seem to act as barriers to the practice of teacher leadership in schools. A possible contributing factor to this reluctance is that in South Africa, according to the *SASA* (Republic of South Africa, 1996), the principal is ultimately accountable for school performance and school improvement. Thus, principals may feel reluctant to share their leadership responsibilities with teachers because of the risk that they may not have the expertise or commitment required to lead the school successfully (Grant, 2012; Grant et al., 2010). Conversely, Naicker et al.'s (2016) research suggests that when principals actively encourage and support teacher leadership, even disadvantaged schools can become highly successful.

A supportive school culture

There seem to be a number of factors that contribute to a school culture that supports teacher leadership. Conversely, there are also school cultural factors that can impede the practice of teacher leadership within a school.

Positive, collegial relationships built on a foundation of trust

The findings of a number of international studies suggest that the ability to build strong, collegial relationships based on a foundation of trust and trustworthiness is essential to effective distribution of leadership (Day et al., 2009; Demir, 2015; Fairman & Mackenzie, 2014; Hunzicker, 2013; Struyve et al., 2014). Demir's (2015) study conducted in Turkish primary schools with 378 teachers shows that trust is significant for the culture of teacher leadership within a school. Furthermore, research conducted in America by Fairman and Mackenzie (2014) reveals that building trusting relationships with colleagues where they feel safe to be vulnerable with one another so that honest critical reflection on practice can take place is a challenge that teacher leaders face when influencing other teachers towards improved educational practice. This arises because, as Hunzicker's (2013) research suggests, the ability to develop and maintain positive collegial professional relationships is a requisite skill or disposition for teachers who want to act as leaders within their school. Struyve et al.'s (2014) research in Belgian schools presents concurrent findings in the case of formal teacher leaders. They (Struyve et al., 2014) found, through their multi-case study research, that one of the primary challenges that teacher leaders face is finding a balance between getting their

colleagues to acknowledge their leadership role and maintaining their social-professional relationships with their colleagues.

Unfortunately in the South African context a culture of mistrust, especially of those in authority, has been left in the wake of the Apartheid regime (Grant, 2006). Rectifying this and regaining teachers' trust therefore poses a significant challenge for school leaders and potential teacher leaders.

An egalitarian ethos

As Torrance (2015, p. 798) purports, the role of teacher leaders outside the confines of their own classrooms is "legitimised by colleagues". The idea that no teacher should be above another seems to be one that is entrenched in the culture of many schools (Eargle, 2013; Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2011; Li, 2015). Studies conducted in both rural south-east America and Hong Kong by Eargle (2013) and Li (2015) respectively produced findings that showed that teachers were reluctant to take on leadership roles within their schools or to label themselves as leaders because of the prevailing egalitarian ethos within the school. These findings by Eargle (2013) and Li (2015) are supported by Katzenmeyer and Moller (2011) in their writings on teacher leadership as mentioned earlier in this chapter. The lack of African or South African writings on this topic warrants the need for further research into this potential barrier to teacher leadership in schools.

Resistant teachers

Grant's (2006; 2012) studies in South Africa reveal that teachers themselves can act as barriers to the practice of teacher leadership, not only because they want to maintain the status quo of an egalitarian ethos (Eargle, 2013; Li, 2015), but also for other reasons. Grant's (2006; 2012) studies suggest that teachers are unwilling to take on leadership responsibilities because it will mean extra work with no extra pay or other rewards. In addition they may also feel that they already have too much work to be able to cope with any added responsibilities.

Vague education policies

As I argued in the rationale of the study in chapter 1, although the current education policies in South Africa support teacher leadership, they do so in a vague and ambiguous manner. With the wide variety of definitions of leadership, and in particular, teacher leadership, it is very likely that each school and each staff member will have their own understanding of what it means to be a leader in their context and this may lead to very varied forms of

implementation of these policies. In addition, these policies present these unclear ideas of teachers acting as leaders without addressing the real-life challenges that constrain teacher leadership in schools or giving strategies on how to cope with these challenges. As research conducted in South Africa reveals, despite the fact that the majority of teacher participants were of the opinion that teachers should be acting as leaders, this leadership was largely confined within the walls of their classrooms (Grant, 2006, 2008; Grant et al., 2010; Naicker & Somdut, 2014). Teacher leadership is therefore not being practiced in the way in which it would seem the *South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 (SASA)* and the *Revised Policy on the Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education Qualifications* mandate. This is not helpful as these policies do not provide sufficient guidance when it comes to the details of how to implement teacher leadership practically in schools and how to overcome possible challenges that schools may face.

This view of South African policies is corroborated by Torrance and Humes (2015) who provide a similar critique of education policies in Scotland. These authors criticise the Scottish education policies' tendency to use generic leadership discourse, in particular distributed and teacher leadership, to advocate these forms of leadership as solutions for much needed school improvement without offering any clear definitions of these terms (Torrance & Humes, 2015). They propose that there is significant "conceptual confusion" around these leadership terms and this creates problems in implementation (Torrance & Humes, 2015, p. 796). Furthermore they point out that Scottish education policy fails to address the complex interrelationships and interactions between teaching staff and formal leaders within the school, the power plays that exist within these school relationships and how, practically, teachers can act as leaders within schools that are still structured hierarchically (Torrance & Humes, 2015).

2.2.2.4 GAPS IN EXISTING RESEARCH

In my examination of the existing empirical literature around teacher leadership there seems to be three significant gaps that are evident and relevant to the present study: the African gap, the private school gap and the narrative gap.

The African gap

As far as I have read, there seems to be a very conspicuous gap in empirical research into teacher leadership in parts of Africa other than South Africa. Perhaps this could be attributed to the recent interest in finding leadership models which are more suited to the African

context and culture, such as *Ubuntu* leadership. Furthermore, the research that has been conducted in South Africa is still fairly limited in both its depth and scope. This state of empirical research in Africa therefore justifies the need for further research into teacher leadership in the African context, which is the aim of the present study.

The private school gap

In addition to the lack of research conducted in Africa, I have not, thus far in my reading, come across any empirical studies around teacher leadership that include private schools in their sampling. Whilst public schools still vastly outnumber private schools in South Africa, the number of private schools is steadily increasing (National Treasury, 2015). We would therefore be remiss if we did not acknowledge the part that private schools have to play in the South African education system. Furthermore, by comparing and contrasting findings related to the experiences of teacher leaders in public and private schools we may gain a greater insight into this phenomenon.

The narrative gap

My exploration of the existing empirical research has revealed that the majority of national and international studies around teacher leadership have taken on a case study methodology or quantitative surveys. In my examination of existing literature I have not found one study that has used narrative inquiry as a research methodology when exploring teacher leadership as a phenomenon. This further substantiates the need for research such as the present study which will fill this gap in existing empirical research.

2.2.3 SECTION CONCLUSION

This section of Chapter 2 has served to discuss the existing literature on and around teacher leadership, including national and international empirical studies as well as government policies. Through this discussion I have attempted to highlight both what is known and what is unknown with regards to the phenomenon of teacher leadership and thus shed light on the contribution that this study makes to existing knowledge. The section that follows focuses on the theoretical framework which I have used to guide and frame this study.

2.3 SECTION 2: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework that I use in this study consists of 3 interweaving components: Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), distributed leadership theory and Grant's (2012) model of teacher leadership. These interconnecting theories can be likened to a pair of spectacles with distributed leadership representing one of the two lenses, Social Identity Theory being the other lens and Grant's (2012) model of teacher leadership being the frame that holds the two lenses together. Each lens, or theory, interprets the light and colour of what we are looking at in this study in a particular way and brings different aspects into focus. Grant's (2012) Model of Teacher Leadership provides structural demarcations for the areas in which teacher leadership can be observed and thus acts like the frame of the spectacles, bringing structure and order to what we are viewing.

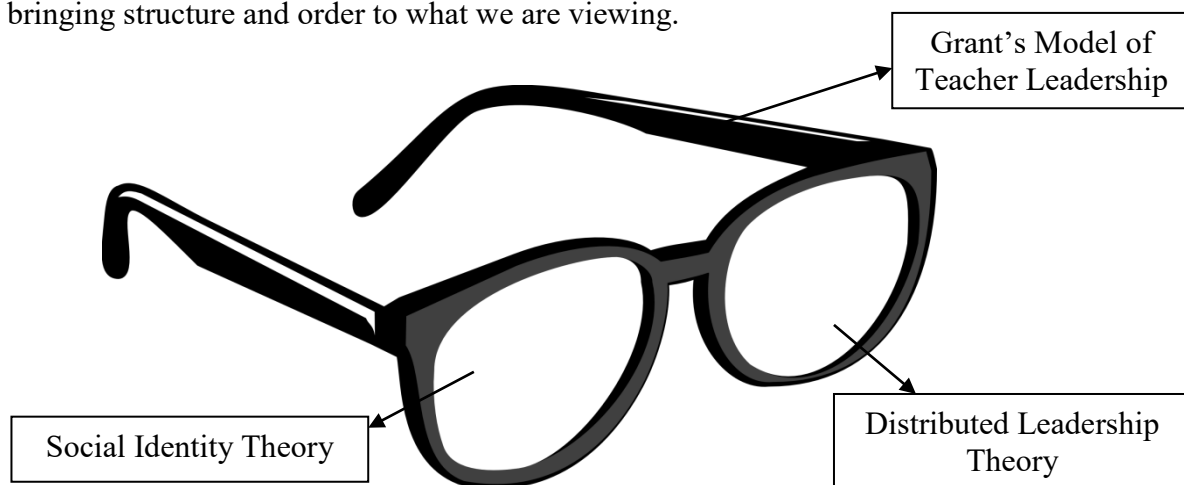


Figure 2.1: A picture of a pair of spectacles – an analogy to explain my theoretical framework

2.3.1 THE FIRST LENS: SOCIAL IDENTITY THEORY

One of the critical questions that make up my research puzzle is concerned with who the teacher leaders in public and private schools are. As Jenkins (2008, p. 18) describes, “identity is our understanding of who we are and who other people are, and, reciprocally, other people’s understanding of themselves and others (which includes us)”. Developing a sense of our own and others’ identity (or identities, for we are multidimensional beings in a continual state of becoming), is how we organise and make sense of our world (Jenkins, 2008). To be able to identify strangers as members of familiar categories or groups helps to make us feel that we have, at least, an idea of what kinds of behaviours and attitudes we can expect of them (Jenkins, 2008).

I was first introduced to Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) through discussions with my supervisor and a group of critical friends. This group of critical friends was made up of four of my fellow students who were also engaging in the research portion of their coursework Masters. We met on a fortnightly basis, together with our supervisor, to discuss and critique one another's research work. One of these critical friends, Vasantha Govender, is a seasoned teacher in a local primary school. She has a wealth of teaching experience and is a self-reflective teacher who strives for excellence and takes pride in her work as a teacher. At the time of our meetings she was an acting HOD in her school. The second member of my critical friends group, Tyrel Naidoo, is a younger teacher who, at the time, was working in a remedial secondary school. Tyrel was an active member of the Student Representative Council at the university and approached his studies with dedication and a desire to continuously improve. The third member was Samukele Ndlovu. She is a seasoned and very dedicated English teacher at a local former Black secondary school. The final member of my critical friends group, Sibusiso Khoza, also teaches at a local former Black secondary school.

These critical friends played a crucial role in the development of this study as they shared their perspectives and critiques of my work. Through my regular discussions with them it became apparent to me that the Social Identity Theory would be useful for my study because it gives a way of understanding how people form and make sense of their identities through their interaction with their social world. Thus, I use Social Identity Theory in order to guide my understanding of the participants' identities and how this may influence the roles which they enact as teacher leaders (Tajfel & Turner, 1979).

Social Identity Theory consists of a 3 step process of social categorisation, social identification and social comparison (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). According to Social Identity Theory, people define themselves in terms of the social groups to which they believe they belong, called 'in-groups', and tend to favour their 'in-groups' over 'out-groups', the groups to which they do not belong (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). These social groupings arise out of our natural tendency to use the interdependent processes of finding similarities and differences in order to categorise our social world and help us better understand it (Jenkins, 2008; Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Each social group has an associated set of expected behaviours and characteristics (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Thus, if we believe that we belong to a certain social group, or 'in-group', we begin to manifest the behaviours and characteristics that we believe are associated with that particular group (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Furthermore, once we have identified ourselves with a certain 'in-group/s', we then make positive associations with our

‘in-group’ and discriminate against ‘out-groups’ in both our behaviour and in our thinking, in order to enhance and maintain our own self-image and self-esteem (Tajfel & Turner, 1979).

As a result of this understanding of how people form and make meaning of their own identities, it would seem that an individual’s identity is neither an inherent, singular entity nor is it fixed at any time (Jenkins, 2008). Rather, it can change depending on the different group(s) with which a person associates himself/herself at different times and the behavioural norms he/she associates with those groups. It also suggests that an individual’s identity, and therefore their behaviour, is dependent upon their unique understanding of what behavioural norms are associated with their ingroup/s. If their perceptions of the characteristic behaviours of these ‘ingroups’ change, so too will their behaviour and/or their identity. Lastly, this theory also explains the prejudice that is prevalent in so many societies and organisations, particularly in South Africa. It not only explains why we categorise and stereotype people but also why we then tend to discriminate against the social groups to which we do not belong ourselves.

2.3.2 THE SECOND LENS: DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP

I was first lead to consider distributed leadership theory as part of my theoretical framework for this study because of my previous engagement with this theory during my BEd Honours course. During this course I was given the opportunity to engage with a number of different leadership and management theories, both as an individual and together with my lecturers and fellow students. Through this engagement I it became apparent to me that the theory of distributed leadership had significant insight and opportunities to offer educational leadership. When I then began to engage with this present study, it seemed clear to me that distributed leadership resonates well with the theory of teacher leadership, the focus of this study. Further discussions with my supervisor and critical friends then confirmed that this theory was indeed suitable for my theoretical framework.

The theory of distributed leadership was explained in Section 1 of this chapter when I discussed how teacher leadership is relevant to current trends in educational leadership scholarship. The development of the theory of distributed leadership reflects a move away from a hierarchical, individualised understanding of leadership, sometimes referred to as the “great man” theory (Harris, 2012; Spillane, 2006). Distributed leadership, however, goes beyond the simplistic ideas of shared leadership and delegation, to instead focus on leadership practice and the complex interrelationships between leaders, their followers and

the context within which they are operating (Harris, 2012; Spillane, 2006). In summary, therefore, distributed leadership theory views leadership as a fluid concept which is not necessarily attached to a title but is instead dependent upon the interrelationships and “interactions between leaders, followers and their situation” (Harris, 2013, p. 545). This consequently means that leadership could be exercised by any member within an organisation if the present interrelationships and context allow for it, and therefore supports the idea of teachers acting as leaders within a school, whether formal or informal.

2.3.3 THE SPECTACLE FRAME: GRANT’S MODEL OF TEACHER LEADERSHIP

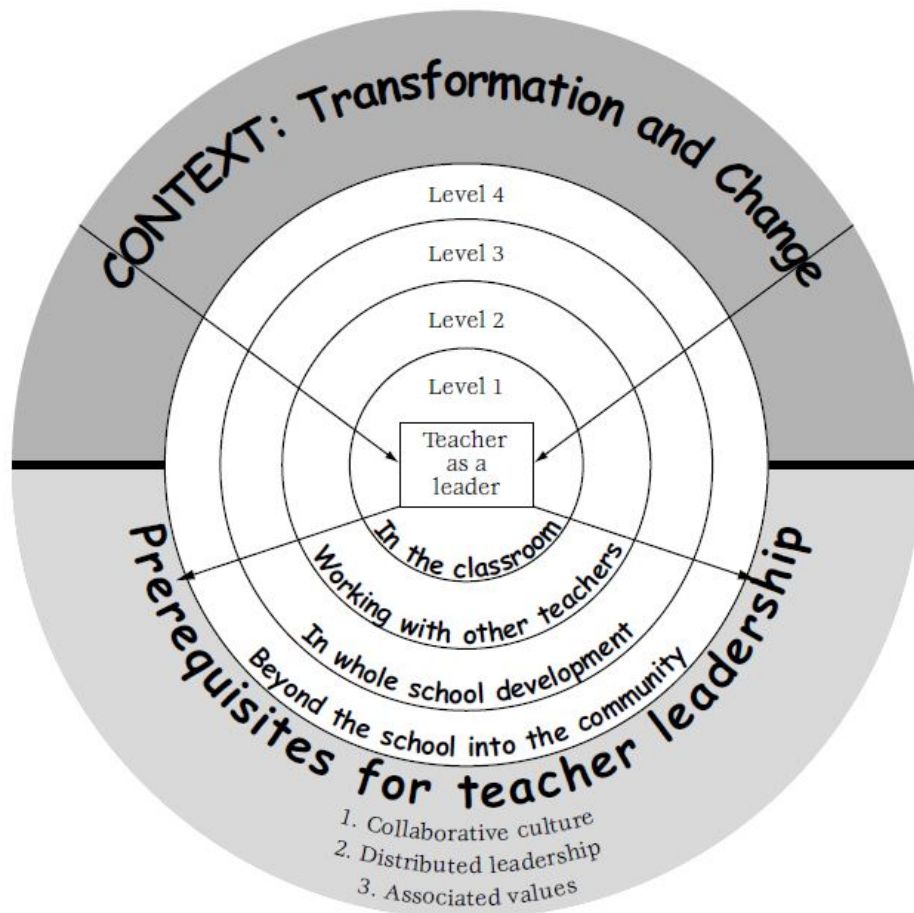
The theory of teacher leadership can be seen as a further development of the theory of distributed leadership. As I explained earlier in this chapter, distributed leadership theory supports the notion of teacher leadership (Torrance & Humes, 2015). In fact, teacher leadership is an expression of distributed leadership. It, therefore, also underpins Grant’s (2012) model of teacher leadership which makes up the final aspect of the theoretical framework of this study.

Through my reading of the scholarship around teacher leadership my eyes were opened to a number of different models associated with teacher leadership, such as Fairman and Mackenzie’s (2012) Sphere of Teacher Leadership Action for Learning. As a result of thorough contemplation and discussions with my supervisor and critical friends, I felt, however, that Grant’s (2012) Model of Teacher Leadership was the most appropriate for my study. The primary reason for this is that this model was developed by Grant through her study of teacher leadership in the South African context. This model is therefore particularly relevant for my study because it is also located within South Africa.

This model describes the ‘zones’ in which teachers lead in their schools, the roles that they take on within these ‘zones’ and the behavioural indicators of these roles (Grant, 2012). A summary of this model is depicted in Figure 2.2. The first zone within which a teacher can lead is in the classroom where he or she takes on the role of “continuing to teach and improve one’s own teaching” (Grant, 2012, p. 56). This, Grant (2012) argues, is the zone in which teacher leadership is exhibited most prevalently in schools because teachers have long had the freedom to lead their pupils within their classroom walls. The second zone in which teachers can act as leaders resides beyond the classroom where teachers form positive working relationships with their colleagues (Grant, 2012). In this zone teachers influence other teachers by “providing curriculum development knowledge”, leading professional

development through mentoring, coaching and leading in-service training and participating in evaluating the performance of other teachers within their school (Grant, 2012, p. 56). The third zone of teacher leadership within a school is where teachers become involved in whole school development activities such as developing a vision for the school and school policies (Grant, 2012). Teachers can lead in this zone by “organising and leading peer reviews of school practice” and “participating in school level decision making” (Grant, 2012, p. 58). The fourth and final zone in which teachers can act as leaders goes beyond the school level to where teachers act as leaders in the life of the wider community and across different schools (Grant, 2012). In this zone teachers also act as leaders by contributing their knowledge of curriculum development and facilitating in-service training and helping other teachers improve their practice, but they do it across different schools and within the context of the wider community rather than only within their own school environment (Grant, 2012).

This model of teacher leadership with its associated zones and roles is useful in helping us understand the different ways in which teacher leadership can be manifested within a school community. It provides a helpful, practical tool that helps us recognise the ways in which teachers might be acting as leaders, even when they are not labelled, or categorised, by others or identified by themselves, as leaders. This might be useful for identifying leadership behaviour in teachers even when there is discontinuity between their behaviour and the expected behaviours or norms of ‘teachers’ in a particular context.



**First level of analysis:
Four Zones**

**Second level of analysis:
Six Roles**

Zone 1
In the classroom

One: Continuing to teach and improve one's own teaching

Zone 2
Working with other teachers and learners outside the classroom in curricular and extra-curricular activities

Two: Providing curriculum development knowledge
Three: Leading in-service education and assisting other teachers
Four: Participating in performance evaluation of teachers

Zone 3
Outside the classroom in whole school development

Five: Organizing and leading peer reviews of school practice
Six: Participating in school level decision-making

Zone 4
Between neighbouring schools in the community

Two: Providing curriculum development knowledge
Three: Leading in-service education and assisting other teachers

Figure 2.2: Grant's (2012) model of teacher leadership

2.3.4 ASSEMBLING OUR SPECTACLES

In order to explain how these three theories work together to provide the theoretical ‘spectacles’ through which I view this study, I will now elaborate on the links between these theories.

Distributed leadership is the lens that focuses on how context, roles, and relationships between staff members interrelate and simultaneously influence the leadership responsibilities and actions of each person within a school. This theory suggests that in order for schools to be effective, leadership should not be dependent on a person’s role or position within the school. Rather, it should be distributed to all members of the school community, including teachers, at different times and in suitable contexts. Social Identity Theory, however, provides another lens which illuminates and helps us understand the current status of distributed and teacher leadership in schools today, particularly in South Africa.

As I explained in Section 1 of this chapter, teacher leadership is currently being enacted in a very limited way within schools and is mainly confined to within the zone of the classroom. Two of the factors that contribute to this reality are: 1) principals who are unwilling to share leadership responsibilities with teachers and 2) fellow teachers who subscribe to an egalitarian ethos and therefore discourage their teacher colleagues from displaying any kind of behaviour that they would classify as leadership and, therefore, the responsibility of only those formally labelled as ‘school leaders’ (Eargle, 2013; Grant, 2006, 2008, 2012; Grant et al., 2010; Li, 2015). Social Identity Theory provides a way of understanding this reality because it explains that people base their identity upon the social group to which they believe they belong and then behave only in ways in which they believe members of that group are expected to behave. This, therefore, provides an explanation for why such groups or categories exist within schools and why these categories, such as ‘principal’ or ‘teacher’ seem to hold persistent power to restrict the behaviour of individual staff members. Because the traditional understanding of the leadership role of teachers has been confined to within the context of the classroom, as empirical evidence suggests, the majority of teachers only behave as leaders within their own classrooms.

In addition to helping us understand the reality of leadership behaviour in schools, Social Identity Theory also provides insight into how we may overcome the challenges associated with the implementation of teacher leadership in schools. If we want to change the leadership behaviours we see in school staff members, we must first change staff members’

understanding of the behavioural norms associated with ‘teachers’ as a group within the school. If we want to see teachers acting as leaders beyond the boundaries of their classrooms and into the wider school community, we have to change our understandings of the behavioural norms of teachers in terms of where and how they can act as leaders.

An important aspect that should also be considered in this is that of self-esteem. According to Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), once people have identified themselves to be part of a particular social ‘in-group’, they then discriminate against ‘out-groups’ in order to improve and maintain the status of their ‘in-group’ and therefore their own self-esteem. It is therefore important that leadership responsibilities are no longer one of the points of discrimination between ‘teachers’ and formal leaders such as the ‘principal’ or ‘senior management team’. Rather, leadership actions and responsibilities should be part of the expected behavioural norms or all of these social groups within a school environment.

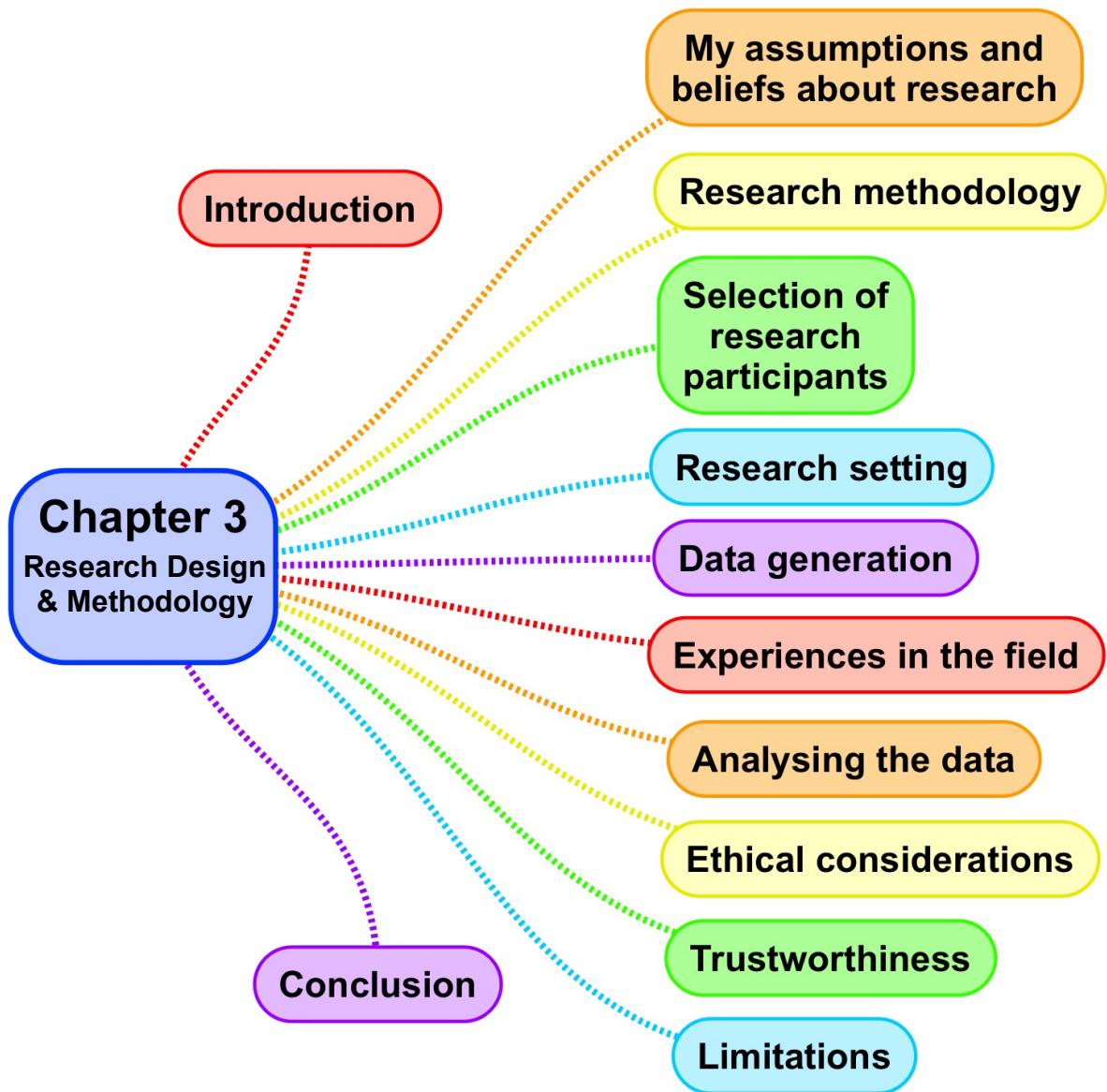
If the two theories I have explained, provide the lenses through which I view teacher leadership in this study, Grant’s (2012) Model of Teacher leadership provides the different practical zones or areas of school life in which teacher leadership can be viewed. In this way Grant’s (2012) Model of Teacher Leadership frames the specific leadership roles and behaviours that teachers can enact in different areas of school life and acts as the final component in the assembly of the theoretical ‘spectacles’ through which this study is viewed.

2.4 CHAPTER CONCLUSION

This chapter has been divided into two parts. In Section 1 I dealt with the dearth of current scholarship around the notion of teacher leadership and its practice in schools today – the primary focus of the current study. Although there is a vast corpus of literature that theoretically supports the notion of teacher leadership, empirical evidence, both internationally and locally, reveals that teacher leadership is still enacted in only a very limited way (Grant, 2006, 2008, 2012; Grant et al., 2010; Grant & Singh, 2009; Helterbran, 2010; Naicker & Somdut, 2014). The limited existing research suggests that some of the causes of this are: entrenched hierarchical leadership structures in school, lack of collaboration and shared vision, principals’ unwillingness to entrust teachers with authority to lead, an egalitarian ethos amongst teachers, teachers’ resistance to change and vague education policies (Grant, 2006, 2008, 2012; Grant et al., 2010; Grant & Singh, 2009; Helterbran, 2010; Naicker & Somdut, 2014). There are also significant gaps in the existing scholarship with regards to teacher leadership in other parts of the African continent and in

the private school context. There is therefore a need for a more rich understanding of the lived experiences of teacher leaders in South African schools which will hopefully be able to guide the development of transformation strategies. In addition, the empirical studies that have been conducted have taken on predominantly qualitative case study methodologies using interviews or quantitative surveys. The proposed research would therefore be able to add to the existing scholarship on teacher leadership as it will use a methodology that seems to be unique amongst the existing literature.

In Section 2 of this chapter I explained how Social Identity, distributed leadership theory and Grant's (2012) model of teacher leadership are used together in an integrated way to form the theoretical framework for this study. I used the metaphor of a pair of spectacles to explain the role that each of these theories play and how they interconnect with one another. In the next chapter I describe the research design and methodology that I chose to use in this study and explain my motivation for each of my methodological choices.



CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN & METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter of this dissertation I reviewed contemporary national and international academic literature, empirical studies and policies around teacher leadership and explicated the theoretical framework for the study. In this chapter I describe and explain the research design and methodology that was used in this study in order to explore the experiences of teacher leaders in public and private secondary schools. I came to select this particular research design and methodology through an iterative process involving discussions with my supervisor and critical friends as well as through my own reflection on these discussions and my experiences as a novice researcher.

3.2 MY ASSUMPTIONS AND BELIEFS ABOUT RESEARCH

This study is located within the interpretivist research paradigm and takes on a qualitative approach. I was drawn to using this particular research paradigm because I consider myself to be an interpretivist - this is how I, now, personally view the world, and in particular, the social world. Although my upbringing and undergraduate studies in Chemistry and Cell Biology initially lead to me adopting a positivist world view, I came to take on the interpretivist paradigm as a result of my postgraduate studies in Educational Leadership, Management and Policy. Through my upbringing and undergraduate studies I was lead to believe, in line with Auguste Comte's positivism, in a fixed dichotomy between right and wrong and that truth was singular and absolute (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011). I had, however, struggled at various times in my life to reconcile this viewpoint with phenomena which I had often observed in my everyday life. For example, I had noticed that different people interpret and have different understandings of similar, or even exactly the same, experiences.

Through discussions with my fellow students and lecturers, and my engagement with research literature, my eyes were opened to the notion of paradigms and the ways in which the different paradigms we adopt can guide how we view the world. My positivist understanding of truth was challenged and I came to accept that there are multiple truths that exist in the world (Cohen et al., 2011; de Vos, Strydom, Fouché & Delpont, 2012).

Consequently, the limitations of the positivist paradigm became clear to me and this led to my adopting the interpretivist paradigm as my own lens through which to view the world.

In addition, I believe that this paradigm is very suited to the aim of my research and my research puzzle. This study aims to explore and discover a rich, subjective understanding of each of the research participants' identities, how they enact teacher leadership and what they experience as enabling or constraining factors in their practice of teacher leadership. One of the key ontological assumptions of the interpretivist paradigm is the view that there are multiple truths or social realities that may exist (Cohen et al., 2011; de Vos, Strydom, Fouché & Delport, 2012). These social realities are subjective to each individual and uniquely constructed through their social interaction with the world around them (Cohen et al., 2011; de Vos et al., 2012). Furthermore, the epistemological assumptions of the interpretivist paradigm are that "knowledge is personal, subjective and unique" (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 7). From this viewpoint, these truths or realities may be experienced differently by different people and so there is value in trying to gain a rich understanding of how different individuals make meaning of their personal lived experiences by communicating and interacting with the research participants in order to understand and interpret the meanings they give to their life world (de Vos et al., 2012).

With regards to the research approach, I decided to use a qualitative approach because I believe this approach fits in suitably with the interpretivist paradigm that frames this study and, once again, with the aim of this study and its research puzzle. Whilst quantitative research tends to be confirmatory in nature, the nature of qualitative research is more exploratory and thus, theory follows and emerges from the research data rather than preceding the data collection process (Cohen et al., 2011). The exploratory nature of my research puzzle is thus best suited to a qualitative research approach.

3.3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study uses narrative inquiry as its research methodology and there are a number of factors that contributed to my decision to use this methodology for this study. I was first introduced to this methodology by my supervisor and what piqued my interest in pursuing this methodology was the challenge of learning about and using a methodology that it is very different to the case study methodology I used in my BEd Honours research. As I subsequently began to learn more about narrative inquiry, the relational nature of this methodology appealed to me. This is perhaps because, as a Christian, I believe that building

positive relationships with others is one of the most important things we can do as humans. The opportunity of forming relationships with my research participants rather than simply treating them as a ‘means to my research end’, was therefore appealing to me.

Another factor that contributed to my decision to use narrative inquiry was that I believe it fits in well with the aim of my study and the research paradigm and approach I have chosen to use. Narrative inquiry is a way of studying people’s lived experiences, and is a relational and recursive process of co-constructing stories for each of the research participants from their subjective perspectives (Clandinin, 2013). It is therefore a suitable methodology to use within an interpretivist paradigm and qualitative approach and is particularly useful in order to gain a deep understanding of how each of the research participants makes meaning of his/her reality and experiences.

Furthermore, narrative inquiry not only gives this study a unique perspective, different from the majority of other empirical studies on teacher leadership, but it also seems to be particularly relevant to the cultural milieu of the South African context. Empirical studies that have been conducted around teacher leadership have taken on predominantly qualitative case study methodologies using interviews or quantitative surveys. The narrative inquiry methodology therefore makes this study unique amongst this body of research. In addition, South Africa is a country with a rich and diverse African culture and heritage. The African philosophy of *Ubuntu*, however, is a common thread that runs throughout the many cultures in this country. *Ubuntu* is exemplified in phrases such as ‘*umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu*’, in other words, ‘a person depends on others just as much as others depend on him/her’ (Waghid, 2014, p. 57). This illustrates the interconnectedness and interdependence among people that is valued by the *Ubuntu* culture. One way in which this interconnectedness is built is through communication with one another – listening to and sharing our stories or experiences with one another. Sharing “stories [is] central to the lives of African societies” (Chilisa & Preece, 2005, p. 51) and thus the nature of the narrative inquiry methodology resonates well with this African philosophy.

3.4 SELECTION OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

When choosing my research participants I purposively selected one post-Level One teacher with no formal leadership role from each of the four schools that were included in my study. Purposive sampling is a sampling technique often used in qualitative studies where the researcher does not aim to make generalisations (Cohen et al., 2011). In purposive sampling

the researcher chooses the participants to be included in the sample based on certain characteristics that they possess which make them interesting or 'typical cases' in the context of the study (Cohen et al., 2011). I therefore chose participants who I felt were suitable in terms of being able to help me explore my research puzzle and who I felt were able to engage appropriately in the relational, rich, narrative nature of the methodology used in this study, namely narrative inquiry.

This study aims to understand how teacher leaders make meaning of their identity and their experiences as teachers and leaders within their school. It is therefore appropriate to generate the data from the teachers themselves. Furthermore, the reason I decided to select post-Level One teachers with no formal leadership roles was because the intention of the study is to explore the lived experiences of teacher leaders, not leaders who are in formal positions of authority. Given the relational, in-depth and storied nature of the narrative inquiry methodology, my selection of research participants was also based on my pre-existing relationships and rapport with them. I felt this would make them more likely to share openly and honestly with me during the interviews, and enable me to illicit rich, detailed data from them. I therefore selected two participants from the group of Masters students that I studied with and the other two from schools in which I have taught. Further criteria which influenced my selection of participants were their willingness to take part in the research, their availability to take part in data generation and the accessibility of their physical locations to myself, the researcher. Another reason that I chose these four as my research participants is that they are, by nature, open and reflective people who are able to articulate their thoughts well.

I gave the participants the following pseudonyms: Amaarah Hassin, Karen Williams, Jared Pillay and Steven Schmidt. Although I asked each of them if they would like to choose their own pseudonym, one they felt appropriate to who they are, they all declined to do so. Amaarah is an English teacher at Thakazani Secondary School. Although she is in her early forties, she has only been teaching for 6 years because she only recently completed her Bachelor of Education degree. The school in which she teaches is the first formal school teaching post in South Africa that she has taken up. Prior to becoming a teacher, she was primarily a homemaker. She is currently also in the process of completing the second year of her Masters degree in Educational Leadership, Management and Policy and so is familiar with the concept of teacher leadership and the research process.

Jared Pillay is also in the process of completing his Masters degree in Educational Leadership, Management and Policy. Through our studies together we also developed a good relationship with each other which I felt would have a positive effect on the openness with which he would speak with me in our interviews. Jared teaches Tourism in grades 10, 11 and 12 and EMS in grade 9 at Green Oak Secondary School. He has five years of teaching experience and has taught at his current school for 2 years.

My third participant, Karen Williams, is a grade 8 to Matric Core Mathematics teacher at Victriola College, a private school. She has been teaching for 31 years in government, private and technical schools and so has a wealth of experience to share. She has been teaching at Victriola College for 7 years, where I taught with her for 5 years. During our time teaching together we developed a positive relationship and I grew to know Karen as an honest, open person who is passionate about teaching and always willing to learn.

The last of my four participants, Steven Schmidt, is an English teacher at a private school called Hope College. This school was his first teaching post and he has been teaching there for 2 years. I taught there with him for a year and eight months and so got to know him on a personal level as a reflective, observant person who is able to articulate his thoughts well. As a result I felt he would be an appropriate person to select as a participant.

3.5 RESEARCH SETTING

This study took place in 2 private secondary schools, one former Black public school and one former Indian public school from January to December 2016 in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. These schools were selected because it was hoped that by contrasting the experiences from teacher leaders in private and public secondary schools, I would be able to gain further insight into understanding teacher leadership in different

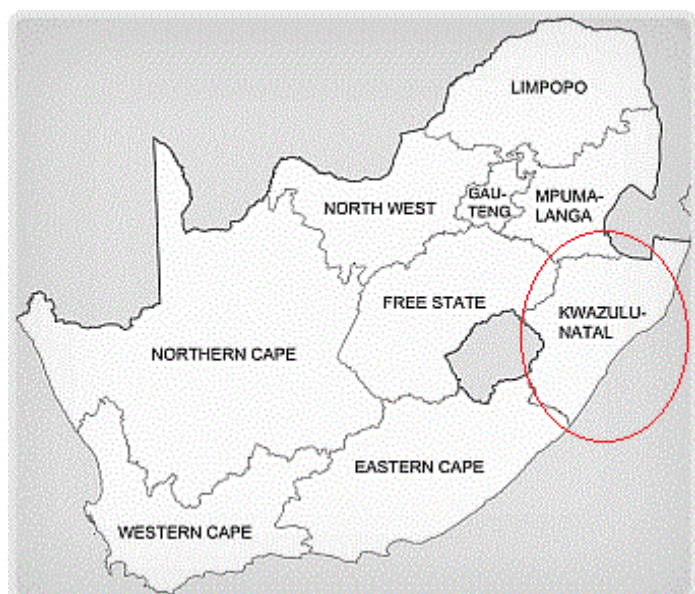


Figure 3.1: Map showing the province in South Africa in which this research took place.

contexts. This is particularly significant because, as I explained in Chapter 2, private schools are an under-research entity and not much is known about teacher leadership in these school

settings (see chapter 2, section 2.2, p. 27). In addition, these schools were sampled as a direct result of my participant selection and are the schools where the teachers who I selected to use in my study were teaching.

One of the private schools is a co-educational combined school (this school offers classes to both boys and girls from grade 000 to grade 12) situated in the upper highway area. The other private school is an all-girls combined school located in Durban. Both private schools are equipped with the best resources, have reputations for their academic excellence and are situated in urban, middle to upper income areas. Class sizes in these schools vary between approximately 15 and 30 pupils. The former Black public school is a co-educational, no-fee-paying, secondary school in a rural area in the Ugu Education District. Whilst the educational resources in this school are poor, this school has an average matric pass rate of 80% and is considered to be one of the best in its area. The learners that attend this school live in poverty and many come from child-headed households. The former Indian school is a co-educational, fee-paying secondary school in an urban area in the Umlazi Education District. This school is well-resourced compared to other public schools in the area due to funding partnerships with local businesses and the matric pass rate over the past 10 years has ranged between 85% and 95%. There is an average of 40 learners per class and the learners that attend this school come from low to middle income homes.

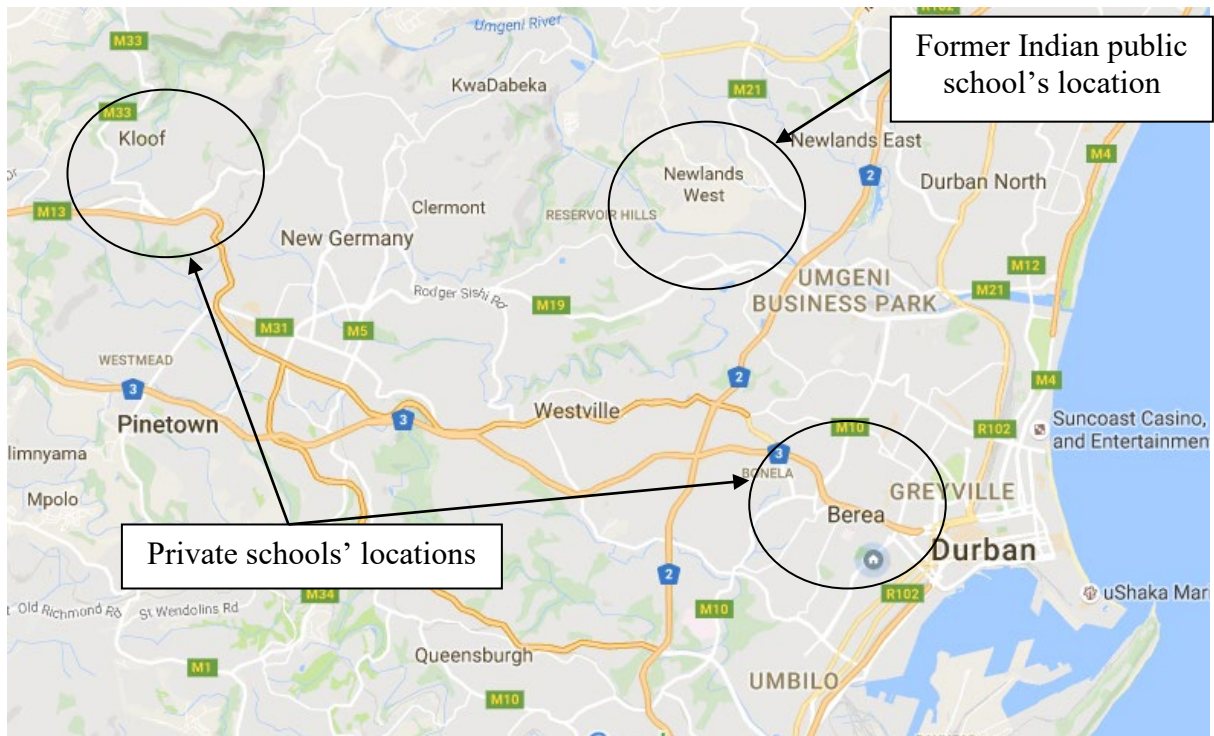


Figure 3.1: Map of the area around Durban where the two private schools and former Indian public school are found.

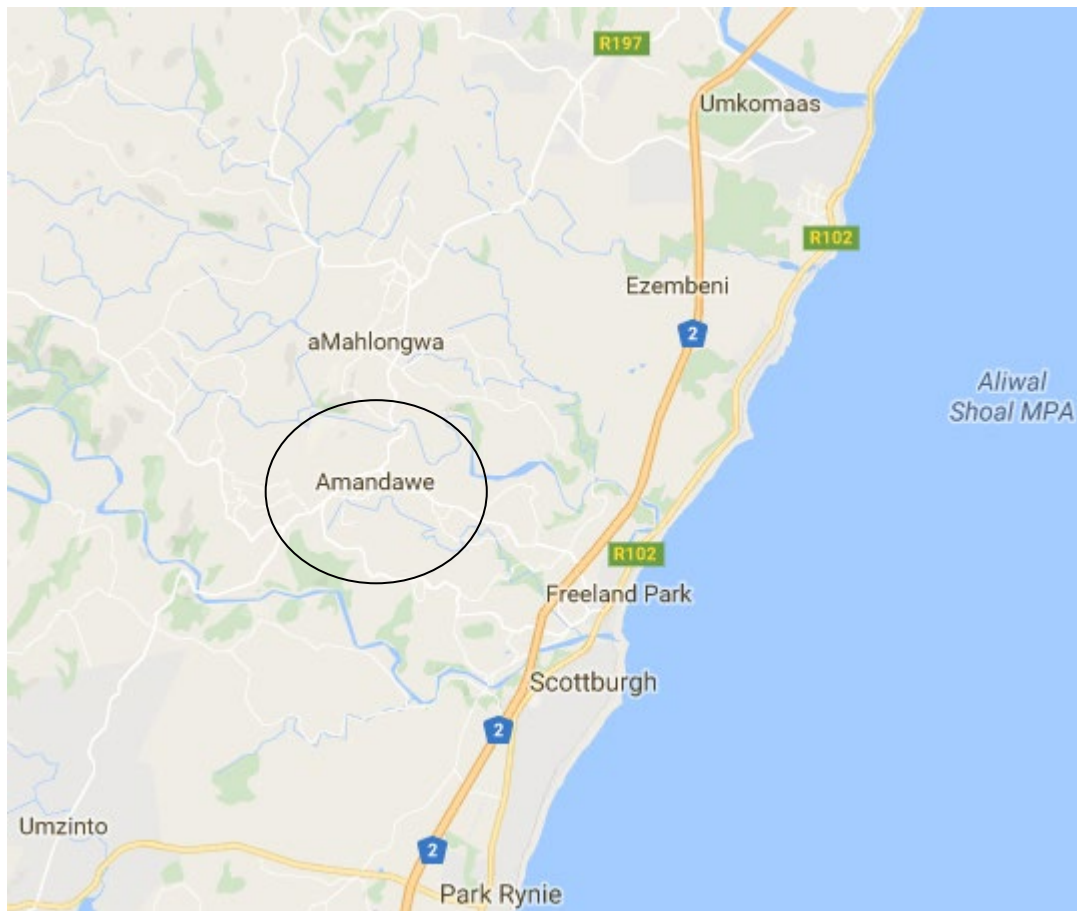


Figure 2.3: Map showing area in which the former Black public school is located.

3.6 DATA GENERATION

In order to generate the data for this study I asked my participants to tell me their stories regarding their identities and experiences of being teachers and leaders in a variety of ways: using narrative interviews, collage inquiry and artefact inquiry. I met with each of my participants for between 30 minutes and an hour and a half, once a week for 3 or 4 consecutive weeks. As far as possible I allowed each participant to choose the best time and place for me to meet them each week. I met Amaarah at her house on a Saturday or Sunday morning whilst Jared preferred to meet in the Research Commons at the university. I met with Karen in her classroom on Tuesday afternoons and Steven and I met in his classroom at school during his free periods. I did this in order to try and ensure that the context for the interviews would be a safe and convenient space in which they would feel comfortable to share openly and freely. I voice recorded our meetings as well as some of my thoughts and impressions about our meetings, which I recorded in private once the sessions were over.

3.6.1 NARRATIVE INTERVIEWS

I decided to use unstructured, face-to-face narrative interviews with my research participants (see Appendix 4, p. 141). Narrative interviews facilitate a space that encourages participants to share the stories that comprise of their lived experiences (Jovchelovitch & Bauer, 2000). Using this type of interview I was able to freely explore my participants' understanding of who they are and their lived experiences of being teacher leaders. Part of the value of narratives is the enhanced depth of meaning that can be elicited from them. Instead of being a mere list of individual events, stories by nature make links between events in terms of time and meaning (Jovchelovitch & Bauer, 2000). Stories are also characterised by a plot. It is the plot that frames the story and provides the temporal, social and physical context in which the events or sub-stories should be understood (Jovchelovitch & Bauer, 2000). As a result, the narrative as a whole is more than the sum of its parts and thus narrative interviews hold the potential to elicit data rich with coherence and meaning.

The unstructured nature of this type of interview provided opportunity for me, the researcher, to freely explore the unique opinions, ideas and perspectives of each participant in an unhindered manner (Ackroyd & Hughes, 1992). It also enabled me to be a part of co-constructing the research data as I was able to freely ask questions in order to verify and deepen my understanding of the stories that the participants were sharing with me (Cohen et al., 2011). This is an important aspect of the relational nature of the narrative inquiry methodology (Clandinin, 2013). I conducted this type of interview at each of the meetings that I had with my participants and digitally recorded each of these interviews. I then embarked on the process of transcribing the interviews as well as the thoughts and reflections that I recorded after some of the interviews. I initially chose to do the transcriptions myself because this provided another opportunity for me to listen to the interviews again and was a helpful step in the re-storying of these field texts during the first phase of data analysis. That being said, because of the substantial length of the interviews as well as the number of interviews that I had to transcribe, in the end I decided to outsource the balance of the transcriptions. I did, however, check the typed transcriptions by listening to the audio recordings whilst reading them before I embarked on my analysis of the data.

3.6.2 COLLAGE INQUIRY

In addition to the interviews, I decided to use Pinterest boards as an alternative form of collage inquiry - a way of making an online collection of pictures and words that were able to

stimulate memory, dialogue, and serve to record a creative set of data for each participant. Pinterest is a free website that requires registration to use, which acts as a personalised media platform (www.pinterest.com). Users can upload, save, sort, and manage images—known as pins—and other media content (e.g., videos and images) through online collections known as pinboards. These pinboards can be made private or public. For the purpose of this research the participants' pinboards were made private. I decided to use Pinterest boards as one of the data generation tools because, as far as I have read, this data generation tool is unique to the existing research around teacher leadership in South Africa. I hope that this cutting-edge data generation tool will be able to pioneer a new way of knowing in research of this nature.

Collage, along with other visual, creative approaches to qualitative research, is increasing in popularity and its reflective nature is particularly suited to the exploratory nature of my research puzzle (Butler-Kisber & Poldma, 2010). This is the case because it provides an alternative to the more linear forms of data generation, such as written thoughts or verbal stories, and can help make new or sub-conscious connections, ideas and understandings explicit (Butler-Kisber & Poldma, 2010). This, therefore, improved the richness of the data generated through the interviews because the pictures, symbols, sayings and metaphors collected by each participant on his/her Pinterest board helped the participant to describe and explain how he/she understands his/her identity and to tell his/her story (Clandinin, 2013; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Raht, Smith & MacEntee, 2009).

3.6.3 ARTEFACT INQUIRY

Similarly to the Pinterest board collages, I also used artefact inquiry to supplement the other data sources, and to enhance the richness of the data generated around these teacher leaders' identities and experiences. In order to do this I asked each of my participants to bring at least one but no more than three objects or photos of objects, which tell a story or mean something to them in terms of their identity as a teacher, the roles that they play as teachers and their experiences of being a teacher and acting as a leader. During our interviews I then asked them to speak to the meaning or story behind each of the objects that they brought with them.

We live our lives surrounded by objects and each of these objects carries certain meanings: denotative meanings that are universal, factual and collectively shared, and connotative meanings that are personal and unique to each individual and their history and experiences (Mitchell, 2011; Riggins, 1994). As Mitchell (2011, p. 50) proposes, artefacts “have the potential to evoke and carry with them autobiographical narratives”. In this way they are a

very useful tool for a study, such as mine, which takes on a narrative inquiry methodology. Whilst some of the artefacts acted merely as catalysts for memories and story-telling, others served as data or field texts themselves (Clandinin, 2013).

3.6.1 OUR MEETINGS

Because I had pre-existing relationships with each participant, I did not need to introduce myself at our first meeting. Instead I began by re-establishing my rapport with each of them through general conversation. I then explained my research interests to them as well as the methods that we would be using to aid the story telling process: Pinterest board collages and artefacts. For those participants who were unfamiliar with Pinterest and how to use it, I helped them to register on the website and showed them how to make their own Pinterest board in order to begin their collection of images, saying and words around their identities. I then asked them to begin to think about their identities and experiences as teachers and to take the next week to continue to add images to their Pinterest boards so that we could talk about them at our next meeting. The theme around which I asked them to create their Pinterest boards was *“Who am I as a person and teacher?”*. I also gave them typed instructions on how to use Pinterest to take home with them in case they needed guidance (see Appendix 5, p. 145) as well as some typed cues to stimulate and guide their thinking as they put their boards together in their own time (see Appendix 5, p. 147).

At our second meeting I asked my participants to speak to the images that they had collected on their Pinterest boards. I also asked questions that prompted them to tell me further details of their stories and experiences. I then asked them to, over the next week, collect at least one but no more than three artefacts or pictures of artefacts that had particular meaning to them in terms of their identity and experiences as a teacher. I also gave them a typed set of questions to take home with them to help stimulate and guide their reflection as they collected their artefacts (see Appendix 6, p. 149). This meeting was also voice recorded and I electronically captured and saved images of each of my participants’ Pinterest boards. At our third meeting I then asked them to speak to each of the artefacts that they had brought with them and took the opportunity to further explore certain aspects of each of the stories related to their artefacts.

3.6.5 COLLABORATIVE, REFLEXIVE NATURE OF DATA GENERATION

It is important to note that each of the processes of data generation that I used in my study were employed in a relational, reflexive way. Thus, the field texts were co-constructed by

both me and each of my participants through our on-going partnerships during the data generation process. Furthermore, these methods that were used to compose field texts were not implemented in a linear way but rather through an iterative process where I, as the researcher, went back to my participants multiple times to gather further explanations of certain aspects that emerged from their stories or to confirm my interpretation of the stories that they had told me.

3.7 EXPERIENCES IN THE FIELD

When I first entered the field to begin generating data and developing field texts I was not sure what kind of experience lay ahead of me. Whilst reflecting on one of my interviews with Jared I recorded the following:

I'm feeling really blessed to have the participants that I have at the moment because I think that they are really wonderful and easy to work with.

Fortunately for me, all four of my research participants were very willing, accommodating and cooperative throughout the research process and this made my experience in the field largely positive. In addition, whilst the relational nature of narrative interviews and the creativity of collage and artefact inquiry appealed to me and made me excited to begin my data generation, initially I was unaware of how inspiring and uplifting my experience in the field would be. This is evident in the following thoughts that I recorded:

On reflecting after speaking to Karen after her second session yesterday and Jared as well, it's just struck me how inspiring this whole process has been for me as a teacher to find out about their stories and what's influenced them as a teacher and what inspires them as well.

I found that hearing the stories of other teachers, the enthusiasm with which they spoke about teaching despite the struggles that they face and their commitment to providing education of the best quality to their pupils, very encouraging. Their passion was infectious and I left each interview feeling renewed and refreshed.

I also observed that for my participants, telling their stories and experiences seemed to be a therapeutic and empowering process. As Connelly and Clandinin (1990, p. 4) suggest, "when both researchers and practitioners tell stories of the research relationship, they have the possibility of being stories of empowerment". It was very satisfying for me to witness this

empowerment as Karen's view of herself as a leader changed over the time that we spent together. At first she made comments like:

I am very low level in the school in terms of influence.

Then later, she said to me:

So ooh! Erin, I have an influence!

A feeling of affirmation and empowerment is evident in my reflection on one of my interviews with Karen, as follows:

For the first time ever she felt that by sharing with me she was blowing her own trumpet and she said she never does that, she never blows her own trumpet and so she felt weird about it.

It was encouraging to me that Karen felt that she was being heard, so much so that it felt strange to her and as if she was boasting. Part of the aim of narrative inquiry is to create an environment in which the research participants' voices are heard (Clandinin, 2013; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). I found, however, that one of the challenges that I faced was that some of the participants took some time to get used to formulating and telling their stories. This could, perhaps, be because they are not used to telling their experiences and perspectives in such a manner, and therefore needed more support and encouragement from me in order to do so. This meant that in order to ensure I facilitated the kind of "relationship in which both practitioners and researchers feel cared for and have a voice with which to tell their stories" (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, p. 4), the interviews tended to be quite long; some up to an hour and a half. This meant that the task of transcribing the interviews became quite large and significantly slowed the good progress that I was making with my research up until that point. After transcribing 3 interviews as well as the reflections that I had recorded, I therefore decided to outsource the transcriptions in order to help speed up the process.

As I explained in section 3.6 (see p. 45) of this chapter, I used Pinterest as an alternative way of practically carrying out collage inquiry. Because, as far as I am aware, this is a new and unique way of doing collage inquiry, during the interviews with my participants I asked them what their experiences were of using this online platform. From their responses it is evident that the participants found Pinterest generally easy to use and easily accessible. This can be seen in the following exchange that I had with Amaarah:

Me: How did you find putting the board together? Was it difficult?

Amaarah: Oh no. Absolutely not. You taught me and then my son helped me with it also and then no, it was absolutely fine... I could also do it on my phone. It's just that I don't have wifi on the phone all the time. So that was fine.

Me: And was it difficult to find images or...?

Amaarah: No, no, when I just, I just like out of the blue put in key words and it came out like that.

In addition, because Pinterest is easily accessible, both as an app on one's cellphone or on the Pinterest website, the participants were able to put their collage (in the form of their Pinterest board) together in their own time. This point is illustrated in Jared's reflections.

I did it like little by little. Ja, every time I thought of something then I would try and search for it on the Pinterest app. Sometimes I couldn't find something appropriate to it so I had to search for it on Google and I just saved... It was a very nice task.

This means that participants were afforded the time needed to reflect deeply on their identities, something that they may have found difficult to do under the time constraints of more traditional forms of collage inquiry. In addition, rather than being limited to the images found in a few magazines, they were able to select images, words and quotations from anywhere on the internet. These two characteristics of using Pinterest suggest that using this method of data generation can create the opportunity for very rich, descriptive and creative data to be generated in an innovative way which is, perhaps, more relevant to today's increasingly technology-saturated society.

3.8 ANALYSING THE DATA

As is fitting for narrative inquiry, I analysed the data (field texts) that were generated through the narrative interviews, collage inquiry and artefact inquiry in two different stages. In the first level of data analysis I, in collaboration with my participants, synthesised the field texts that were generated into narrative stories or 'research texts' (Clandinin, 2013; Polkinghorne, 1995). This synthesis process is referred to as 're-storying' or 'narrative analysis' where field texts are configured into stories with a beginning, middle and an end using a plot

(Polkinghorne, 1995). I did this by reading and re-reading the field texts and examining and re-examining the Pinterest board collages and artefacts that my participants created and shared with me. I also made an intentional attempt to, as Clandinin (2013) suggests, address the three dimensions of the inquiry space: temporality, sociality and place. I did this in order to help me come to a deeper and more complex understanding of the stories and experiences that were relevant to my research puzzle (Clandinin, 2013). This process, therefore, helped me to choose which stories to integrate and to foreground in the narrative research texts.

In the second stage I analysed the narrative stories or ‘research texts’ that I had written together with each of my participants. In contrast to what he refers to as ‘narrative analysis’, Polkinghorne (1995) refers to this process as ‘analysis of narratives’. During this inductive process of analysis I looked for common plotlines or threads that seemed to emerge from the narratives and that resonated across different narrative accounts (Clandinin, 2013; Polkinghorne, 1995).

I also used my theoretical framework, consisting of SIT, distributed leadership theory and Grant’s (2012) model of teacher leadership, as the lens or ‘spectacles’ through which I viewed and made sense of these common resonant threads. When I addressed the first question of my research puzzle, I used SIT in particular in order to make sense of the complex nature of my participants’ identities. This theory was most appropriate to use in this part of the analysis as it helps us to understand how people come to an understanding of who they are in relation to their social world. When addressing the second question of my research puzzle, I drew on Grant’s (2012) model of teacher leadership, and its associated zones and roles in which teachers can act as leaders. Using this model, along with my understandings of distributed and teacher leadership, I identified the different ways in which my participants acted as leaders in their school communities. Lastly, in order to address the third question of my research puzzle, I used both distributed leadership and Grant’s (2012) model of teacher leadership to help me identify emergent themes from the narratives that constitute either barriers or enabling factors to the enactment of teacher leadership.

3.9 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

I applied for and was granted ethical clearance from the HSSREC Research Office (see Preliminary Pages, p. ii) and permission to conduct this research from the KZN Department of Education (see Appendix 1, p.135) and the school principals (see Appendix 2, p. 136). In order to adhere to the ethical principle of autonomy I ensured that I made clear to participants

that their participation in this study was completely voluntary and issued each participant with an informed consent letter (Cohen et al., 2011). This letter provided participants with detailed information about the purpose and goals of the study, how the study would be conducted, what would be expected of them as participants and what possible advantages and disadvantages they, as participants, might experience (see Appendix 3, p.138).

In terms of the ethical principles of non-maleficence and beneficence, I made sure that my interactions with my participants and the types of questions that I asked them during our meetings not only did not cause them any harm or detrimental emotional stress, but that our interactions worked towards their empowerment as they reflected on their identities and experiences as teachers and their voices were heard (de Vos et al., 2012). I also had to be attentive to the issue of relational ethics throughout the entire narrative inquiry process – from shaping my research puzzle to developing the final research text (Clandinin, 2013). For me, this meant that I had to ensure that in each of my encounters with my participants, I treated them with dignity and respect, listened empathetically and without judgment to each of their stories and considered what my role in our relationships with one another and society should be with regards to the notions of equity and social justice (Clandinin, 2013; Ellis, 2007). It was also important that I, at all times, respected their authority as co-authors of the field texts and final research texts and that they felt that their stories were accurately and respectfully portrayed (Clandinin, 2013). Furthermore, because “as narrative inquirers, we become part of participants’ lives and they become part of ours” (Clandinin, 2013, p. 30), it was important that I, at all times, abided by the relational ethics that guide our everyday social relationships and was not tempted to forfeit these ethical practices in order to foreground a research agenda that I might have (Ellis, 2007). In narrative inquiry we should not view our encounters with our participants as a ‘means to an end’. The relationships that we build with our participants must be honoured at all times (Clandinin, 2013; Ellis, 2007).

In addition, I made every effort to protect my participant’s anonymity by using pseudonyms for them, their schools and any people or organisations to which they may have referred in our discussions. Furthermore, this research study makes a contribution to national and international debates by providing some insights into improving teacher leadership in South Africa. It is my hope that understanding how teachers understand their identities and their leadership role and the factors that they find to be enabling or constraining to their ability to act as leaders within their school environment, might deepen our insights about the

phenomenon of effective school leadership. Such insights may assist policy makers, school leaders and teachers at schools to improve their school's performance.

3.10 TRUSTWORTHINESS

One of the reasons I was first attracted to narrative inquiry as a methodological approach to my study was that, in my new and limited understanding at the time, I felt that this methodology had potential to yield findings which would be very trustworthy. From my perspective it seemed that the relational, co-constructive nature of the data generation in this methodology would help minimise researcher bias and what Opie (1992) refers to as 'appropriation' of the data.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) describe four criteria which can be used to develop the trustworthiness of qualitative research: credibility, dependability, confirmability and transferability. As the researcher, I have attempted to enhance the credibility of this study by describing my experiences throughout the research process and making explicit the reasons behind the decisions that I have made throughout the study (Cope, 2014). Clandinin (2013) suggests that every narrative inquiry should begin with the researcher inquiring into her own personal story. This process enabled me to illuminate the personal motivations, goals, prejudice and biases which could be influencing my research. In addition, I have attempted to improve the credibility of this study by keeping a detailed audit trail of the data that was generated and by continually verifying the field texts, research texts and findings with the participants, which is an essential part of the narrative inquiry methodology (Clandinin, 2013; Cope, 2014; Tobin & Begley, 2004).

Opie (1992, p. 52) warns that in the analysis and interpretation of interview data (which occurs before, during and after an actual interview), one can "appropriate" the data to the researcher's interests, potentially silencing or excluding other "significant experiential elements" which may be contrary to the researcher's interpretation. In other words, there is potential for bias to occur in interpretation because the interviewer and interpreter's agenda and objectives of the research may influence the interpretation of the data, thus distorting the subjective reality which the interviewee has expressed. In order to minimise the influence of researcher bias when establishing the research findings and to enhance confirmability, I have clearly described how findings were established, supported them with rich quotations and also involved my research participants in the development of the final research texts in order to ensure that they felt that their realities were being accurately represented (Cope, 2014).

Whilst it was not my intention in this study to make generalisations about teacher leadership, I attempted to strengthen the transferability of the research findings in line with existing literature (Cope, 2014), by providing detailed descriptions of the research context and the participants themselves (see Chapter 3, section 3.4, p. 40 and section 3.5, p. 42). Lastly, the dependability of this study was enhanced by checking my decision-making and interpretations with my supervisor and critical friends group throughout the research process. My critical friends group met together with our supervisor, usually on fortnightly basis, in order to present our work to one another and to receive one another's critique and input. I found this process to be invaluable as their perspectives were instrumental in improving the quality of this research project.

Finally, in order to enhance the credibility and rigour of my study, I employed the notion of crystallisation to my work (Tobin & Begley, 2004; Tracy, 2010). Crystallisation, a concept introduced by Richardson (2000) as an alternative to the notion of triangulation, is more suitable for the interpretivist paradigm in which I am working. This is because, as Richardson (2000) argues, triangulation assumes that there is a particular, fixed perspective to be confirmed whereas crystallisation acknowledges the multiple realities which exist around a particular experience or phenomenon (Tobin & Begley, 2004; Tracy, 2010). Crystallisation can be accomplished through the use of multiple methods of data generation and various types of data in order to enhance the completeness and rigour of the study (Richardson, 2000; Tobin & Begley, 2004; Tracy, 2010). In this study I did this by using narrative interviews along with collage inquiry and artefact inquiry in order to generate data in the form of words, pictures and symbols. This created opportunities for different facets of the phenomenon and different perspectives of the participants' experiences and understandings to be explored and therefore enabled me to gain a more nuanced understanding of the complexities around my participants' lived experiences of being teacher leaders.

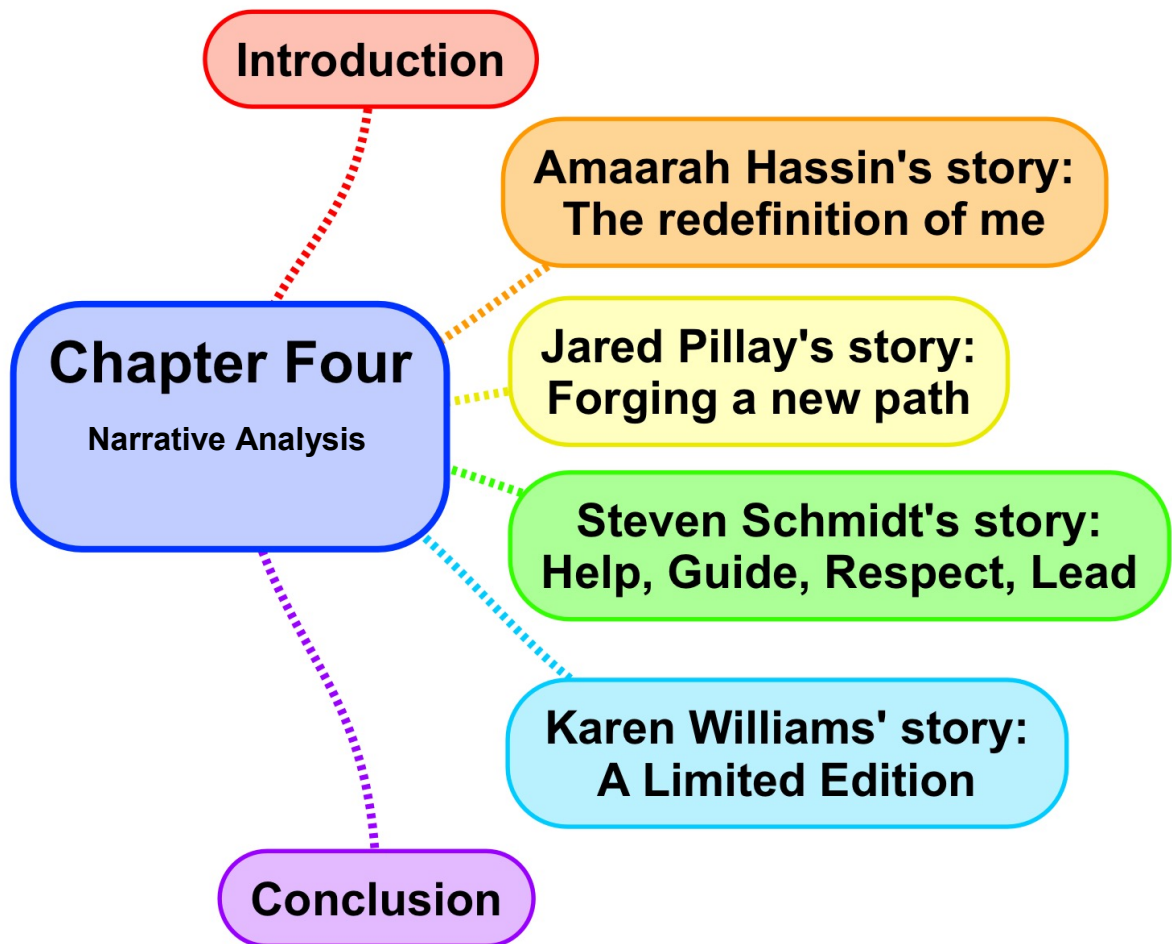
3.11 LIMITATIONS

This study took place in two private schools and two public schools in KwaZulu-Natal only. The participants were limited to one post-level one teacher from each of the four different schools. As a result of the qualitative approach taken as well as the minimal number of participants, the findings of this study cannot be generalised to other contexts. This, however, is not the intention of the study. Another relevant limitation to this study is my relative inexperience in conducting research of this kind, facilitating interviews and analysing data. I

attempted to minimise this limitation through frequent, in-depth discussions with my supervisor and critical friends and by reflecting on how my inexperience may affect the research process at all stages.

3.12 CONCLUSION

In this chapter I delineated the research design and methodology that I used throughout this study in order to explore the lived experiences of teacher leaders in public and private secondary schools. I attempted to take a reflexive approach to this by providing detailed explanations of the reasoning behind each of my methodological choices. The next chapter contains the storied narratives (research texts) that were co-constructed by me and my research participants using the field texts that I generated through narrative interviews, collage inquiry and artefact inquiry.



CHAPTER FOUR

NARRATIVE ANALYSIS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In Chapter Three I explicated the research design and methodology used in this study. I also gave reasons for my methodological choices and transparently described my reflections on my experiences during data generation. In this chapter I present my first level of data analysis: the stories of each of my four research participants. These stories were developed in collaboration with the participants through a process of re-storying. I present Amaarah Hassin's story first because I found her story to be exceptionally captivating, inspiring and rich. She was also the first participant with whom I completed my interviews and transcriptions. Jared's story then follows as he also works in a public school setting. I then present Steven's story next, followed by Karen's story to conclude the chapter.

4.2 AMAARAH HASSIN'S STORY: THE REDEFINITION OF ME

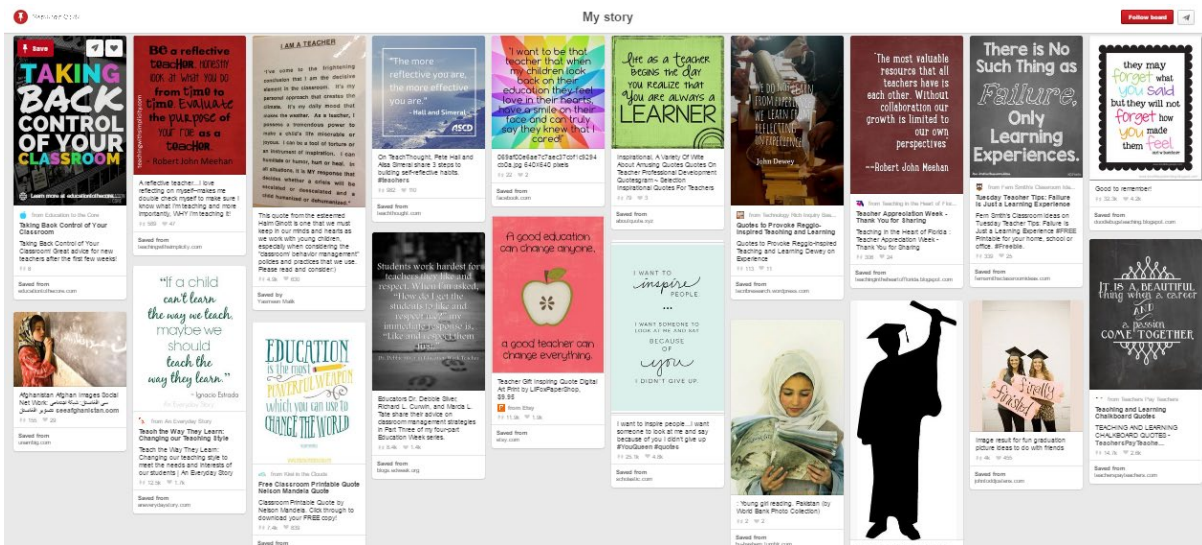


Figure 4.1: Amaarah's Pinterest Board

From nobody to somebody

Being a Muslim girl in a Muslim family my life was all about “I must always wear my head scarf, I must always pray my Salah (the prayer that we Muslims read five times a day), I must respect my parents” and my entire early life, I actually didn't have my own personality. I didn't know how to define myself. I didn't know

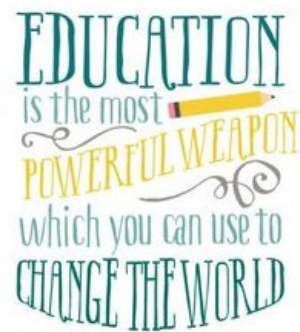


Figure 4.2: Quote from Amaarah's pinboard

who I was. It was all about parents and about home. I was nobody.

As a child I did not have any educated role models in my life. Nobody in my family had ever gone to grade 12 and so, at home, I was not exposed to literature but when I did get to school I really enjoyed it. It was interesting to me. Even a tattered old book was important to me and I would read it just because it was English. By the time I reached grade 8 I was starting to do well at school. My teachers were happy because when I was at school I would love to write



Figure 4.3: Image from Amaarah's pinboard

on the board and to mentor the other learners. Sometimes when the teachers could not get through to the learners, the learners used to tell the teachers, “Tell Amaarah to do it”. I was becoming popular. People knew me, teachers knew me. They were happy with me. From being a ‘nobody’ I was finally becoming a ‘somebody’.

A sudden full stop

Then half way through grade 8 I was taken out of school. My dad owned a shop that sold fabric remnants – a type of haberdashery – and this shop was our livelihood. One day my mum came to me and said, “Your dad is ill. He has diabetes.” I still remember her words ringing in my ears. She said, “Your dad is too ill to manage at the shop on his own. I cannot cope with helping in the shop and running our home, so you have to leave school and help him there.” Suddenly there was a full stop in my life. On the one hand I was reaching my peak at school and my teachers were so good, but on the other hand I loved my dad. Although I knew that no one else in my family had received their Matric and I had a chance of getting that Matric, I saw how he was struggling with his diabetes and I wanted to please him. And so I agreed to leave school and I went to help my dad. I was like his right hand and he depended on me but once again. I was a nobody in the world. I was doing for others and not for myself.

My second chance

Once I got married my husband and I together with our two children lived in a flat near the East coast. From our flat I would see the young boys and girls with their school bags walking up and down the street. And I sighed and said “My God, I didn’t have that. Look how cute they look. They look adorable. They are a picture of education and what education is. It’s supposed to help you socialise. It’s supposed to develop you and everybody should get an

education, even me, I should have gotten that education. And look at that, they are doing their matric, my God! And me in my rags drying clothes with my kids just going to school.” Then one day my husband and I had this conversation:

Husband: Did you see that there are older people in that college?
 Amaarah: Ja.
 Husband: Why don't you do your matric?

Oh my God! I was beyond words. I could not talk for that day. It was a day of contemplation. What did he say? How can I do my matric? I left fifteen years ago. How can I just do a matric? I left in grade 8. I don't know if I can do this.

The first day that I went to New Light College in 2005, I was completely mesmerised by everything. I was like every adult person there – intimidated, because we had left school 10 or 15 or 20 years ago. I was just shocked. I said “I'm not going to make it. I'm not going to make it. I last went to school so long ago.” Despite my fears, after two years of consistent hard work, I got my Matric. I graduated with a distinction and was honoured by the college as “Student of the Year for 2006”. They published an article about me in the local newspaper and gave me and my family a holiday



Figure 4.5: An image from Amaarah's pinboard.

to the coast as a gift. Suddenly I realised that this is how other people live their lives. They achieve and they go on holidays. I then decided that Matric was not enough for me. I didn't want holidays or the luxurious lives of others, but I wanted education. I wanted to cover up for all those

days that I sacrificed school while others got educated. I had to go further.



Figure 4.4: One of Amaarah's artefacts – a newspaper article about her achievement as Student of the Year.

A hunger for more

When I finally graduated with my BEd with a distinction yet again, I could not believe that I actually wore that graduation hat. It was so unbelievable. As soon as I qualified as a BEd I was placed in Thakazani Secondary School but the craving I had for education spurred me on to do my Honours in education while working. I did all 5 modules in one year and that made me realise, "I can do this". Then people told me that I could go on to do my Masters. I was completely taken aback by the title of 'Masters'. I had to have it. I just had to have it. I had to have more and so I registered for Masters.

The odd one out

When I was told that I had been placed in Thakazani, I couldn't even pronounce the name. I was very worried because it was a black school, I'm the only Indian in the whole school, and there were so many learners in each class. The first day that I arrived at Thakazani the principal tried to convince me not to take the position by telling me how big each of the classes were, but it didn't bother me. I needed money. I needed to find myself. This was where I could find myself. I needed an identity. I had lost identity. I needed to find it again and I was prepared to fight.

It was not easy though. When I started teaching there I used to drive home from school crying, 'God, I'm not going to make it. I'm an Indian, they are black children. They are not going to understand me, and me them'. I felt hopeless because I could not take control of my classroom. I felt that my BEd had not qualified me enough to deal with the challenges I was facing, like disciplining these learners from a culture unknown to me.

My school has, what I call, a mocking culture. The learners are very quick to mock you and I

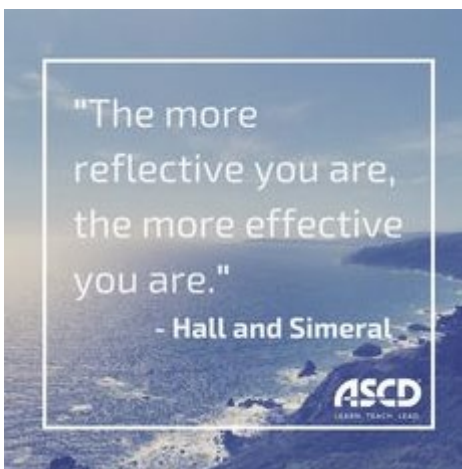


Figure 4.6: An image from Amaarah's pinboard

was the target of a lot of mocking at that time because I could not speak Zulu. They, along with my colleagues at school, would also hound me with questions whenever I would wear my scarf around my neck. As per my religion, I am supposed to wear my hijab (headscarf), but I knew that would be too much of a culture shock for my Black learners and it would make teaching them very difficult for me. I was always explaining my culture because I was, and I still am, the only odd one out. It was tiring because I was still

getting used to the school. I didn't need to be interrogated every moment. Then I took the hijab off my head and used a neck scarf around my neck but again, the questions came. This went for quite a few months but then I started reflecting and asking myself 'what am I doing wrong?'

The odd one in

Even though it's not acceptable in my culture for a married woman like me to go out without a scarf, finally I decided not to wear my hijab at school anymore and what a difference it made! I still wear my hijab in my own community and with my family but, for the sake of education and getting through to my learners, I have moved away from my own culture, and assimilated into theirs. I love and am proud of my culture and religion, and I cling onto it. I suppose removing my headscarf has been one of my greatest sacrifices, but I wish there could have been another way. I even tried my best to learn their language to stop the mockery!

Learning Zulu has also helped me to gain control of my classes. The mocking has lessened and my learners now just do their work because they understand that I am now like all their other teachers. I'm not the odd one out who they can talk about and who they can trouble because I don't understand them. They now know that they cannot take advantage of me. Another thing that has helped me is that I sometimes take a stick with me into the classroom. The reason I do this is because all the other teachers do it. I don't even use the stick. I sometimes hit the desk, but I have to hold the stick, because the stick is a symbol of discipline for them in their culture. When I take my stick to the class it means 'she means business'. It's like the stick has such a control over them. So I have had to depend on the stick to scare them at times, but they know that I would never use the stick on them.

My mentor at school has also helped me to understand my learners better. She taught me a lot of things that were not book knowledge. She taught me cultural knowledge. I now understand their home culture and the responsibilities they have as girls and boys. I understand where they are coming from. This has enabled me to think of more effective ideas when it comes to teaching. For example, through my reflections and getting to know the learners better, I have moved away from using the chalkboard. I realised that when I write on the board the learners are free to talk and laugh and do whatever they want to do. Then I decided to give them printed worksheets instead of writing the work on the board. Now, when I walk into the classroom I have worksheets prepared for them and I start passing them out. They do not have a chance to talk because I am looking at them the entire time with a stick in my hand.

I've realised that disciplining them into being quiet and co-operative during a lesson is the secret to success.

Learning isiZulu not only helped my relationships with my learners but it also helped me to form better relationships with my colleagues. We are very much closer now. They say "Amaarah, you are just like us now" and they have even given me the name Thandiwe – the loved one. The more you feel like them and with them, the more they make teaching easy. They make your life easy and they become better friends.

It has taken 5 years for me to get used to the culture within my school and to finally feel a part of it. I now feel that all the learners love me. I've got the worst learners to actually warm up to me. My experience has shown me that culture brings us together or tears us apart. It's the culture. It's not the learner or the teacher. It's not the fact that you are Zulu and I am Indian. It's the culture within the school. So I have tried to absorb their culture but, at the same time, not let go of my own. I think my greatest struggle as a teacher was the culture. I had to break down that barrier, and teaching happened later.

More than delivering the syllabus

Now that I have gained the respect of my learners and taken back control of my classroom, I also don't feel that delivering the syllabus, book knowledge, is everything. I feel that I want to develop them psychologically and emotionally, as human beings and as citizens. Everything is all about love, it's about emotion. I believe if they've got that they can learn, so whenever I'm teaching I often hug my learners, if it's a female learner, smile or show them love in some way. And now, if they have any problems they actually approach me because they know I will help them and I believe that this has made them respect me more.

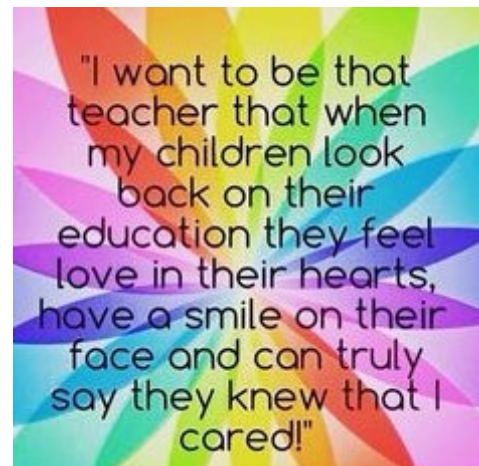


Figure 4.7: A quote from Amaarah's pinboard

I also try to be an inspiration to them. I try to be inspirational with my pep talks with them. And I use emotion. I engage with them emotionally because emotion always gets to them. They often need moral pep talks because of the home backgrounds that they come from. Their parents are often away from home or absent in their lives and perhaps don't have the time to morally develop their children. Many of them are not taught morals at home and so

they must be given moral lectures all the time. And then they will work towards that. It's the only way that they will stay disciplined and human.

Develop me!

One thing that still makes me different from the other teachers I work with but which has helped me to develop as a teacher over the last six years, is that I am not afraid to ask questions. I am humble enough to say "I don't know this", but I find that the Head of Departments (HOD) in my school do not develop their subordinates. Perhaps it's because they know that most teachers don't really want to learn. In my first days at my school I always wondered why the others did not ask questions. When I asked them why they said, "You see, in our culture, when you ask questions like you don't know, it means that you are inferior. People think you don't know. You're unqualified." Nevertheless, I said "No, even if people think that of me I'm not going to stop because it's the only way to develop." I am different from most of the other teachers. The other day when I was talking to one of the senior English teachers at my school he said, "We remember you, Hassin. We can never forget you, because you were the one always asking and doing. Asking and doing. Whenever you had a problem in the classroom you would come back and ask." My constant questioning of both the other teachers and my learners has not only made me a better leader in my classroom but it has also helped me to grow my subject knowledge and expertise.

One day my HOD was marking paper 3 and in the last three years I have not had much experience with paper 3 so I went to her while she was marking her papers. I went to her, sat on her table and, jokingly, I said "Develop me." Then I said "Listen, you're marking. Please tell me: how are you following the rubric?" So she showed me. I have finally come to learn that if I want to be developed I must approach her and she will teach me. But I can't afford to wait for the day when she is going to come to us. She never comes to us. She never develops us in any meeting. I've realised that I need to be proactive. It's all about you. Nobody is going to come and develop you. You've just got to develop on your own. You've got to do it on your own.

Spreading my wings

In the past, I was given a small leadership position where I realised leadership is not easy. The Deputy Principal gave me the position of 'block in charge'. He said, "You have got to make sure that this block is quiet. There are four classes there. You need to make sure that the teachers get into their classrooms and stay with their learners." Unfortunately with our teachers, as soon as they know that there's a change in the timetable they assume that they are

free, and when they learnt that I was appointed ‘block in charge’, they believed that I should take care of all four classes. I could not handle it on my own, so I looked at the timetable and saw that Mrs Mchunu was supposed to be in one of the classes. I went to find her in the staff room and we had the following conversation:

Amaarah: Mam, please could you get into the class? Just sit there please, because I’m trying to control the block but there are four classes without a teacher and I am struggling. I know the other teachers are busy in the hall. You are the only one that is available. Can you please get in? Just keep them quiet. Please help me out?

Mrs Mchunu: I’m not coming because it’s not my period.

Amaarah: Mam, this is not me saying this. This is what I’m supposed to do. I’ve been told from higher authority that if you are meant to be in that class, I’m supposed to ask you to be there. Can you please be there then? Not thinking that I am saying this but thinking that somebody else may come and ask you. I’m sort of trying to save you from that because your name is on the timetable.

Mrs Mchunu: Let them come and ask me.

Because I did not have a formal leadership position, it was difficult for them to accept my authority, so I had to go back there and try to keep the peace on my own while Parliamentarians were at our school that day! I just did her job for her because she was just not prepared to come up. I did it and it was fine, but what I am trying to say is that I feel a sense of competition and intimidation from some teachers. That’s why, in the past I was afraid to take leadership positions. I was afraid they would say “You know nothing and now you are trying to be something. You’re trying to be everything.” I was afraid they might think I was showing off. I don’t want to come across as a show-off. That’s why I always let the other teachers do things and I always make sure to congratulate them and make them feel good. But I no longer care about that anymore. No matter what people think of me I will do what I need to do for my learners. I think I’m going to get into a new endeavour in the third term this year. I want to start a debate programme in my school. I want to have my own baby.

I want to build something. And now I am free to spread my wings and I'm going to do it without any hesitation.

4.3 JARED PILLAY'S STORY: FORGING A NEW PATH

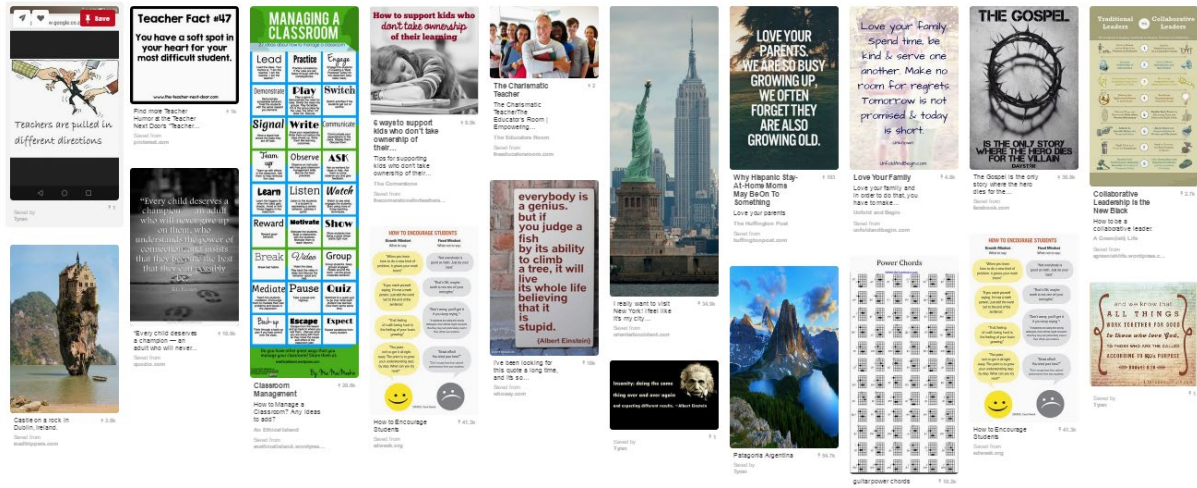


Figure 4.8: Jared's Pinterest Board

Me and my family

The Indian culture is very family orientated. My wife, two sons and I still stay with my parents. We made the decision to stay once we got married because my father nearly got hijacked outside our home and my parents have done a lot for us over the years. I grew up as the youngest of three siblings and my parents were very loving and also very strict. My dad was in the navy for 19 years and, you know military men, they can be strict and orthodox about everything. There is no such thing as negotiating. I think they were just trying to raise us up in a good biblical way. When I think back, my father was really strict, especially when it came to achieving what you were supposed to achieve, but he softened up once he left the Navy when I started high school. The Bible



Figure 4.9: A quote from Jared's pinboard

influenced my parents a lot and I think the Bible really influenced and shaped me as a person too. It has shaped my character, my behaviour, even the way I lead in the classroom today.

From a joke to my journey

I was the only one out of my entire family who actually pursued education. It started off as a joke. In grade 10 when our teacher, Miss Naidoo, asked us what we wanted to be when we finished school, the first thing that came into my mind was, “I like to teach people.” And it started off as a joke because at that age no one in school wanted to be a teacher. I think it planted a seed in my mind though, and as I began to think about it the more I realised that it was actually something that I would like to do. Then in grade 12 when we filled in our career assessment forms to choose what we wanted to study, even though we could put down 6 choices, the only choice I wrote down was teaching.

When I finally got accepted to study at Edgewood, I said “No, this is an opportunity for me”. My parents grew up in Mooi River and, because they were very poor, they didn’t get to complete matric. Even though my dad’s dream was to become a lawyer, he had to leave school in grade 11. I think that’s what drove me to study and that’s why my parents pushed for me to go to university as well, so I took the opportunity and I worked to the best of my ability. That’s how much I wanted to succeed, and from failing my first assignment I ended up getting an A for my last assignment. In the end I became the first one to graduate in my family.

The beginning of my journey as a teacher

After I graduated my first job was at Douglasdale College in 2012. It was quite a nice school but it was like I was caught in the middle of everything. The whole school was really declining badly and the principal embezzled a lot of money. I was there for about five months and then I got another job at Frontier High School in Asherville. I taught there for about 2 years until I just got kind of fed up with everything. I liked the school and I loved the teaching but we worked in very hard conditions. We didn’t have many free periods so we’d become physically exhausted all the time. Eventually I decided to go and teach in Saudi Arabia and it was so different. I don’t think I ever went home exhausted in Saudi. The way the classrooms were structured...It was so amazing. I really loved teaching there. It was small classes and the classrooms could be arranged in democratic settings like in u-shapes or circular shapes. They had computers and a projector and you really were able to act as a facilitator of learning rather than a lecturer who knows everything. And what I liked was that they had structure for everything. For example, there was a discipline structure. If a learner

didn't do his homework there's a structure of what needs to be done, so it's not like you as a teacher are being pulled in all different directions.

Teaching in the dumping zone

After about 10 months in Saudi I made the decision to come home and when I came back I applied to Tall Oak College, a school down my road where I am now working. At the moment I'm teaching grade 9 EMS and Tourism in grades 10, 11 and 12. Although these subjects were something new for me, it wasn't that challenging in terms of the content but working with the kids was challenging because, in government schools, Tourism is like a dumping zone. The weakest kids are just put into this subject so we are left with the hardest of the hardest kids to deal with. Not every student wants to learn because of the stereotypes attached to the subject, that it's for dumb people, silly people, but I recognised that if I'm going to say "They don't want to learn. That's their own problem", we are going to have a high failure rate so I try to encourage them all the time. You have to remind them that not everyone is meant to sit behind a desk. What they are learning is a skill and it feeds a different market out there. Then they begin to understand and we push out some good kids. For example, last year I had a hectic class, the kids were a bit rough. They came from some hectic backgrounds. But we had a 100% pass in tourism. It was a big achievement for me and I think that is what motivated me to stay in tourism. The kids are also amazing.



Figure 4.10: An image from Jared's pinboard

Avoiding insanity

I really love teaching so I always try to do it to the best of my ability. I always want to be a person who wants to learn. For example, my HOD always tells me that when I first came to the school the principal spoke to him and said 'this is the guy that I want because he is someone you can mould'. Actually, that is the type of person that I am: I am, also, a follower. There's a Bible scripture that says "the wise learn from the elderly and they learn from the experiences of the elderly". I want to learn from other people

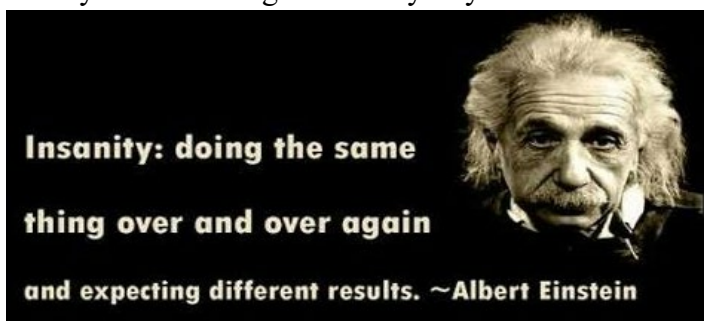


Figure 4.11: A quote from Jared's pinboard

as well. I ask for help if I need help and try not to make the mistakes. Albert Einstein once said “insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results”. When I came across this quote it made me reflect on everything that I do as a teacher. If I want to change the result, I have to change what I am doing. So if I complain about the students’ results or their behaviour it’s because I am disciplining them the same way, that’s why it hasn’t changed.

Learning from my own experience

Over the years I’ve learnt to adopt more of the approach where I see students as equal to me. Some of them are like 22, 21 years old and I’m 26 so I have to treat them as adults. When I started I used to try to use the approaches that my teachers used – the way they were so authoritative. That just created a thick wall between me and the students. I felt as if they were different to me, not in the same class, and I think that made issues worse because they began to see me as an outsider, not a part of the class. I found that they also challenge you if you treat them as though you are better than them, higher than them. When I looked at the senior teachers around me and how they are so strict, I honestly thought that that was what it takes to be a good teacher, but I just couldn’t get into a positive relationship with the students that way. It was stressful. The kids were naughty and I was always shouting and screaming. It was frustrating for me because I was failing. It is hard because of the way we grew up in school and because even in university, they don’t really teach you to become democratic. So you tend to become like the teachers who taught you. It doesn’t work because they know their rights. They know I can’t shout at them or scream at them. They are not going to do what you want if you are going to be authoritative.

Forging a new path

We have to move away from the traditional methods of teaching; like how our teachers taught us. We need to show love and care and patience and try and work democratically. Even though I do still get angry at times, I’ve moved away from shouting. I’ve become more sensitive. It just makes no difference so I’ve begun to show oneness with them, that I understand them. Even if I don’t feel like doing it, I make an effort to ask them, “Hey, what’s wrong? Are you okay?” and show them that I care. It has made a world of difference. My faith also influences the way that I teach, the way I lead and the



Figure 4.12: A quote from Jared’s pinboard

moderators will ask you “Why did this child have zero? What did you do?” and all of a sudden it becomes your fault. I really do embrace the democracy thing, allowing students to do the work, be in charge of their knowledge, be in charge of their learning but the circumstances we are in don’t allow us the opportunity to work with the most difficult students. You know, we have 30 or 40 in a class, sometimes 50, so I think it doesn’t create that space for you to work democratically.

I also feel like all the policies that we have are sometimes so confounding. There are so many and they limit you as an educator sometimes. I had an experience where I almost got in a lot of trouble because, although it wasn’t my intention, I didn’t do something exactly according

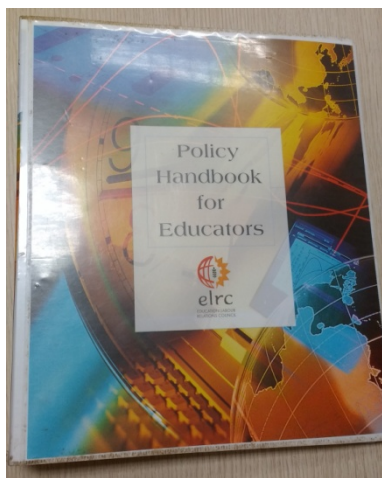


Figure 4.16: One of Jared’s artefacts – a Policy Handbook for Educators

to the policy. We had a common test set up within our cluster. I was new to working with these clusters and so I administered the test at the wrong time compared to the other schools in the area. I got into a lot of trouble with the other schools. They said a lot of harsh things like, ‘how can you be so stupid?’. I tried to explain to them that it was not something I did intentionally, it was just an error on my side but they really threw policy at me. They said it was an irregularity

because it wasn’t done according to policy and they threatened to report me to the Subject Advisor. That’s when I began to see that this is why a lot of teachers do the bare minimum because if you do something wrong, you can get into so much trouble for it. So sometimes it limits you a lot. You really have to be careful. It’s safer to do everything by the policy and to just stay in your comfort zone. Working in the South African context is difficult.

Power dynamics

One of the HODs asked me to join the student leadership programme with him. He called me and he said, ‘You know what? We’re going to try and develop these leaders. Let’s put together some programmes.’ He’s like the big chief in charge of that and I just help him with some ideas here and there. I actually want to get more involved in teaching leadership to the kids, and even the teachers themselves, because they don’t really know about student leadership. They think we’re just giving them badges and that changes nothing in their lives. Sometimes I would like to hold a workshop or something, but I also recognise that the other teachers would probably say ‘who is he to come in and just tell us what to do?’. That power

dynamic does exist to some degree. The worst thing is getting rejected because they don't take you seriously.

I want get into leadership one day in the near future. The last time I was speaking with one of my buddies, we agreed that the office automatically gives you power. Our management team only plan amongst themselves. They don't really meet with the whole staff. It's like a black box. Everything happens in there and then they come out with an idea. As a level one teacher you don't have a lot of power but if you're just given that title, that office, you're automatically in a position of influence.

Sometimes it's very difficult to initiate something. There are a lot of people who are waiting for a lot of things to go wrong when you organise an event or something. I think as an individual, in order to become influential you sometimes have to get on to a team. To do it yourself may be difficult. For example, myself and the Drama teacher actually work very well together because we have the same vision. Tourism, for me, is a subject we cannot only learn from a textbook so this year the drama teacher and I took some kids to the Drakensberg. It was so good. Apart from the attractions, the activities themselves were so enriching for them. We really saw leaders rise up, even from amongst those kids that we thought were a bit naughty. Watching them take control of their groups was amazing. Now all the teachers want to try and plan something.

No one usually plans excursions. They don't want to take the risk. I think that is why I like to get involved in smaller groups and from there start influencing the school from the inside out. Let the others see and then jump on board. But in my school there's no structure to say that this is the student leaders group, let's get all these teachers involved there and let's get someone to head it. I think if there was, there would be a sense of attachment, a sense of belonging. Instead it is all about the individual. If he wants to do something, let him do it and that's his project.

4.4 STEVEN SCHMIDT’S STORY: HELP, GUIDE, RESPECT, LEAD

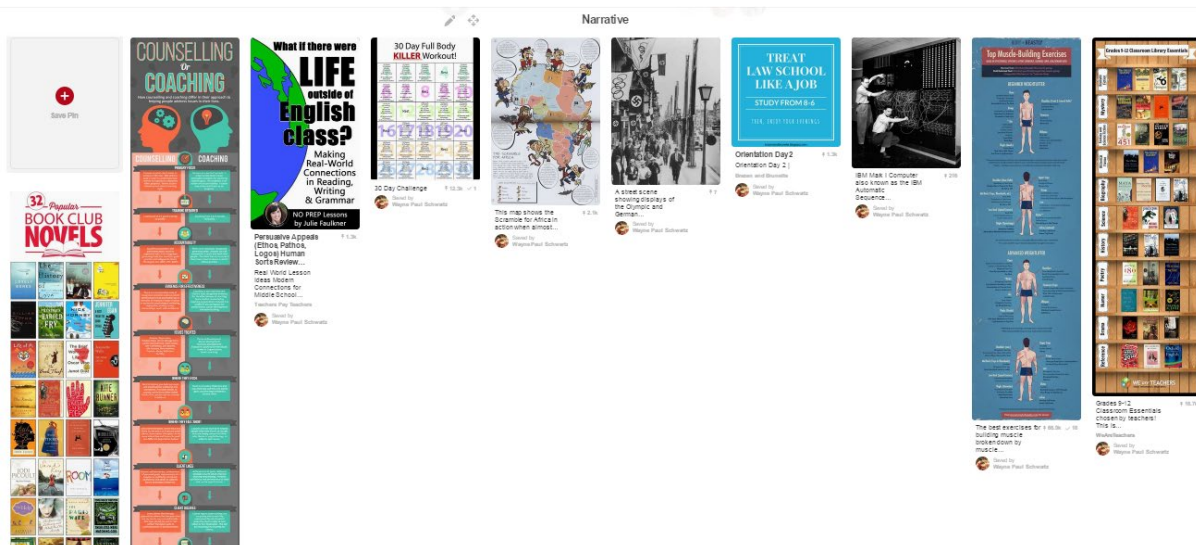


Figure 4.17: Steven Schmidt’s Pinterest board

From student to teacher

After I matriculated in 2007, from day one I began working at my father’s law firm. Part of my package there was that the firm would pay for my studies, as long as I was studying law. I enjoyed studying law but I didn’t enjoy working in the firm. I just did not like seeing what I would become in a few years’ time; what my life would be like and the environment I would be working in. So then after 3 years of studying law I eventually changed my majors to English and History, but then had to pay my own way. I worked as a manager in an Italian coffee shop while I completed my undergraduate degree. Once I graduated with a Bachelor of Arts, I then went on to do an N3/N4 level Engineering course for 6 months.

The following year I completed my PGCE whilst doing an internship at an all-girls private school called St. Francis’ College, near where I was living at the time. Just before I went to St Francis I was horribly unhealthy. I was a smoker, I was underweight and I drank most weekends, but I decided I wanted to be a good role model to the pupils. On New Year’s day, 2014, I said to myself “I don’t want to smoke anymore. I want to go to the gym and I want to be healthy, because if I go to that school I don’t think I’m going to feel very good about myself if I’m running out of class to go and have a cigarette and I stink of cigarettes.” Five days after that I started going to the gym, I started cycling and I haven’t had a cigarette in over two years now. My whole life changed overnight. I enjoyed my experience at St. Francis’ College so much. It was awesome. At the end of my internship, however, I was

offered a full-time position as an English teacher at Greenacre College, another all-girls private school, which is where I am currently teaching.

Student, teacher and counsellor

I haven't stopped studying though. I've been studying Maths and Science for the last year and a half. It's just interesting, but I'm done with it now. I'm putting a lid on it. I don't have to finish the course. I just wanted to learn a little bit about Maths and Science. I didn't do Science at school and I did Standard Grade Maths, so I just wanted to learn a little bit more. I think at the next application session, I'll apply for Honours in Psychology now. I would like to

move into more counselling. I like teaching, but I really like helping around the school. Not just with the girls, but everyone. I like that aspect and I really enjoy it when the girls come to me with problems and I can help them.

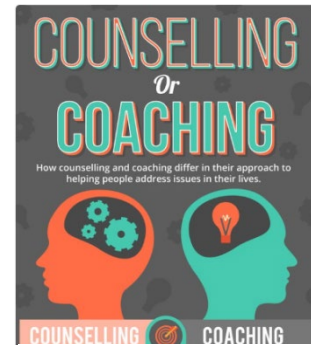


Figure 4.18: A picture from Steven's pinboard

Finding more cultural diversity

Although I was offered a part time position at St. Francis' College, I don't regret moving to Greenacre College at all. One thing that I like about Greenacre College is that it is much more culturally diverse. Girls from different cultures have to rub shoulders here. They have to get to know one another. The girls here know when they should keep quiet and there's less and less ignorance here. I went to an all-boys high school that is extremely diverse and our teacher there used to say all the time, "you're all different, let's talk about our differences." And that was awesome, even though we would want to kill each other by the end of the

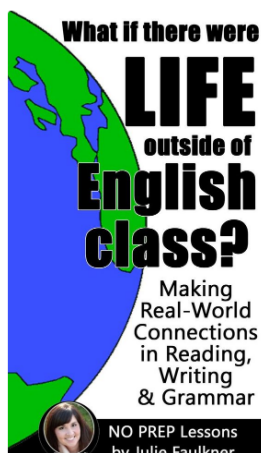


Figure 4.19: A picture from Steven's pinboard

lesson. I vividly remember those lessons. Because of that experience I am a lot more empathetic and open to hearing a lot of other people's perspectives.

Diversity and inequality

In my own classroom I'm very keen for my pupils to be open-minded but I take a bit more control over what they're saying. I try and interpret what they are saying and mediate the discussions. We bring it up every day in my subject, English. There is always some aspect of literature or something that we're doing that relates to the inequality and oppression that has happened, and is still happening in South Africa. They feel it all the time at school.

For example, I went up to Johannesburg for Derby Day now and that was awesome. It's a day when my school competes against the hosting school in a number of sporting and cultural events. I had to go up and help with the Cultural aspect. I went with all the girls that did the slam poetry, public speaking and debating and all that. The slam poetry was awesome but it was all along the same vein, no matter what race group they were from. It was all about believing in yourself and empowering yourself. There were no teachers there except for me. The girls came to me at the beginning and they said, "Would you mind adjudicating?". I replied, "No, I don't think that's a good idea. I'll sit there and you two can adjudicate and you can ask two Greenacre College girls to join you and the four of you can run the show. I'll just sit in the corner. If things get really out of hand I'm here, but it will be fine." For me, that was the perfect way to do it; to let them manage themselves and express themselves in a safe way, and they did such a good job.

It was interesting to see all the different thoughts that came out. They would say, 'I'm struggling with this idea and that's why I have written this poem'. For example, this one girl whose grandfather is white but she is black. She said when she was 5 years old she was told that her grandfather was white and at the time she thought, 'Ooh! I've got white in me. I'm so beautiful!' And she said that from then until now, she has taken a long time to realise that it has nothing to do with the colour of your skin. That was quite interesting to hear. The white girls in the room were shocked and said, 'What? You care if there's white in your family? Wow! Okay. That's quite hectic that you went your whole childhood thinking you were beautiful because you had a bit of white in you.'

I also had never thought about that before, ever. I still don't understand the whole colour-ism thing – why it's better to be lighter or darker, but I'm trying to. Earlier this year I lead a group of grade 9 girls on our school's 'Uhambo'. It's a two week journey where the girls have to carry everything they need – clothes, food and shelter – in their back packs and we hike and camp and do different activities along the way. The Black and Indian girls all had clay with them and they were dead scared about getting in the sun and their skin going shades darker. I couldn't believe it. The white girls in the group said, 'But it's just your skin. It's your colour! We don't care.' Then one of Black girls responded, 'But when you tan, you go a lovely brown. You will never be as dark as me. You look healthy. People identify that as healthy in your culture. In my culture, the darker you are the worse.'

I don't understand it, but I'm trying to. It comes up a lot and I talk about it with the girls all the time. It's a bit exhausting though, because I don't have all the answers. It's quite tricky because they look at you like you're this book of wisdom. I mean we talk about these things and we search hard for answers but there often is no answer. Maybe that's where we are right now – there is no answer but the girls, especially the grade 8s and 9s, don't really accept that. They're still looking for answers, or at least looking for someone to say, 'go down this path.'

Good ideas lead to more work

We had a woman come to our school from Scotland last year and I was really excited to do an international pen pal exchange program with her school. It was something that I wanted to do with my grade 10s, but with the sheer load on all of us here, the other teachers in my department were quite resistant. Any new idea spells out work. There's so much work for us to do here and even though our principal is so keen for us to take on new initiatives, at the same time nothing gives. You just get given more work but nothing is taken from you. Because I knew the way my colleagues were going to react, I had to tailor my proposal. I had to think through everything beforehand; how it would fit in with our curriculum and what it would link to. When I explained that it was going to work out well with our syllabus and when I suggested that I pilot the idea with just my class, they warmed up to the idea, so I pursued it.

When I eventually finished negotiating with the Scottish school, however, they emailed me to say that they didn't have space in their high school, but they did have space in their senior primary. I thought it would give me a 'foot in the door' so I said "Yes please. I'll email our principal and tell him." Our principal then responded to me saying, "That's awesome. Go and help the senior primary do it". Even though I teach in the high school, I had to run the whole thing for the grade 6s. Originally I had wanted to do it with my grade 10 class so that I could phase it into the syllabus and there would be no extra work. It would just be a bit of admin and I'd be seeing the children for lessons anyway and I'd know the children. But I know that our principal does this kind of thing to people. He will delegate something that you have to do for him when it doesn't suit you at all and, tough, he's the head and you just have to do it.

I will never tell anyone in the high school, though. My head of department would be furious if she knew I was doing work in the senior primary when I'm supposed to be working up here in the high school. She is very protective of her department. In her opinion your first job is to teach. I'm more hesitant now in putting my hand up for things, because if it doesn't work out

how I planned it to, I might be stuck doing something I am not passionate about. It seems like the management just see that I'm putting my hand up to do something and they don't care where they put that energy. The headmaster and I chat a lot about the projects and other things that we would like to do in the school. I know if I really feel strongly about something, if I really want to do something or I don't like the way something has been done, I can go and speak to him and he will listen and support it. At the same time, however, I sometimes feel like every time we chat about something that I think is a good idea, it automatically gets given to me to do.

Respect

I think outside of the English department, the other teachers in my school think quite highly of me. Maybe it's because whenever they see me, it is because they need something from me. Because I do the hall management, I'm always involved with so many different phases or departments in the school and, barring one incident, it's been done like clockwork every time. Because I coach our junior debating team, I also work with a lot of different teachers from other schools. We chat a lot about what we can do to help our debating teams grow and improve. It's a nice way to network. They know I come from Greenacre College and my grade eights are the champions this year. They are undefeated and all the teachers know that this says a lot about how I work with the kids.

I think treating people with respect is so important when it comes to being a leader. If I respect your needs, then it will make my decisions more pleasant and you'll be more accepting of them. You'll want to follow whatever I have to say. For example, I am in charge of hall management and I have a group of girls who help me. I ask the hall management girls to do some horrible things, but I make allowances for them so that when I ask them to do tough things they are more willing. Like I asked them to help out at the sports awards ceremony last year and the two girls who were available were winning awards that night. They said to me, "Mr. Schmidt, please, we can't do this. We want to sit with our parents when we win our awards." I said, "But if you can't do it, I have to". Then I said, "Okay, I'll do it. You guys get to enjoy your sports awards and I will do the work. Because I do that, though, you guys have to do other stuff so that I don't have to be there." I could have said, "You're going to be at the sports awards anyway, you just walk down from the sound desk to go get your awards" , but you've got to respect every aspect of what they want. Then last night they were supposed to be helping out in the hall until 8 o'clock, and we ran until half past eight. When eight o'clock came, I said "You can go. Its fine, I'll stay." But they replied

“No, no, its fine. Our parents can wait.” So rather than go home, they left their parents waiting in their cars for 30 minutes whilst they finished what they had to do with the group so that I didn’t have to do it all by myself.

You have to listen to them and sometimes you don’t even have to give them what they want, you just have to acknowledge their needs. You just have to say “I’m sorry I couldn’t do that for you but I tried” or “I’m sorry you feel that way.” That’s all they want. That’s what I think everyone would appreciate here. Being in charge doesn’t mean that I have to ask for your approval to do something, but I do have to tell you that I’m going to do it and see how you feel. That’s what I think everyone is upset about at school at the moment - that there is no consideration for input or ideas. The staff are simply asking to be listened to. They don’t even expect their advice to be implemented. Schools are supposed to be places you work with, not for, but these private schools are becoming schools you work for and not schools you work with. And people are not happy with this changing climate. There’s so much negativity here. I can’t stand it, but because I’m new here and because I’m younger than everyone else, I just keep quiet.

4.5 Karen Williams' story: A limited edition

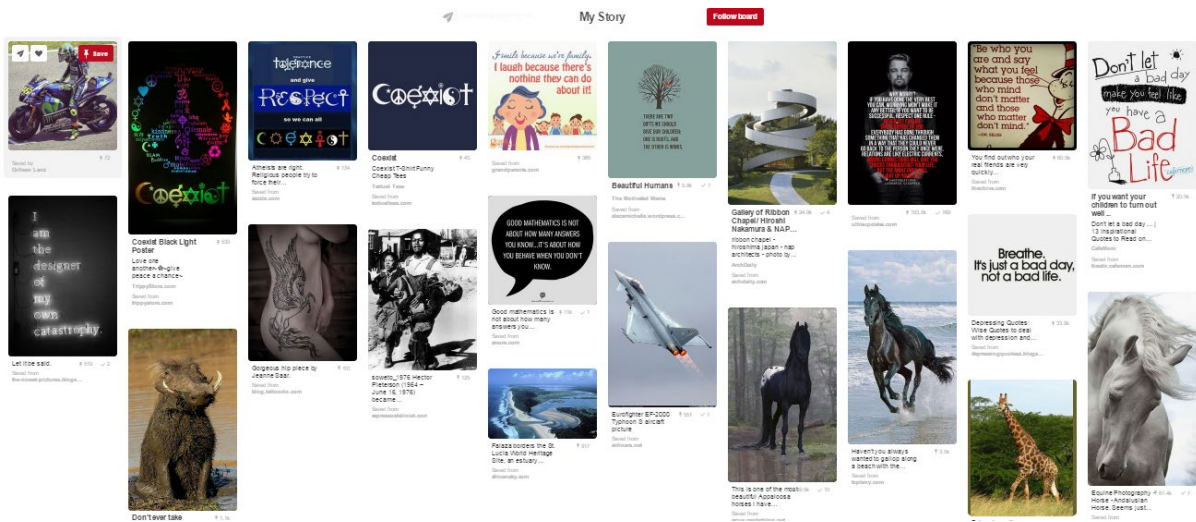


Figure 4.20: Karen Williams' Pinterest Board

Not my first choice

When I matriculated in 1977, I had no intention of being a teacher at all. I wanted to be a game ranger and so I did a biological degree at university, majoring in environmental and cell biology. When I finished my degree in 1983, however, I discovered that females were not really encouraged to go out in the field as a game ranger. I would have ended up in a tourism office and I thought, "Never!". I didn't really know what to do, so I decided to do a teaching diploma (HDE) just for something to do. Surprisingly, when I got into my first year of teaching I absolutely loved it. My first teaching post in 1985 was at Dunham High School and I taught there for 20 years.



Figure 4.21: A picture from Karen's pinboard



Figure 4.22: A picture Karen referred to during one of my interviews with her.

Staying true to myself

When I first started teaching at Dunham High School, I was told by the other teachers that I 'shouldn't smile before Easter'. In the 31 years that I have been teaching, however, that has never worked for me. I have always found myself being a negotiator. I could never ever be a disciplinarian and I have never tried to pretend to be something I am not. It is just my personality and I have stayed true to my personality. I am relaxed. I am laid back. I go with the

flow. I am adaptable. If something doesn't work I will try something else. I am not confrontational at all. I am just myself and I've always promised myself that I will always be myself.

When I first started teaching here at Victriola College in 2010, there was a teacher who used to run to the headmaster every five minutes because I allowed the pupils to listen to music on their earphones. I had this constant, "Mrs Williams, don't do this. Mrs Williams, don't do that", but I just ignored it. I didn't purposefully want to buck the system, but somebody was trying to force me to change something that was working for me. Letting my pupils listen to music wasn't causing damage. In fact, it was helping some. Of course, in those sorts of situations I do doubt myself, but then if you trust the kids around you, they will tell you whether you are doing the right thing or not.

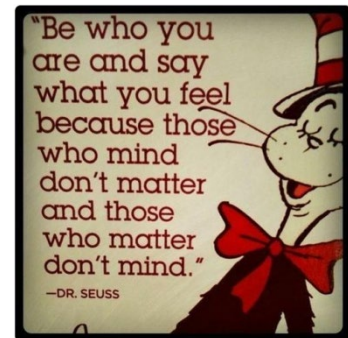


Figure 4.23: A quote from Karen's pinboard.

A beacon of reality

I started teaching at Victriola College in 2010. Before teaching here I had never taught at a wealthy or private school before. A lot of my current pupils' are from wealthy backgrounds and their parents protect them a lot. They do their homework for them. They did their projects for them when they were little. As a result, these kids are in for such a big shock when they actually have to stand up on their own two feet. So I find myself showing them a lot of tough love. You can do that when you teach Maths. I am still supportive, but it is really important to me for them to understand that everything that you earn, you have got to earn yourself. You can't always rely on somebody else. You've got to be strong within yourself. I find myself feeling that very strongly every single day. I feel I need to be a beacon of reality for them, because I don't think that is going to change no matter what technology is available. If you can't learn to like yourself and know yourself first, and if you don't realise that you have to do it yourself if you are going to get anywhere, then you are in trouble. A lot of the pupils I teach don't have to take responsibility for their own learning. It is always the teacher's fault rather than their own. I therefore find that with my registration class I often ask, "Okay, what's up for this week? Is anybody in trouble? Is there anything I can do to help you find the time for you to get your school work done on time?" I try to give them skills to prioritise and manage their time better, because school is stressful.

More and more I also find myself having to be beacon of reality for both parents and pupils when it comes to my pupils' marks. Parents are so focused on marks and all of that adds to the kid's anxiety, especially Maths. It drives me crazy. I try to help them understand that they should look at their child's progress over a year. There are going to be ups and downs, especially in Maths. Instead

of punishing their hard working child just because he or she did badly in one little class test, they should be

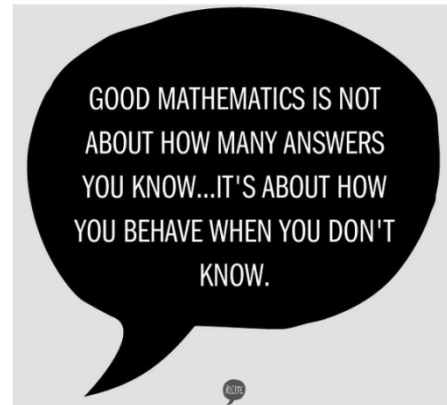


Figure 4.24: A quote from Karen's pinboard.

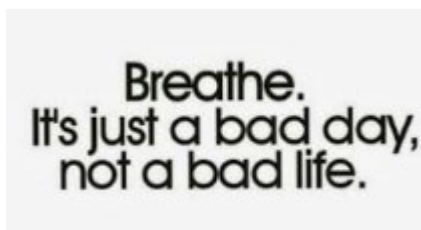


Figure 4.25: A quote from Karen's pinboard.

reassuring. I also have to help my pupils understand that the tests you keep are the ones that you did badly in. The ones where you got 100% you can throw away. You can learn nothing from them. I try to put everything into perspective for them.

A social guide

As a teacher I also have to be aware of what is happening around me socially and know when to take the initiative to say something to them when the need arises. When I was managing the first team cricket side, the coach was a gorgeous, tall, young, dark-haired guy. Eventually I became aware that he was very, very uncomfortable because of the way the girls at the school were behaving towards him. They were actually sexually harassing him in terms of the comments they were making. So the next time it happened I saw who was around and I took the opportunity to chat to them. I said, "Do you understand how the coach feels?" The girls were horrified. They didn't mean to make him feel uncomfortable at all. They were not aware that they were basically sexually harassing him. They then went to the coach afterwards and apologised. Thereafter, when these girls saw other young girls behaving inappropriately, they passed on my advice to them.

A passion for (re)creating

I am very job orientated and I care a lot about the students I teach. What motivates me is an interest in seeing inside a youngster's head, because how can you help motivate somebody if you don't see the world the way they do? When you teach for as long as I have, you see how kid's generations change; the way they think changes. This new generation of pupils is so technology-based. They don't see anything in the same way they used to at all. So all the

tools that I have, whether it is the worksheets or the way I explain something, don't work anymore. So that is where a lot of my focus is now, because the pressure on doing well in Maths, the pressure from parents, is high. If something doesn't work anymore you have got to re-think.

Because I need to keep changing the way I teach and the tools I use, I create a lot of the material that is used in the Maths department. I do it using my colleagues' ideas, but I am the one who tends to take their bits and pieces and put them together. Our head of department encourages us to share our ideas and having easy access to the internet in my classroom is absolutely amazing. It has changed my life because it gives me free access to whatever I want. For example, it has taken me a long time, but I have developed revision worksheets for every single section of Maths. There are tons of questions, including worked solutions, and I have divided them up into basic, complex, and difficult questions. At the moment myself, the school's computer teacher and a past pupil of mine, are in the process of turning these revision questions into a Maths game. It is still in the early days of

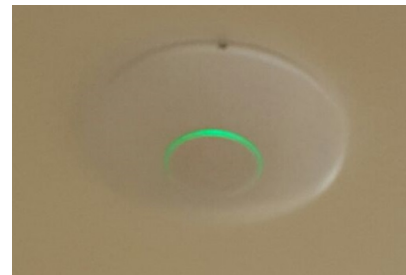


Figure 4.26: A picture of one of Karen's artefacts - the wireless router in her classroom. She uses this to connect to the internet.

development but we hope that it will entice kids to do revision and improve their Maths skills. The idea is that you have got plots on a landscape and if you want to own a piece of land you have got to answer a Maths question. If you get the question right, the plot of land is yours. The aim is to build your land up. As you acquire more land you can start setting up defences and then if somebody wants to attack your land, they have got to answer two questions. If you fortify your land quite well, they have got to answer quite a few questions. We also eventually want to create 'land wars' between one of our neighbouring schools and us. It will be open source so it will be available to anyone.

Just try

Unfortunately, I think that my passion for trying to create new, more effective teaching material all the time is the reason that I get impatient with other teachers. I am not good at mentoring other teachers. I tried it in the past and I have been so busy trying to focus on developing new materials that it doesn't leave room for me to spend time with somebody else. I am too busy researching. I spend a lot of time on my own, searching for new ideas and teaching material. I get cross with some of my colleagues sometimes because some of them will say to me, "Colleen how did you find this new iPad app?" To find new apps and learn

how to use them in my lessons takes hours, but all they want is for me to teach them. I spend hours struggling to find them and learning how to use them and they want me to simply pass it on. Although I don't mind passing on ideas, sometimes the development and understanding of something happens because you've walked the walk. Just try. Having said that, my colleagues and collegiality within my department is very important to me. For me it is important that we appreciate each other and thank each other in the right way. So one of my roles within our department is to make sure that we thank each other all the time. We need each other.

Finding a way where there seems to be no way

Although I am the one in our department who is full of new ideas and keen to try new things, I haven't been able to try any of them. My ideas get squashed because there is not enough time in our lessons to cover the syllabus as it is. I still say what I think and make suggestions but when you work with that kind of slight level of frustration all the time, it is not conducive to being the most constantly creative person. It's demoralising. There are also very strong, dominant personalities in this school who like being in control and who like things done in their way. For example, our deputy principal likes to follow a linear path and likes to check boxes, so any new idea often doesn't go anywhere with him. I don't even bother to share my ideas with him. I have been working here for a while and I know how everyone works so I share them with other people and I kind of go around the 'blockage'. Luckily, there are other avenues you can use where you know your ideas won't just be put on the back burner. I don't always get what I want, but at least I know the idea will be heard and thought about for more than five seconds. I feel like giving up sometimes, but I have learnt in this place that you don't have to shout to be heard. You just have to pass a comment and it eventually sits somewhere in somebody's head.

Intimidated beyond description

At our cluster meetings I feel intimidated beyond description by the other teachers from our neighbouring private schools. They have so much support from their schools and are freed from menial tasks so that they can devote time to developing their own curriculum. They are so full of good, tried and tested ideas. I have very little support from my school when it comes to developing my curriculum. My school's leadership seem to want to keep me busy with menial tasks. I don't know if it is true, but it makes me feel as if they don't think I am doing enough work in a day. Because I am so busy, I don't have the time to develop and test my ideas. I don't say a word at those meetings.

Don't 'micro-manage' me

Although I love my job, I work with a lot of people who love 'micro-managing' me and it makes me very, very unhappy. Luckily nobody in my department is like that but, in other spheres of the school, people definitely are. In one case it has made me so unhappy that I am going to have to remove myself from that scenario and give up being a part of something that I enjoy. You cannot change a micro-manager. That is what they are, and if you can't work with that, you have to find a way of removing yourself.



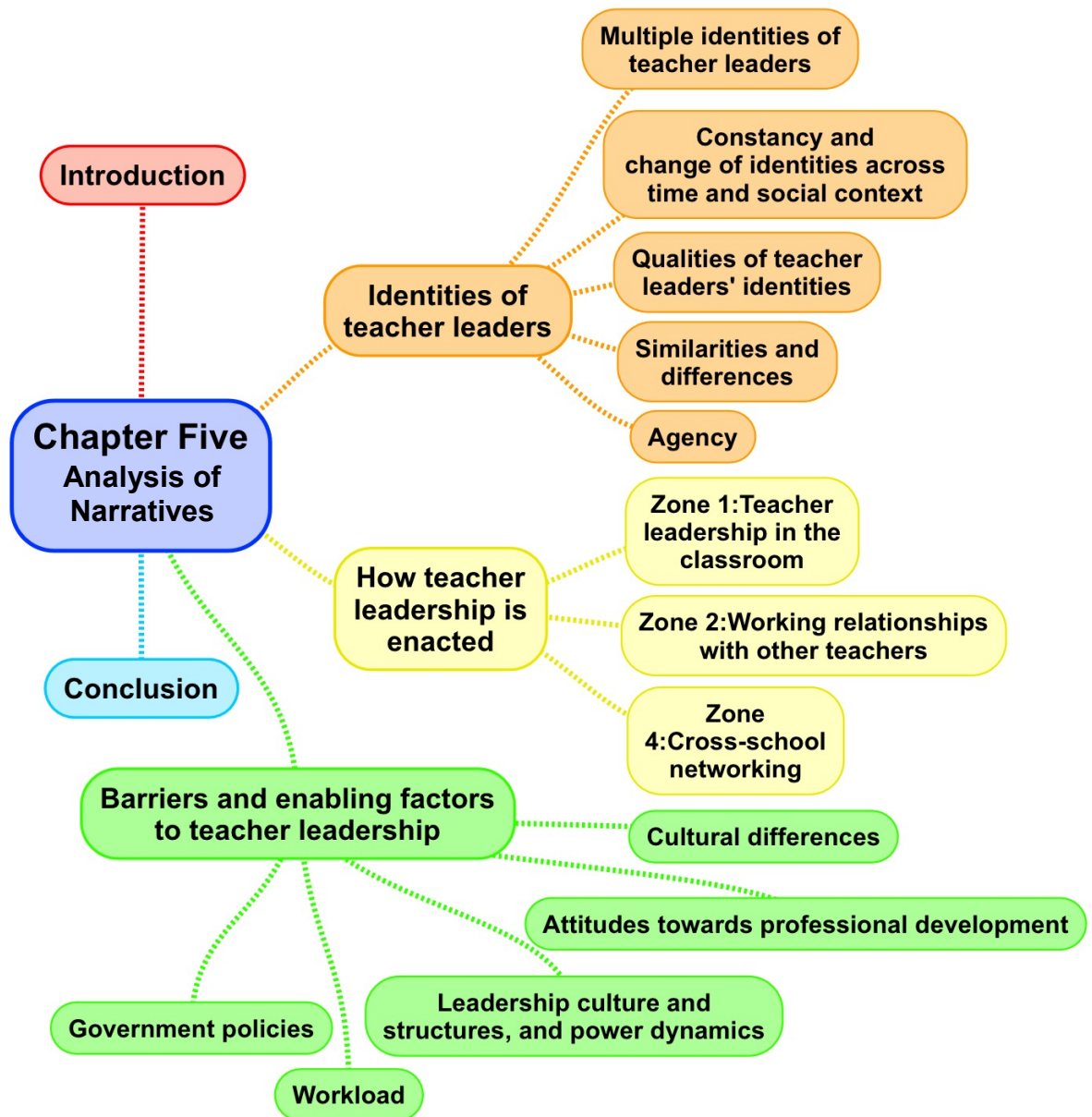
Figure 4.27: A picture of a water polo ball – one of Karen's artefacts.

For example, I am the manager of the Waterpolo girls' first team and yet I cannot make a single decision with regards to my team without first running it past the person who is in charge of the girls' waterpolo. I mean, not one decision. When we were playing Brentwood College, we asked a grade nine girl who shows quite a lot of potential if she would like to sit on the bench and play with the first team for a minute or two of the match. We were not putting her in the first team. We were not doing anything wrong. We simply wanted to give her the opportunity to get a feel of what it was like in the first team, to encourage her. Oh my word! I got into so much trouble because I had not asked for permission first. How can I ask for permission if I had no intention of doing it? It was a spur of the moment thing. We were trying to be encouraging and she only played for literally two minutes. I could not understand why I, an experienced manager of this team, could not make a decision like that. As a result, all I am allowed to do as the manager is tick the register and drive the school bus. If you ask me to be a manager, do not do that to me. I feel completely disempowered. It's horrible. So the only option I have is not to be involved in girls' waterpolo anymore. I have spoken to the person above me and I think that she feels that she is also being micro-managed. She is getting into trouble because of the things that I am doing, so it is being filtered down from the top. But I also think it is a little bit of her own personality.

4.6 CONCLUSION

In this chapter I presented the stories of each of my participants. I began with the stories of Amaarah and Jared who teach in public schools, not only because I found their stories captivating but also because these schools are representative of the majority of schools in

South Africa. I then went on to present the stories of Steven and Karen, who share their experiences as teacher leaders within the private school setting. In the next chapter I present my analysis of these stories with regards to the three questions that constitute my research puzzle.



CHAPTER FIVE

ANALYSIS OF NARRATIVES

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter I presented the four stories that were co-constructed between myself and each of the four research participants from the field texts that were produced through narrative interviews, collage inquiry and artefact inquiry. This chapter focuses on the second stage of data analysis, namely analysis of the narratives presented in Chapter 4. This is done by elucidating common plotlines or threads that emerge from the stories in the context of my theoretical framework (see Chapter 2, section 2.3, p. 27) as well as uncommon and unique threads that contribute to a new knowing. This analysis is structured around answering the three research questions that make up this study's research puzzle. These are:

- Who are the teacher leaders in public and private secondary schools?
- How is teacher leadership enacted on a day-to-day basis in public and private secondary schools?
- What are the enabling and constraining factors for teacher leadership in public and private secondary schools?

I begin by examining the identities of my teacher leader participants. I then go on to address the second and third research questions. I do this by looking at the ways in which these teachers enact teacher leadership, and unpacking the factors that either enable or create barriers to teacher leadership in public and private secondary schools.

5.2 IDENTITIES OF TEACHER LEADERS

A number of interesting aspects emerge from the data with regards to the identities of the teacher leader participants in this study. In this analysis I have chosen to address only those aspects of teacher leader identity which are significant and relevant to the focus of this study and have used Social Identity Theory as a lens to make sense of the data.

5.2.1 MULTIPLE IDENTITIES OF TEACHER LEADERS

It is evident that each of the teacher leaders in this study do not have a singular identity but rather possess multiple identities simultaneously. Amongst others, Amaarah is a woman, daughter, mother, wife, friend, Indian, Muslim, student, teacher, graduate, achiever, mentor,

innovator, disciplinarian and leader. A few of these identities are reflected in the quotes below. The following excerpt illustrates Amaarah's identity as a graduate, teacher and student:

When I finally graduated with my BEd with a distinction yet again, I could not believe that I actually wore that graduation hat... As soon as I qualified as a BEd I was placed in Thakazani Secondary School but the craving I had for education spurred me on to do my Honours in education while working... Then people told me that I could go on to do my Masters... I had to have more and so I registered for Masters. (see Chapter Four, p. 60)

Multiple identities also emerge from Jared's story. The following quote shows his identity as an Indian, husband, father, son and brother. He says:

The Indian culture is very family orientated. My wife, two sons and I still stay with my parents... I grew up as the youngest of three siblings and my parents were very loving and also very strict. (see Chapter Four, p. 66)

From Steven's story we can see how he held several identities simultaneously. He was a matriculant, employee, son and student. As he says:

After I matriculated in 2007, from day one I began working at my father's law firm. Part of my package there was that the firm would pay for my studies, as long as I was studying law. (see Chapter Four, p. 73)

These multiple identities that are held by each of the research participants align well with Social Identity Theory (SIT) because, according to this theory, a person can have multiple identities depending on which social groups they, or others, perceive them to be a part of (Bamberg, 2012; Tajfel & Turner, 1979). In addition the identities held by these participants are made recognisable by the different behaviours that the participants display. According to SIT, once we identify ourselves to being part of a particular social group or category, we tend to display the kinds of behaviours and characteristics that we associate with that group (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). These multiple identities held by each participant are not, however, all constant over time, or in different social settings. From their stories we can see that some of their identities change over both long and short periods of time. They are also dependent upon the social context in which the participants find themselves.

5.2.2 CONSTANCY AND CHANGE OF IDENTITIES ACROSS TIME AND SOCIAL CONTEXT

As we read the stories of each of the research participants it is evident that, whilst some aspects of their identities appear to be independent of time and constant across different social settings, other aspects undergo significant change. For example, in Amaarah's story we can see how, as a young girl, she identifies herself at first as unimportant and of little worth and then, once she started achieving at school, her identity began to change:

From being a 'nobody' I was finally becoming a 'somebody'. (see Chapter Four, p. 58)

Other aspects of her identity, however, remain the same over time. For example, her identity as a female, Indian and as a Muslim:

I love and am proud of my culture and religion and I cling onto it. (see Chapter Four, p. 61)

In Jared's story, we see how he undergoes a major lifestyle change in order to become a better role model to the pupils that he teaches. He says:

Just before I went to St Francis I was horribly unhealthy. I was a smoker, I was underweight and I drank most weekends, but I decided I wanted to be a good role model to the pupils. On New Year's day, 2014, I said to myself "I don't want to smoke anymore. I want to go to the gym and I want to be healthy, because if I go to that school I don't think I'm going to feel very good about myself if I'm running out of class to go and have a cigarette and I stink of cigarettes." Five days after that I started going to the gym, I started cycling and I haven't had a cigarette in over two years now. My whole life changed overnight. (see Chapter Four, p. 73)

This aspect of change when it comes to the participants' identities fits in with the fluid notion of identity described by SIT. We can see here that one of the ways in which the research participants construct their identities is "in terms of *some* change against the background of *some* constancy" (Bamberg, 2012, p.104). What is interesting to note in Karen's story, is how her identity changes in different social contexts. In her own school environment she is

confident enough to say what she thinks and offer new ideas, even if those around her do not seem interested in pursuing them.

My ideas get squashed...I still say what I think and make suggestions. (see Chapter Four, p. 83)

In school cluster meetings with teachers from other private schools, however, Karen does not display the same confidence.

At our cluster meetings I feel intimidated beyond description by the other teachers from our neighbouring private schools. I don't say a word at those meetings. (see Chapter Four, p. 83)

Karen's identity also displays a fluidity which is dependent upon her social context. In different social settings Karen identifies herself with different social groups. Whilst in one setting she identifies herself as knowledgeable, powerful and confident, in another setting she identifies herself as less knowledgeable than the people she is with, powerless and reserved. Whether newly adopted, inherent in them for some time or dependent upon context, in the next section I look at those aspects of teacher leaders' identities which are common or noteworthy in some way.

5.2.3 QUALITIES OF TEACHER LEADERS' IDENTITIES

A number of common and unique but interesting, characteristics of teacher leaders emerge from each of the research participants' stories. Firstly, all of these teachers display a strong, self-motivated desire to see their learners succeed academically. This is reflected in Jared's story as follows:

I recognised that if I'm going to say "They don't want to learn. That's their own problem", we are going to have a high failure rate so I try to encourage them all the time... last year I had a hectic class, the kids were a bit rough. They came from some hectic backgrounds. But we had a 100% pass in tourism. It was a big achievement for me and I think that is what motivated me to stay in tourism... I really love teaching so I always try to do it to the best of my ability. (see Chapter Four, p. 68)

The second quality that is evident in Amaarah, Jared and Karen is that they are reflexive innovators who regularly reflect on their practice and then creatively change the way that

they do things in order to improve their teaching. Amaarah explains how her reflections on her work have led to her changing the way she does things in her classroom:

For example, through my reflections and getting to know the learners better, I have moved away from using the chalkboard. (see Chapter Four, p. 61)

Karen displays a similar quality by sharing the following:

When you teach for as long as I have, you see how kids' generations change; the way they think changes. This new generation of pupils is so technology-based. They don't see anything in the same way they used to at all. So all the tools that I have, whether it is the worksheets or the way I explain something, don't work anymore... If something doesn't work anymore you have got to re-think. (see Chapter Four, p. 81)

The teacher leaders in this study also display an ability to form positive working relationships with their colleagues, despite the challenges that they face in doing so. For example, Amaarah speaks of how she made a point of learning the language of her colleagues in order to improve her relationships with them:

Learning isiZulu not only helped my relationships with my learners but it also helped me to form better relationships with my colleagues. We are very much closer now. (see Chapter Four, p. 62)

Another quality that these teacher leaders display is that they are risk takers. One way that they display this is by not being afraid to 'go against the grain' and behave differently to the groups that they associate themselves with. For example, in a school where staff members do not ask questions for fear of looking incompetent, Amaarah unashamedly asks many questions of her colleagues:

One thing that still makes me different from the other teachers I work with but which has helped me to develop as a teacher over the last six years, is that I am not afraid to ask questions. (see Chapter Four, p. 63)

Another way that these teachers display a willingness to take risks is by being willing to try new teaching strategies. This is evident in Karen's story when she says:

...I am the one in our department who is full of new ideas and keen to try new things...(see Chapter Four, p. 83)

The qualities of the teachers described above resonate with findings made by Fairman and Mackenzie (2014) and Hunzicker (2013). These authors found that teacher leaders had a strong, self-motivated desire to see pupil performance improve; they were self-reflective, willing to take risks and try new ways of teaching and managing; and they possessed the interpersonal skills that are required to develop positive collegial professional relationships with their colleagues (Fairman & Mackenzie, 2014; Hunzicker, 2013).

Whilst some of the findings in this study reflect those of other empirical studies, there are other findings which seem to be unique amongst the research. Firstly, Amaarah's and Jared's reflexivity and strong desire to improve their teaching is coupled with a willingness to position themselves as followers who intentionally seek guidance from those around them. For example, Jared shows a desire to learn from others when he says:

I always want to be a person who wants to learn. For example, my HOD always tells me that when I first came to the school the principal spoke to him and said 'this is the guy that I want because he is someone you can mould'. Actually, that is the type of person that I am: I am, also, a follower. There's a Bible scripture that says "the wise learn from the elderly and they learn from the experiences of the elderly". I want to learn from other people as well. I ask for help if I need help and try not to make the mistakes. (see Chapter Four, p. 68)

Secondly, all of the participants display pastoral characteristics. Amaarah speaks about how it is important for her to engage with her pupils on an emotional level and show them love and care:

I also don't feel that delivering the syllabus, book knowledge, is everything. I feel that I want to develop them psychologically and emotionally, as human beings and as citizens. Everything is all about love, it's about emotion. I believe if they've got that they can learn, so whenever I'm teaching I often hug my learners, if it's a female learner, smile or show them love in some way. (see Chapter Four, p. 62)

This characteristic is also reflected by Steven when he says:

I like teaching, but I really like helping around the school. Not just with the girls, but everyone. I like that aspect and I really enjoy it when the girls come to me with problems and I can help them. (see Chapter Four, p. 74)

Thirdly, these teacher leaders are high achievers and people who have an inherent desire for achievement. Jared displays the same quality when he says:

I worked to the best of my ability. That's how much I wanted to succeed, and from failing my first assignment I ended up getting an A for my last assignment. (see Chapter Four, p. 67)

Lastly, the teacher leaders in this study are people who believe in the power of education. One of the collage pictures that Amaarah included the following quote by Nelson Mandela on her Pinterest board:

Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world. (see Chapter Four, p. 57)

Jared shows his appreciation for the power of education when he says:

My parents grew up in Mooi River and, because they were very poor, they didn't get to complete matric. Even though my dad's dream was to become a lawyer, he had to leave school in grade 11. I think that's what drove me to study and that's why my parents pushed for me to go to university as well, so I took the opportunity and I worked to the best of my ability. (see Chapter Four, p. 67)

5.2.4 SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES

In the research participants' stories we see how their multiple identities are formed by finding, or creating, similarities between themselves and certain social groups ('in-groups'), and by acknowledging differences between themselves and other social groups ('out-groups'). Amaarah shows how she identifies herself with a particular social grouping in terms of her culture, race and gender as a Muslim Indian woman and how she is very aware of the differences between herself and the other teachers and pupils, who she identifies as being part of a 'Black/Zulu' social group.

When I was told that I had been placed in Thakazani, I couldn't even pronounce the name. I was very worried because it was a black school, I'm the only Indian in the whole school. (see Chapter Four, p. 60)

Jared also explains how, when he became a teacher, he tried to create similarities between himself and other teachers by behaving like the teachers he had known and experienced in the past because that's what he thought it meant to be a successful teacher.

When I started I used to try to use the approaches that my teachers used – the way they were so authoritative... When I looked at the senior teachers around me and how they are so strict, I honestly thought that that was what it takes to be a good teacher. (see Chapter Four, p. 69)

As I explained in the theoretical framework of this study (see Chapter 2), according to SIT, people develop their identities by “synthesising relationships of similarity and difference” (Jenkins, 2008, p.18). They do this through the processes of social categorisation, social identification and social comparison. In these excerpts we can see how the participants have divided their social world into different groups or categories with descriptive labels such as ‘Indian’, ‘Muslim’ or ‘good teacher’. They then identify themselves as similar to, and a part of, particular groups and different to, and therefore not a part of, other groups. It is interesting to note that whilst their identification with some groups is based on an inherent characteristic such as their race, their identification with other groups such as ‘good teachers’ is based on their behaviour. In Jared’s story, for example, we see how he tried to modify his behaviour to emulate the behaviours he felt were demonstrated by the ‘good teachers’ that taught him and that he was teaching with. In Amaarah’s story she learnt to speak Zulu in order to be accepted as part of the other teachers in her school:

Learning isiZulu... helped me to form better relationships with my colleagues. We are very much closer now. They say “Amaarah, you are just like us now” and they have even given me the name Thandiwe – the loved one. (see Chapter Four, p. 62)

5.2.5 AGENCY

Although it is evident that the participants in this study showed a desire to be part of certain social groups and even changed their behaviours in order to identify with these groups, a noteworthy observation is that they also display enough agency to differ from these groups

where and when they see fit. Jared found that when he tried to copy the behaviour of other ‘good’ teachers, it made him less successful and so he decided to change the way that he did things with his pupils.

When I looked at the senior teachers around me and how they are so strict, I honestly thought that that was what it takes to be a good teacher, but I just couldn't get into a positive relationship with the students that way... We need to show love and care and patience and try and work democratically. Even though I do still get angry at times, I've moved away from shouting. I've become more sensitive. It just makes no difference so I've begun to show oneness with them, that I understand them. (see Chapter Four, p. 69)

Karen displays this agency when she admits that she is different to the teachers around her and stays true to her personality despite being encouraged to behave differently.

When I first started teaching at Dunham High School, I was told by the other teachers that I 'shouldn't smile before Easter'. In the 31 years that I have been teaching, however, that has never worked for me. I have always found myself being a negotiator. I could never ever be a disciplinarian and I have never tried to pretend to be something I am not. (see Chapter Four, p. 79)

This shows how it is possible that “other and self can synchronically be viewed as same *and* different” (Bamberg, 2012, p.105). In this way, Jared and Karen therefore position themselves as what Bamberg (2012, p. 106) refers to as “agentive self-constructors” rather than ‘victims’ of the social groups to which they belong.

In addition Jared displays agency not only by behaving differently to the social group to which he belongs as a teacher but also by influencing this group to change their behaviour as well. By organising a successful excursion Jared was able to get the other teachers he works with to want to do so as well, even though it is not something they would normally do:

Now all the teachers want to try and plan something. No one usually plans excursions. They don't want to take the risk. (see Chapter Four, p. 72)

5.3 HOW TEACHER LEADERSHIP IS ENACTED

In this study the concept of leadership includes the individual and combined processes of vision setting and influence (Bush & Glover, 2003; Bush & Middlewood, 2013). More specifically, teacher leadership is when the leadership potential of level one teachers is realised because teachers “lead within and beyond the classroom; identify with and contribute to a community of teacher learners and leaders; influence others towards improved educational practice; and accept responsibility for achieving the outcomes of the leadership” (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2011, p. 6). Out of each of the research participants’ stories emerges different ways in which these teachers behave as leaders within the school context. In this section I present the ways in which they enact teacher leadership by organising them into the framework provided by Grant’s model of teacher leadership (2012) and the zones, roles and behavioural indicators associated with this model. Although the model consists of four zones, because there is no evidence of teacher leadership being enacted in zone three, I only refer to zones one, two and four.

5.3.1 ZONE ONE: TEACHER LEADERSHIP IN THE CLASSROOM

This is the zone in which the leadership enacted by my research participants is the most prevalent. In their classrooms and with their pupils we see these teachers lead by “continuing to teach and improve [their] own teaching” (Grant, 2012, p.56). Firstly, one way in which these teachers exhibit leadership is by pursuing further studies on a part-time basis in order to be life-long learners. Jared, Amaarah and Steven continue to study part-time whilst teaching, as Amaarah explains:

As soon as I qualified as a BEd I was placed in Thakazani Secondary School but the craving I had for education spurred me on to do my Honours in education while working. (see Chapter Four, p. 60)

Steven also mentions his part time studies when he says:

I haven’t stopped studying though. I’ve been studying Maths and Science for the last year and a half. (see Chapter Four, p. 74)

Secondly, they display an intentional effort to improve their teaching by reflecting on their work as teachers and then developing creative solutions to the challenges that they face. Jared shows reflexive practice when he describes how he changed his approach towards his learners when he realised that the way he was treating them was not working well:

When I looked at the senior teachers around me and how they are so strict, I honestly thought that that was what it takes to be a good teacher, but I just couldn't get into a positive relationship with the students that way... We have to move away from the traditional methods of teaching... We need to show love and care and patience and try and work democratically. Even though I do still get angry at times, I've moved away from shouting. I've become more sensitive. It just makes no difference so I've begun to show oneness with them, that I understand them... It has made a world of difference. (see Chapter Four, p. 69)

Thirdly, all of the teacher leaders in this study make an intentional effort to form meaningful connections with their pupils outside of their academic relationship. In this way they create opportunities to influence their pupils by playing a pastoral role in their lives. Whilst all of the teachers do this by asking appropriate questions, listening to their pupils and offering advice or help to their pupils, some of the teachers use other ways of developing deeper relationships with their pupils. As Jared says:

I've begun to show oneness with them, that I understand them. Even if I don't feel like doing it, I make an effort to ask them, "Hey, what's wrong? Are you okay?" and show them that I care. (see Chapter Four, p. 69)

Jared also explains how he forms relationships with his pupils through playing guitar, a common interest that he shares with them, and how this has created opportunities for him to lead them by forming extra-curricular groups:

In one of the schools where I taught they had a small Christian group and when they found out I could play guitar they asked me to help them. Eventually we started this youth group in school and it grew quite big. During our breaks on a Friday we would have up to 80 or 90 kids. They would come and play guitar and worship God for a few moments and I would teach the kids. It wasn't about me as a teacher but they would share their experiences if they wanted to preach. It was amazing. Sometimes we underestimate children, how much they know. (see Chapter Four, p. 70)

Karen explains how she mentors the children in her registration class by helping them with time management and stress management. She says:

I therefore find that with my registration class I often ask, “Okay, what’s up for this week? Is anybody in trouble? Is there anything I can do to help you find the time for you to get your school work done on time?” I try to give them skills to prioritise and manage their time better, because school is stressful. (see Chapter Four, p. 80)

Lastly, in Jared’s, Amaarah’s and Karen’s stories we can see how they have developed and implemented their own strategies for creating and maintaining discipline in their classrooms that are relevant to their personalities or their specific school context. For example, Jared found that he had to adopt a different attitude towards his learners in order to gain their cooperation:

Over the years I’ve learnt to adopt more of the approach where I see students as equal to me. Some of them are like 22, 21 years old and I’m 26 so I have to treat them as adults. When I started I used to try to use the approaches that my teachers used – the way they were so authoritative. That just created a thick wall between me and the students. I felt as if they were different to me, not in the same class, and I think that made issues worse because they began to see me as an outsider, not a part of the class. I found that they also challenge you if you treat them as though you are better than them, higher than them... Even though I do still get angry at times, I’ve moved away from shouting. I’ve become more sensitive... I now treat them with respect and it’s really working for me. (see Chapter Four, p. 69)

Karen also explains how the discipline methods that other teachers suggested did not work for her and, as a result, she had to adapt the way in which she disciplined her class to suit her personality. As she says:

When I first started teaching at Dunham High School, I was told by the other teachers that I ‘shouldn’t smile before Easter’. In the 31 years that I have been teaching, however, that has never worked for me. I have always found myself being a negotiator. I could never ever be a disciplinarian... I am not confrontational at all... I didn’t purposefully want to buck the system, but somebody was trying to force me to change something that was

working for me. Letting my pupils listen to music wasn't causing damage. In fact, it was helping some. (see Chapter Four, p. 79)

These four ways in which my research participants exhibit leadership as they continue to teach and improve their own teaching resonate with the behavioural indicators described by Grant's model of teacher leadership (2012) as well as Fairman and Mackenzie's (2014) findings on how teacher leadership is practically enacted. These resonant indicators described in Grant's model of teacher leadership are: "keeping abreast of new developments (attendance at workshops and further study) for own professional development"; "reflective practice", "engaging in classroom action research" and "taking initiative and engaging in autonomous decision-making to make change happen in classroom to the benefit of learners"; "developing meaningful relationship with learners (evidence of pastoral care role)" and, lastly, maintaining classroom discipline through a range of innovative strategies" (Grant, 2012, p. 56). These findings are also in agreement with Fairman and Mackenzie (2014) who found that teachers can act as leaders by showing commitment, reflecting on their teaching practice and implementing change.

As Grant (2012) herself acknowledges, the behavioural indicators that she describes in her model are not all-encompassing. In the stories of these teacher leaders, other practical ways of implementing teacher leadership in this zone emerge. Whilst the behavioural indicators that I am about to describe could all fall under mentorship, it is interesting to note how these teachers enact this mentorship differently in public schools compared to in private schools. For example, Jared, a public school teacher, makes an intentional effort to motivate his pupils to work hard by encouraging them and providing a vision for them of where their high school education might take them:

Not every student wants to learn because of the stereotypes attached to the subject, that it's for dumb people, silly people, but I recognised that if I'm going to say "They don't want to learn. That's their own problem", we are going to have a high failure rate so I try to encourage them all the time. You have to remind them that not everyone is meant to sit behind a desk. What they are learning is a skill and it feeds a different market out there. Then they begin to understand and we push out some good kids. (see Chapter Four, p. 68)

Private school teacher, Karen, also tries to teach her pupils to take responsibility for their own learning. In contrast, however, she tells of how she has to help her pupils learn how to manage the stress of the pressure and high expectations placed on them by their parents. As Karen says:

More and more I also find myself having to be beacon of reality for both parents and pupils when it comes to my pupils' marks. Parents are so focused on marks and all of that adds to the kid's anxiety... I also have to help my pupils understand that the tests you keep are the ones that you did badly in. The ones where you got 100% you can throw away. You can learn nothing from them. I try to put everything into perspective for them. (see Chapter Four, p. 81)

When it comes to mentoring pupils in terms of their social behaviour, there also seems to be a marked difference between the way this is implemented in public versus private schools. Amaarah, a public school teacher, tries to advocate basic morals and values in an inspirational way:

I also try to be an inspiration to them. I try to be inspirational with my pep talks with them... They often need moral pep talks because of the home backgrounds that they come from. Many of them are not taught morals at home and so they must be given moral lectures all the time. (see Chapter Four, p. 62)

Private school teacher, Steven, on the other hand, tends to spend more time facilitating and guiding complex discussions around diversity and inequality:

In my own classroom I'm very keen for my pupils to be open-minded but I take a bit more control over what they're saying. I try and interpret what they are saying and mediate the discussions. We bring it up every day in my subject, English. There is always some aspect of literature or something that we're doing that relates to the inequality and oppression that has happened, and is still happening in South Africa. They feel it all the time at school. (see Chapter Four, p. 74)

It would seem that these above strategies of enacting leadership are context specific and have arisen out of the challenges that these teachers faced within their classrooms. In Jared's

context, he has decided to address the negative stereotypes associated with his subject by encouraging his learners and reminding them of what they are working towards. On the other hand, Karen has to help her students learn how to manage the anxiety they experience due to the pressure of achieving at school. Amaarah addresses a lack of discipline and moral values in her pupils using motivational ‘pep talks’ whereas Steven facilitates discussions around complex moral issues such as dealing with diversity and inequality. In these ways, each of these participants exert their influence and leadership in ways that are relevant to their own pupils and their specific school contexts.

5.3.2 ZONE TWO: WORKING RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHER TEACHERS

There are three roles that Grant (2012) describes within this zone of teacher leadership. The participants in this study, however, only display behaviours indicative of two of these roles, Roles Two and Three, and they do so in specific and unique ways. There does not seem to be any evidence of the fourth role, “participating in performance evaluation of teachers in one’s own school” (Grant, 2012, p. 57), in their stories.

Jared enacts role two, “providing curriculum development knowledge within one’s own school” (Grant, 2012, p. 57), and role three, “leading in-service education and assisting other teachers in one’s own school” (Grant, 2012, p. 57), not only when he worked with his colleague, the drama teacher, to organise an excursion for their pupils, but also during his collaboration with the HOD on the student leadership programme. As he says:

One of the HODs asked me to join the student leadership programme with him. He called me and he said, ‘You know what? We’re gonna try and develop these leaders. Let’s put together some programmes.’ He’s like the big chief in charge of that and I just help him with some ideas here and there. (see Chapter Four, p. 71)

Amaarah demonstrates role three by developing a positive working relationship and rapport with her colleagues. She does this by assimilating their language and culture into her own and by being humble enough to ask the other teachers for advice, thereby encouraging feelings of trust and transparency between them as colleagues. This is illustrated in the following quotes from Amaarah’s story:

Learning isiZulu not only helped my relationships with my learners but it also helped me to form better relationships with my colleagues. We are very

much closer now. They say “Amaarah, you are just like us now” (see Chapter Four, p. 62)

The other day when I was talking to one of the senior English teachers at my school he said, “We remember you, Hassin. We can never forget you, because you were the one always asking and doing. Asking and doing. Whenever you had a problem in the classroom you would come back and ask.” (see Chapter Four, p. 63)

This demonstration of teacher leadership by Amaarah was also observed by Fairman and Mackenzie (2014). They identified that one way in which teachers can act as leaders is by asking questions about their own practice in order to exemplify risk taking, honesty and reflection and their benefits for teaching practice.

In the private school setting, Karen explains how she enacts role two by working with her fellow Maths teachers to develop the Maths curriculum. As she says:

I create a lot of the material that is used in the Maths department. I do it using my colleagues’ ideas, but I am the one who tends to take their bits and pieces and put them together. Our head of department encourages us to share our ideas... (see Chapter Four, p. 82)

She also enacts role two by modifying the Maths curriculum to suit her specific school’s context. For example, because the pupils in her school each have their own electronic device such as an iPad, she devotes a large amount of time to finding and learning how to use new apps that her pupils can use on their devices. As she says:

To find new apps and learn how to use them in my lessons takes hours... I spend hours struggling to find them and learning how to use them. (see Chapter Four, p. 82)

Both Steven and Karen enact role two through managing extra- and co-curricular activities in their school. Steven led a group of grade 9 girls on an annual two week hiking expedition. He is also the junior debating team coach and is also in charge of the girls that assist with managing events in the school hall. Karen was manager of the first team cricket side and is currently managing the girls’ first team waterpolo at her school. She describes how, in her

role as manager, she also has to guide pupils when it comes to socially acceptable behaviour. As she says:

I also have to be aware of what is happening around me socially and know when to take the initiative to say something to them when the need arises.
(see Chapter Four, p. 81)

Although it is clearly evident that my participants do display teacher leadership in zone two, it is much more restricted than the leadership that they display in zone one. This is, however, concurrent with the findings made by studies conducted in the South African context by Grant (2008), Grant & Singh, (2009), Grant et al. (2010) and Naicker and Somdut (2014). These studies all note a significant drop in teacher leadership enactment from zone one to zone two, three and four. This suggests that, although teacher leadership may not be confined to zone one, it is certainly more highly concentrated in zone one than it is in the other zones of teacher leadership.

5.3.3 ZONE FOUR: COMMUNITY LIFE AND CROSS-SCHOOL NETWORKING

The data generated in the study yields no evidence of the research participants acting as leaders in Zone Three: Whole school development issues such as vision building and policy development. Whilst, as a result of the methodological nature of this study, this does not necessarily mean that the participating schools are completely devoid of teacher leadership in this zone, this finding resonates with research conducted by Grant (2008) and Grant and Singh (2009) in Kwa-Zulu Natal schools. This study does, however, provide some, albeit limited, evidence that the participants do enact teacher leadership in Zone Four: Community Life and Cross-School Networking.

According to Grant (2012), one of the behavioural indicators of teacher leadership in this zone is involvement in cluster meetings. Both Jared and Karen exhibit involvement in cluster meetings and, consequently, collaboration with teachers from other schools. As Jared mentions:

We had a common test set up within our cluster. (see Chapter Four, p. 71)

It is, however, noteworthy that whilst Karen attends these cluster meetings, her level of influence at these meetings is low because of her lack of confidence:

At our cluster meetings I feel intimidated beyond description by the other teachers from our neighbouring private schools... I don't say a word at those meetings. (see Chapter Four, p. 83)

This suggests that mere attendance of these cluster meetings may not necessarily constitute leadership enactment.

Steven also shows leadership within this zone through his involvement in curricular and extra-curricular activities with other schools. For example, he was in charge of facilitating the Derby Day cultural activities with another school in Johannesburg. As he says:

I went up to Johannesburg for Derby Day now and that was awesome. It's a day when my school competes against the hosting school in a number of sporting and cultural events. I had to go up and help with the Cultural aspect. (see Chapter Four, p. 75)

He also initiated a pen pal exchange program with a Scottish school and networks with teachers from other Kwa-Zulu Natal schools as a result of his involvement in debating. He says:

We had a woman come to our school from Scotland last year and I was really excited to do an international pen pal exchange program with her school. (see Chapter Four, p. 76)

Later he also mentions:

Because I coach our junior debating team, I also work with a lot of different teachers from other schools. We chat a lot about what we can do to help our debating teams grow and improve. It's a nice way to network. (see Chapter Four, p. 77)

Karen displays leadership within this zone by liaising with parents, helping them to have the correct perspective of their children's performance and helping them to support their children's learning. She says:

More and more I also find myself having to be beacon of reality for both parents and pupils when it comes to my pupils' marks. Parents are so focused on marks and all of that adds to the kid's anxiety, especially Maths.

It drives me crazy. I try to help them understand that they should look at their child's progress over a year. There are going to be ups and downs, especially in Maths. Instead of punishing their hard working child just because he or she did badly in one little class test, they should be reassuring. (see Chapter Four, p. 81)

Although, as I have illustrated, there is some evidence of the research participants enacting teacher leadership within zone four, it is in a limited way. This concurs with the findings of Grant et al.'s (2010) survey analysis of 1055 post-Level one teachers' views of teacher leadership in Kwa-Zulu Natal schools as well as Naicker and Somdut's (2014) case study of teacher leadership enacted by novice teachers.

5.4 BARRIERS AND ENABLING FACTORS TO TEACHER LEADERSHIP

As Amaarah admits, "leadership is not easy". There are a number of factors which can hinder the enactment of teacher leadership in schools. Conversely, there are also factors which can support the enactment of teacher leadership. In this section I examine the barriers that emerge from the data whilst simultaneously engaging with some of the corresponding enablements that support teacher leadership.

5.4.1 CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

One of the most significant barriers to Amaarah's ability to form meaningful relationships with her pupils and colleagues and therefore influence them positively in any way, was the difference between her own culture and the prevailing culture within the school.

It has taken 5 years for me to get used to the culture within my school and to finally feel a part of it. I now feel that all the learners love me. I've got the worst learners to actually warm up to me. My experience has shown me that culture brings us together or tears us apart. It's the culture. It's not the learner or the teacher. It's not the fact that you are Zulu and I am Indian. It's the culture within the school. So I have tried to absorb their culture but, at the same time, not let go of my own. I think my greatest struggle as a teacher was the culture. I had to break down that barrier, and teaching happened later. (see Chapter Four, p. 62)

The differences between her culture and the culture within the school led to a break down in her relationships with her pupils and fellow teachers which was not conducive to positive working relationships. As she says:

My school has, what I call, a mocking culture. The learners are very quick to mock you and I was the target of a lot of mocking at that time because I could not speak Zulu. They, along with my colleagues at school, would also hound me with questions whenever I would wear my scarf around my neck. I was always explaining my culture because I was... the only odd one out. (see Chapter Four, p. 60)

As I explicated in my literature review (see Chapter Two, section 2.2.2.3, p. 24), a number of authors agree that positive, collegial relationships built on trust are necessary for the distribution of leadership (Day et al., 2009; Demir, 2015; Fairman & Mackenzie, 2014; Hunzicker, 2013; Struyve et al., 2014) and therefore, as Grant (2012) suggests, for teacher leadership to become a reality in schools. Thus any factor which might jeopardise these trust relationships has the potential to impede the enactment of teacher leadership in schools.

Although this barrier is starkly evident in Amaarah's story, the way in which she overcame this impeding factor can be considered an enabling factor to teacher leadership. From her story we see how Amaarah's willingness to assimilate the culture of the school helped her to overcome the barrier that cultural differences imposed. This is exemplified by Amaarah's willingness to put her own cultural practices aside within the school context, in order to better connect with her pupils.

Even though it's not acceptable in my culture for a married woman like me to go out without a scarf, finally I decided not to wear my hijab at school anymore and what a difference it made! I still wear my hijab in my own community and with my family but, for the sake of education and getting through to my learners, I have moved away from my own culture, and assimilated into theirs. I love and am proud of my culture and religion, and I cling onto it. I suppose removing my headscarf has been one of my greatest sacrifices... (see Chapter Four, p. 61)

By making a concerted effort to learn Zulu, the home language of her pupils and fellow teachers, Amaarah was able to gain their respect, enhance the discipline within her classroom and improve her professional relationships.

Learning Zulu has also helped me to gain control of my classes. The mocking has lessened and my learners now just do their work because they understand that I am now like all their other teachers. I'm not the odd one out who they can talk about and who they can trouble because I don't understand them. They now know that they cannot take advantage of me... Learning isiZulu not only helped my relationships with my learners but it also helped me to form better relationships with my colleagues. We are very much closer now. They say "Amaarah, you are just like us now" and they have even given me the name Thandiwe – the loved one. The more you feel like them and with them, the more they make teaching easy. They make your life easy and they become better friends. (see Chapter Four, p. 61)

5.4.2 ATTITUDES TOWARDS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

From Amaarah's perspective, the other teachers that they work with seem to be unwilling to be developed. This seems to be rooted in a fear of being seen as uneducated as a result of asking questions or asking for help. In addition, the formal leaders within their schools do not seem to show any intentional effort to develop their subordinates. This is particularly evident in Amaarah's story when she shares:

One thing that still makes me different from the other teachers I work with but which has helped me to develop as a teacher over the last 6 years, is that I am not afraid to ask questions... In my first days at my school I always wondered why the others did not ask questions. When I asked them why they said, "You see, in our culture, when you ask questions like you don't know, it means that you are inferior. People think you don't know. You're unqualified." (see Chapter Four, p. 63)

She also mentions:

I find that the Head of Departments (HOD) in my school do not develop their subordinates... But I can't afford to wait for the day when she is going

to come to us. She never comes to us. She never develops us in any meeting.
(see Chapter Four, p. 63)

As Katzenmeyer and Moller (2011) suggest, in order for teachers to act as leaders and be able to influence both their pupils and colleagues, they need to exhibit a high level of teaching skill. A willingness to improve and be developed as a teacher and leader is, therefore, a fundamental supporting factor to teachers acting as leaders within their schools. In the light of the barriers described above, Amaarah speaks about the necessity of being proactive when it comes to her own development as a teacher:

I've realised that I need to be proactive. It's all about you. Nobody is going to come and develop you. You've just got to develop on your own. You've got to do it on your own. (see Chapter Four, p. 63)

Thus, possessing the motivation and initiative to facilitate one's own development as a teacher may be an enabling factor to teachers acting as leaders.

5.4.3 LEADERSHIP CULTURE AND STRUCTURES, AND POWER DYNAMICS

The participants also speak of other teachers' unwillingness to accept informal leadership and how this poses a challenge for teacher leadership. Jared explains this during a conversation with one of his colleagues:

The last time I was speaking with one of my buddies, we agreed that the office automatically gives you power... As a level one teacher you don't have a lot of power but if you're just given that title, that office, you're automatically in a position of influence. (see Chapter Four, p. 71)

Whilst relating a story of how she found leading her fellow teachers difficult, Amaarah says:

Because I did not have a formal leadership position, it was difficult for them to accept my authority. (see Chapter Four, p. 64)

This suggests that within these schools there is a culture of hierarchical, bureaucratic leadership which is supported by a hierarchical school leadership structure and manifested in teachers' attitudes towards informal leadership. Studies conducted by Grant (2006; 2008) support the above findings. In her studies Grant (2006; 2008) concluded that hierarchical school structures governed by autocratic leaders and a general understanding amongst staff of leadership as being tied to one's formal position, are barriers to teacher leadership in schools.

Jared and Amaarah mention another dynamic of these power relations when they speak of their hesitance to lead certain initiatives because of what their fellow teachers might think of them and the power dynamics that exist within their schools. Jared exemplifies this when he says:

I actually want to get more involved in teaching leadership to the kids, and even the teachers themselves, because they don't really know about student leadership. They think we're just giving them badges and that changes nothing in their lives. Sometimes I would like to hold a workshop or something, but I also recognise that the other teachers would probably say 'who is he to come in and just tell us what to do?'. That power dynamic does exist to some degree. The worst thing is getting rejected because they don't take you seriously. (see Chapter Four, p. 71)

From the private school context, Steven seems to share a similar experience. He finds his status as a young teacher who is new to the school is a barrier to him being able to influence his colleagues. He says:

There's so much negativity here. I can't stand it, but because I'm new here and because I'm younger than everyone else, I just keep quiet. (see Chapter Four, p. 78)

It is evident that these participants feel that their leadership beyond the realm of the classroom would not be favourably accepted by their colleagues. Eargle (2013) and Li (2015) recognise a similar phenomenon in the American and Hong Kong schools that they studied. They concluded that an egalitarian ethos that permeated the culture within these schools led to teachers being reluctant to assert their leadership for fear of what the other teachers might think. This finding also resonates with conclusions made by Struyve et al. (2014) who found that Flemish teachers felt that their leadership roles jeopardised their social-professional relationships by making their colleagues suspicious of whether they are still “one of them” (Struyve et al., 2014, p. 219). This perception that no teacher should be above another in any way unless it is by formal appointment, is a significant barrier to teacher leadership and is experienced by teachers in schools all around the world.

The teacher leaders in this study do not only experience the challenge of power dynamics from their teacher colleagues. They also experience the issue of power exerted by their

formal leaders. From some of my participants' stories, it can be seen that the formal leaders within the school impede the enactment of teacher leadership in three ways. Firstly, as I mentioned earlier, Amaarah expresses that in her experience the formal leaders within the school do not provide opportunities for teacher development. Secondly, as Jared, Steven and Karen explain, in their schools, post-Level One teachers are not given opportunities to be a part of whole school decision-making and they experience their formal leaders as gatekeepers to their leadership efforts. As Jared says:

Our management team only plan amongst themselves. They don't really meet with the whole staff. It's like a black box. Everything happens in there and then they come out with an idea. (see Chapter Four, p. 72)

Jared also speaks about a lack of appropriate collaborative structures which, were they in place, would enable post-Level One teachers to be more involved in decision-making. He says:

But in my school there's no structure to say that this is the student leaders group, let's get all these teachers involved there and let's get someone to head it. (see Chapter Four, p. 72)

Private school teacher, Karen, explains how some of the formal leaders in her school are not willing to consider her new ideas and consistently stop her from being able to put her ideas for change into practice. She says:

There are also very strong, dominant personalities in this school who like being in control and who like things done in their way. For example, our deputy principal likes to follow a linear path and likes to check boxes, so any new idea often doesn't go anywhere with him. (see Chapter Four, p. 83)

Steven, on the other hand, shares two contradictory experiences of his formal leaders' influence on teacher leadership. In the context of whole school decision-making, he finds that formal leaders constrain the influence or input of post-Level One teachers. He says:

That's what I think everyone is upset about at school at the moment - that there is no consideration for input or ideas. The staff are simply asking to be listened to. They don't even expect their advice to be implemented.

Schools are supposed to be places you work with, not for, but these private schools are becoming schools you work for and not schools you work with. (see Chapter Four, p. 78)

When it comes to leading his own initiatives within the school, however, Steven experiences the principal as being very supportive and encouraging of his leadership. He says:

The headmaster and I chat a lot about the projects and other things that we would like to do in the school. I know if I really feel strongly about something, if I really want to do something or I don't like the way something has been done, I can go and speak to him and he will listen and support it. (see Chapter Four, p. 77)

Thus, from Steven's story, one can see that although formal leaders can act as barriers to teacher leadership, they can also be significant enablers to teacher leadership within schools.

The third way in which formal school leaders impede teacher leadership is by 'micro-managing' teachers. Although formal leaders within the school may recognise the leadership of post-Level one teachers in principle, some of these formal leaders struggle to support teacher leadership in practice. Karen tells of how being 'micro-managed' by the leaders above her, disempowers her as a teacher leader. She says:

Although I love my job, I work with a lot of people who love 'micro-managing' me and it makes me very, very unhappy... For example, I am the manager of the Waterpolo girls' first team and yet I cannot make a single decision with regards to my team without first running it past the person who is in charge of the girls' waterpolo. I mean, not one decision... I feel completely disempowered. It's horrible. So the only option I have is not to be involved in girls' waterpolo anymore. (see Chapter Four, p. 84)

These findings speak to the complex relationships and power dynamics within schools that Torrance and Humes (2015) suggest, can inhibit the practical enactment of teacher leadership and prevent it from becoming part of everyday school life beyond the realm of the classroom. They also find support in the writings of a number of academics, who purport that the success of teacher leadership within schools is heavily influenced by the existing formal leadership structures within the school, as well as the beliefs and attitudes of existing formal leaders and

fellow teachers. (Akert & Martin, 2012; Crowther et al., 2009; Eargle, 2013; Grant, 2010, 2012; Harris, 2013; Helterbran, 2010; Naicker & Somdut, 2014).

It is interesting to note the different ways in which my research participants, Amaarah, Jared and Karen, address the challenge of hierarchical structures, culture and power dynamics. Jared believes that one way of overcoming this barrier is to team up with other like-minded colleagues. He says:

I think as an individual, in order to become influential you sometimes have to get on to a team. (see Chapter Four, p. 72)

This resonates with zone 2 of Grant's (2012) model of teacher leadership where teachers act as leaders by working with their colleagues. Amaarah, however, displays the potential to overcome these barriers because of her innate willingness to take risks and 'go against the grain' – a characteristic of teacher leaders identified by Fairman and Mackenzie (2014). She says:

I no longer care about that anymore. No matter what people think of me I will do what I need to do for my learners. I think I'm going to get into a new endeavour in the third term this year. I want to start a debate programme in my school. (see Chapter Four, p. 64)

From the private school context, Karen explains how she no longer shares her ideas with those formal leaders who are unwilling to listen and consider her ideas seriously. Instead, she shares her ideas only with those leaders who she knows will listen and consider them. Even if these listening leaders are lower in rank, they then have more power and opportunity to take her ideas forward so that they might eventually be approved and implemented.

I don't even bother to share my ideas with him. I have been working here for a while and I know how everyone works so I share them with other people and I kind of go around the 'blockage'. Luckily, there are other avenues you can use where you know your ideas won't just be put on the back burner. I don't always get what I want, but at least I know the idea will be heard and thought about for more than five seconds. I feel like giving up sometimes, but I have learnt in this place that you don't have to shout to be heard. (see Chapter Four, p. 83)

In Grant's (2012) model of teacher leadership, having an awareness of the micro-politics is one of the behavioural indicators of teacher leadership in zone 3: school level decision-making within one's own school. This example shows how Karen uses her understanding of the micro-political climate in her school to her advantage in order to address the barrier that some formal leaders pose to her ideas and initiatives and, therefore, her leadership.

5.4.4 WORK LOAD

Another barrier to teacher leadership that emerges from the participants' stories is teacher workload. Jared describes how he feels as though he is pulled in many different directions as a teacher because of the many, varied responsibilities that he has:

Even though I want to be the one who influences these children, it's difficult. There are times when you really feel that you have to do a lot as a teacher. Especially in the space we are in. We are expected to manage in a particular way, deal with behaviour, deal with everything under the sun, every issue from academics to even their social lives, social issues, drug addiction, domestic abuse and at the end of the day you are answerable when that child doesn't give you work and they receive zero. (see Chapter Four, p. 70)

Steven explains how the workload experienced by the teachers in his school makes implementing new ideas challenging. He says:

With the sheer load on all of us here, the other teachers in my department were quite resistant. Any new idea spells out work. There's so much work for us to do here and even though our principal is so keen for us to take on new initiatives, at the same time nothing gives. You just get given more work but nothing is taken from you. Because I knew the way my colleagues were going to react, I had to tailor my proposal. (see Chapter Four, p. 76)

Karen also describes how she does not have enough time to test her ideas to see if they will work well and, as a result, does not have the confidence to share her ideas at cluster meetings.

I have very little support from my school when it comes to developing my curriculum. My school's leadership seem to want to keep me busy with menial tasks. I don't know if it is true, but it makes me feel as if they don't

think I am doing enough work in a day. Because I am so busy, I don't have the time to develop and test my ideas. I don't say a word at those meetings.
(see Chapter Four, p. 83)

Although the practical implications differ in different school contexts, it seems that the workload experienced by teachers is a significant challenge when it comes to them acting as leaders in their schools and beyond. Research conducted by Grant (2006; 2012) and Grant and Singh (2009), corroborates the above finding. Also working in the South African context, these authors posit that teachers are reluctant to assume informal leadership roles because they feel over worked and unable to handle any extra responsibilities (Grant, 2006; 2012; Grant & Singh, 2009).

5.4.5 GOVERNMENT POLICIES

The findings of this study also suggest that government policy can inhibit the enactment of teacher leadership. Jared believes that one of the reasons why teachers are reluctant to take on informal leadership roles is because they are fearful of the consequences of contravening complex educational policies.

I also feel like all the policies that we have are sometimes so confounding. There are so many and they limit you as an educator sometimes... That's when I began to see that this is why a lot of teachers do the bare minimum because if you do something wrong, you can get into so much trouble for it. So sometimes it limits you a lot. You really have to be careful. (see Chapter Four, p. 71)

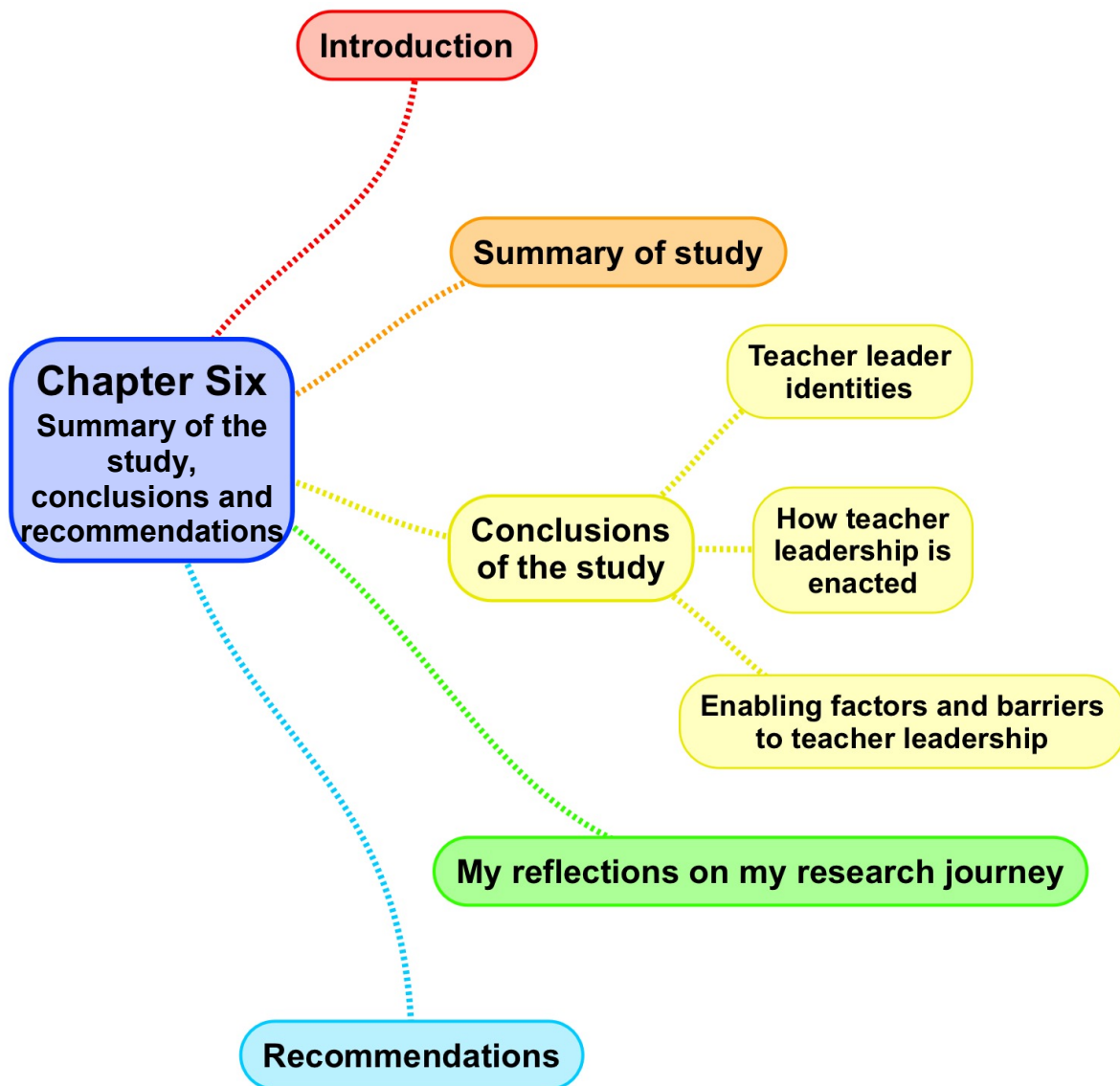
As I discussed in my review of literature, the vague and ambiguous nature of government policies can be a barrier to teacher leadership. The unclear and ambiguous nature of government policies certainly does not help mitigate the “confounding” nature of these policies for teachers. In addition, Torrance and Humes (2015) allude to the failure of education policies to address confusion around leadership concepts and the complex challenges that teachers face during implementation. These failures may also exacerbate teachers' fears of unintentionally contravening government policy.

5.5 CONCLUSION

This chapter focused on answering the three questions that constituted this study's research puzzle. These questions are:

- Who are the teacher leaders in public and private secondary schools?
- How is teacher leadership enacted on a day-to-day basis in public and private secondary schools?
- What are the enabling and constraining factors for teacher leadership in public and private secondary schools?

I addressed the first question by examining the teacher leaders' identities using Social Identity Theory. I then used the zones, roles and behavioural indicators described by Grant's model of teacher leadership (2012) to scrutinize the different ways in which my research participants act as teacher leaders within their schools and beyond. Lastly, I identified those factors which act either as enablements or as challenges to these participants acting as leaders in their work contexts. In the next chapter I will delineate a summary of this study, my conclusions and recommendations as well as my reflections on my research journey.



CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY OF THE STUDY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter follows on from Chapter Five, in which I delineated my analysis of the narratives. The analysis of the narratives was based on the stories that I presented in Chapter Four. I used my research questions to structure the analysis and my theoretical framework as a lens to help me make sense of the data. In this chapter I round up the study by providing a chapter-by-chapter summary of the entire study, my reflections on my research journey, as well as my conclusions and recommendations.

6.2 SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

In Chapter One I contextualised the study by describing the social and historical milieu in which the study took place. I also stated the focus and purpose of the study: to explore the lived experiences of teacher leaders in public and private secondary schools. In order to provide justification for the study, I addressed relevant personal, practical, policy, social, and research concerns. I then went on to describe and explain the questions that guide the study and which make up my research puzzle. I explained and differentiated key terms such as leadership, management and teacher leadership, and, lastly, gave an outline of the chapters that make up this study. The process of writing this chapter increased my motivation to pursue this research as I reflected on the contextual relevance of this study and the potential role that it could play in improving education in South Africa. It also enabled me to fine-tune and focus my thoughts around the study, thereby providing a firm ground from which I could leap into the next step of the research process.

Chapter Two is divided into two sections: my review of the scholarship around teacher leadership and my theoretical framework. In the first section I presented relevant academic literature by discussing both the theoretical perspectives of teacher leadership and its potential value in education, as well as relevant issues that have emerged from national and international empirical studies around teacher leadership. I also offered a critical examination of government policies such as the *Revised Policy on the Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education Qualifications*. I then concluded the section by highlighting the dearth in academic

scholarship concerning research conducted in the African, private school context and using narrative inquiry methodology. In the second section of Chapter Two I delineated the three theories that constitute my theoretical framework: Social Identity Theory, the theory of distributed leadership and Grant's model of teacher leadership. I also explained how these theories work together to provide a theoretical lens for this study. Writing both sections of this chapter helped me to clarify my understanding of the concept of teacher leadership and its practical outworkings. I also gained a more balanced view of teacher leadership by looking at the potential value it has to offer education as well as the challenges that it faces in implementation.

The focus of Chapter Three was the research design and methodology used in this study. In this chapter I described the different elements of the research design and methodology and justified my choices by making the thought processes behind them explicit. The different elements that I addressed are interpretivism as my personal and research paradigm; narrative inquiry as my research methodology; how I selected my participants; the schools in which the research took place; how I went about generating data through narrative interviews, collage inquiry and artefact inquiry; reflections on my experiences in the field; how I analysed the data; how I addressed the issues of ethics and trustworthiness; and the limitations of the study. Whilst writing each part of this chapter I had to spend a lot of time engaging in critical reflection of my research choices. By reflecting on my research paradigm I also became more aware of my personal worldview, how it has developed and how it has been influenced and transformed over time. As I became more familiar with the intricacies of narrative inquiry and began my data generation I was struck by the power of storytelling, for both the tellers and listeners. I found my passion for education was re-ignited as my participants shared their experiences with me. As I delved into their stories I also observed the therapeutic and empowering potential of narrative inquiry as a methodology. I appreciated the relational and respectful nature of this methodology that puts people first and research second, without undermining the quality and rigour of the study. Because my personal teaching experience has been in the private school context, I found that by hearing about the experiences of my participants who are public school teachers, my perspective was significantly broadened. I was also personally challenged as a teacher never to give up, to think and problem-solve creatively and to cultivate a grateful attitude towards the privileged environment in which I work.

In Chapter Four I presented the stories that I co-constructed with each of my four participants and this represents the first level of my data analysis. In this chapter I transformed the field texts (transcribed interviews, Pinterest board images and artefact images) into stories that told of the experiences of teacher leaders: their identities, how they enact teacher leadership and the factors they find to be enabling or challenging to their leadership as post-Level One teachers in different spheres of the school. The process of writing these stories was an iterative one. I found that I had to repeatedly ask myself whether the parts of my participants' stories that I found interesting or exciting were relevant to my research puzzle. This also made me very aware of how easy it is for my own biases, preferences and personal opinions to cloud the research process.

Chapter Five included the second level of my data analysis. In this chapter I answered the research questions that constituted my research puzzle. Using my theoretical framework to guide my analysis, I looked for common or unique and noteworthy 'threads', plots or themes that emerged from the stories I wrote in chapter four. For each theme I explained what I understood the data to be saying. I then related it to literature in order to highlight how it either resonated with existing research findings, or provided a different or new point of view.

6.3 CONCLUSIONS OF THE STUDY

A number of conclusions can be drawn from the analysis of the narratives that are presented in this study. In this next section I present my conclusions as they pertain to the different research questions.

6.3.1 TEACHER LEADER IDENTITIES

The teacher leaders in this study possess multiple, simultaneous identities that are both personal and professional in nature. The findings suggest that whilst some of these identities have persisted over time, others have changed and continue to change over time and across different social contexts. These teacher leaders form their identities by finding, or creating, similarities between themselves and certain social groups to which they would like to belong (in-groups), whilst simultaneously acknowledging the differences between themselves and other groups (out-groups). Despite this desire to identify with, and therefore behave like, certain social groups, these teacher leaders do display enough agency to differ from their in-groups where they see fit, especially for the sake of their learner's academic success.

A number of different qualities of teacher leaders emerged from the data. Whilst some of these qualities concur with findings made by other authors, others seem to be unique amongst the body of literature around teacher leadership. In agreement with findings made by Fairman and Mackenzie (2014) and Hunzicker (2013), these teacher leaders display a strong, self-motivated desire to see their learners succeed. They are reflective innovators who regularly reflect on their practice and creatively change the way they do things in order to improve their teaching. They also possess the ability to form positive working relationships with their colleagues yet are willing to ‘go against the grain’ and take risks in terms of trying new things and embracing change. Unique to the existing scholarship around teacher leadership, the teacher leaders in my study display a willingness to position themselves as followers and seek guidance and advice from fellow colleagues. They do this because they recognise a need for growth in themselves and out of a desire to improve their teaching. They also display strong pastoral qualities and an ability to connect with pupils on a personal level. In addition, they are high achievers with an inherent desire for continued achievement and who believe in the power of education to change lives.

6.3.2 HOW TEACHER LEADERSHIP IS ENACTED

Using Grant’s (2012) model of teacher leadership to identify the ways in which my participants enact teacher leadership, it is evident that the prevalence of teacher leadership decreases as one moves from Zone One (in the classroom) to Zone Four (community life and cross school networking), a finding that resonates with a number of other studies (Grant, 2008; Grant & Singh, 2009; Grant et al., 2010, Naicker & Somdut, 2014). Teacher leadership is also evident in Zones Two (working relationships with other teachers) and Four, but there is no evidence of it being enacted by my participants in Zone Three (whole school development). This lack of teacher leadership in Zone Three seems to be a result of formal leaders in these schools acting as gate keepers to teacher leadership on the whole school level.

Within Zone One across public and private schools, my participants exhibit leadership by “continuing to teach and improve [their] own teaching” (Grant, 2012, p.56) through pursuing further part-time studies, reflecting on their work and developing creative solutions to the challenges they face, forming meaningful connections with their pupils on a personal level, and developing their own context-specific discipline strategies. These ways of enacting teacher leadership concur with the behavioural indicators described in Grant’s (2012) model

of teacher leadership, as well as Fairman and Mackenzie's (2014) findings. Unique to existing literature, however, these teachers also display leadership in terms of mentoring their pupils, specifically with regards to taking responsibility for their own learning and, their social behaviour. It is interesting to note, however, that the ways in which they do this seem to be starkly different in public versus private schools and are thus context-specific. For example, public school teacher, Jared, motivates his pupils to work hard by encouraging them and giving them a vision of the benefits of a good education. In contrast, private school teacher Karen spends time helping her pupils manage the stress and anxiety they experience due to the high expectations placed on them by their parents.

As we move to Zone 2 of Grant's model, we see that teacher leadership is enacted in a far more limited way than it is in Zone One. Across both public and private schools, the teacher leaders in this study enact teacher leadership in terms of Role Two (providing curriculum development knowledge within one's own school) and Role Three (leading in-service education and assisting other teachers within one's own school) of Grant's model. With regards to Role Four (participating in performance evaluation of teachers in one's own school), there seem to be silence around peer evaluation in the public schools, despite the fact that government policy stipulates the implementation of the Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS). In the private schools, performance evaluation occurs in a restricted way through moderation of assessment tasks. There is, however, no evidence of any other form of peer evaluation in these schools. Both the public and private school teachers in this study displayed leadership by working on curricular material and co-curricular activities together with their colleagues and fostering strong working relationships based on trust and transparency. It is noteworthy, however, that only the private school teachers showed leadership in terms of co-ordinating extra-curricular activities.

Concurrent with other studies (Grant et al., 2010; Naicker & Somdut, 2014), the teacher leaders in this study enact teacher leadership in a fairly limited way in terms of Zone 4 (community life and cross-school networking). Whilst in both public and private schools teachers are involved in cluster meetings, the extent to which they display leadership in this context is constrained. For example, Karen says of cluster meetings, "I don't say a word at those meetings" (Chapter Four, p. 84). Private school teacher Steven displays leadership in this zone through his involvement in co-ordinating extra- and co-curricular activities with teachers from other schools. Karen, also a private school teacher, exhibits leadership as she liaises with parents about how they can best support their children's learning.

Looking at the ways in which teachers enact leadership on a day-to-day basis in public and private schools, it is interesting to observe how these teachers display the ability to enact leadership in ways that are relevant and appropriate to their context and the unique challenges that they face in their schools. It can therefore be argued that, although there are some similarities in the ways that teachers act as leaders across different schools, successful teacher leaders have the ability to appropriately respond to their unique teaching environments and address the specific issues that they face as teachers in an apt, context-relevant way.

6.3.3 ENABLING FACTORS AND BARRIERS TO TEACHER LEADERSHIP

There are a number of different factors that my participants experience as barriers to their ability to act as teacher leaders in their schools. By examining how my participants addressed these barriers, however, I was also able to identify corresponding enabling factors for teacher leadership.

From the analysis of the stories in this study it is evident that cultural differences between teachers and their pupils and colleagues, acted as a significant barrier to the practice of teacher leadership. Simultaneously, however, when teacher leaders were able to address this challenge by being willing to actively assimilate the prevailing culture within the school, this became an enabling factor.

In addition, some teachers faced a negative or apathetic attitude towards development within the school from both colleagues and those in formal leadership positions. These attitudes impede the enactment of teacher leadership in the school, but when teachers are proactive about initiating their own development and are willing to ask for guidance despite what others may think of them, they display attitudes that enable teacher leadership.

This study also shows that a culture of hierarchical, bureaucratic leadership supported by hierarchical leadership structures and an egalitarian ethos amongst teachers makes it difficult for post-Level One teachers to assume informal leadership roles in their school. More specifically, formal leaders impede teacher leadership in 3 ways. The first way in which they do this is, as mentioned earlier, by failing to develop post-Level One teachers. The second way they do this is by excluding post-Level One teachers from school level decision-making and failing to support their leadership initiatives. The third way they do this is by micro-managing teachers, thereby undermining their leadership roles. The participants address these challenges by teaming up with like-minded colleagues in order to amplify their voice, being

willing to take the risk of ‘going against the grain’, and by avoiding leadership ‘blockages’ by sharing their ideas and initiatives with only those formal leaders who are willing to listen them and support them as far as possible.

Another barrier that emerged from the data and which finds support in existing literature, is teacher workload (Grant, 2006; 2012; Grant & Singh, 2009). Not only do the many, varied responsibilities held by teachers make it more difficult for them to take on leadership responsibilities, but the heavy workload experienced by other teachers make them resistant to new ideas that are suggested by teacher leaders. This arises because new ideas are perceived as more work on top of an already heavy workload.

Finally, resonant with Torrance and Humes (2015), the last barrier to teacher leadership that I identified in this study is that of confusing, complex government education policies. The confounding nature of these policies makes teachers afraid of taking on leadership roles for fear of contravening these policies and having to face unfavourable consequences.

6.4 MY REFLECTIONS ON MY RESEARCH JOURNEY

As I look back on this research process, I feel as though my journey can be likened to climbing a ladder. The ladder itself was my research methodology, narrative inquiry. At first, it was a very short ladder because I did not know very much about this methodology, but as I engaged with literature, my supervisor and critical friends, and learned more about it, my ladder grew in height. It was here that the fortnightly sessions that my supervisor organised with me and my critical friends (fellow researchers) became so



Figure 6.1: My journey can be likened to climbing a ladder.

important. This was especially true because of the dearth in Educational Leadership and Management research using narrative inquiry as its methodology. During these sessions we critiqued one another’s work and learned from one another’s successes and necessary improvements.

On the bottom rung of this ladder, where I began this journey, my view and experience of the world was quite limited. With regards to my personal teaching career, my experience has been limited to private schools. My perspective of the teaching world was therefore quite narrow and context-specific. Every time I interacted with my supervisor, critical friends or

research participants and every time I engaged with literature and learned more about teacher leadership, it was like I was taking a step up this ladder. With each step that I took higher up this ladder I was able to see a little more of the world around me. I was able to see further and my perspective of the world grew wider and more varied. I, therefore, feel very privileged to have had the opportunity to engage with fellow researchers and teachers who work in contexts that are very different from my own experience. By hearing about their lives and teaching experiences I have been able to see the world through their eyes and this has really helped to broaden my perspective and deepen my understanding of the world around me.



Figure 6.2: The further I climbed up my research ladder the wider my perspective of the world around me and the further I could see.

As I delved into my participants stories, the power of story-telling, for both listeners and story-tellers, made a significant impression on me. As I listened to, and became part of, my participants' stories, I saw the therapeutic benefits of story-telling. This was especially evident in my interactions with the level-One teachers I interviewed, whose stories are often left untold. During one of our sessions together my supervisor shared the following African saying with me: "Until lions tell their tale, the story of the hunt will always glorify the hunter". This saying has stayed with me since that day and has challenged me to make a greater effort to draw out and listen to the experiences of those around me in my personal and professional life. This is exemplified in the following quotation from one of my reflections on my interviews with Amaarah.

I hope that, as she said herself, through the reflection that she is going to be doing as she participates in this study, I hope that for her that will be empowering and validating and encouraging.

I also experienced the power that stories have to change the listener. When one listens to another's story with sincere interest, one cannot leave that experience unchanged. As I listened to my participants' stories I was challenged, motivated and inspired. This is illustrated by the following quotation from my reflections on the interviews I conducted with my participants, Jared and Karen.

Jared was talking today about his experience of how teaching and learning happens overseas when he went to America. Ja and it just inspired me that we don't have to do things the way that we were taught or keep doing things the same way and I think that's a theme that's sort of come out in both Karen and Jared, in their stories. Both of them are very reflective and almost action-learning kind of people. People that are conducting their own action research all the time and reflecting on their practice, changing their practice until they find something that works and ja, I really think that that's very admirable and inspirational. That we need to keep reflecting. We need to keep learning, We need to keep changing the way that we teach so that we can get through to kids.

Thus, the reflective nature of narrative inquiry gave me an opportunity to reflect on my own teaching practice from different perspectives.

The notion of climbing a ladder can easily make one think of climbing a corporate ladder where, as one climbs, one's status, economic and otherwise, improves. With this increasing status can also come increasing pride at one's achievements. This is not what I experienced and it is not what I intend to portray here. For me, as I climbed my research ladder and gained more understanding, I was better able to see how much more there is that I still do not know. Thus, the process of this study has been a humbling one for me. The more I know, the more I realise how much I do not know. Thus, instead of viewing research as a way of finding definitive answers for problems that we encounter, I now see it as a way of simply broadening my perspective and deepening my understanding.



Figure 6.3: I would not have been able to complete this study without the support of my supervisor, critical friends and loved ones.

It has taken a lot of effort to climb this ladder and, at times, I doubted whether I would be able to take the next step. During these times the ladder felt unstable and rickety. If it were not for my loved ones, critical friends and supervisor, who all together helped to hold it steady, I am sure I would not have made the climb at all.

6.5 RECOMMENDATIONS

I conclude this chapter and this study by presenting four recommendations that I feel would constitute an appropriate response to this study.

Firstly, I argue for a revision of educational policies, especially those around teacher roles and responsibilities, such as the *Revised Policy on the Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education Qualifications* (Republic of South Africa, 2015). This study reveals that the vague and confusing nature of current South African educational policies acts as a hindrance to the enactment of teacher leadership in schools. It is also evident that the specific ways in which teachers enact teacher leadership successfully are contingent upon context. Thus, there is an apparent need for more clear educational policies which are considerate of the unique challenges that teachers face when it comes to implementation as well as workshops aimed at post-Level One teachers to assist them in translating these policies into practice in ways that are appropriate and relevant to their unique contexts.

Secondly, I suggest that at the undergraduate and postgraduate level, prospective teachers are given the opportunity to engage in discussions and with literature around teacher leadership. Particular attention should be paid to discussions and debates around the practical challenges, that empirical evidence suggests, teacher leaders are currently facing as well as those factors that enable teacher leadership.

Thirdly, I contend that the Department of Education should provide workshops in which school management teams are capacitated in terms of leveraging teacher leadership for the benefit of their schools. More specifically, this means involving post-Level One teachers in school level decision-making, being supportive of leadership initiatives that are brought forward by post-Level One teachers, curbing tendencies towards micro-managing their teachers, being sensitive to teacher workload and, being more aware of overloading their teachers.

My final recommendation is directed at post-Level One teachers themselves, for without their cooperation teacher leadership will remain an unrealised rhetoric. I urge these teachers, in whatever context they may find themselves, to take the risk of creatively and confidently exercising their agency in terms of assuming informal leadership roles within their schools. Our schools need courageous, proactive teachers who are willing to be agents of change in their schools and communities.

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APPENDIX 1: KZN DoE PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH



education

Department:
Education
PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL

Enquiries: Nomangaliso Ngubane

Tel: 033 392 1004

Ref:24/8/702

Mrs ER Ballard
90 Ferguson Road
Glenwood
4000

Dear Mrs Ballard

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE KZN DoE INSTITUTIONS

Your application to conduct research entitled: "TO LEAD OR NOT TO LEAD: LIVED EXPERIENCES OF TEACHER LEADERS IN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SCHOOLS", 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 12 January 2016 to 30 June 2017.
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.

Gugulesizwe High School

New West Secondary School

Nkésinathi S.P. Sishi, PhD
Head of Department: Education
Date: 13 January 2016

KWAZULU-NATAL DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

POSTAL: Private Bag X 9137, Pietermaritzburg, 3200, KwaZulu-Natal, Republic of South Africa ...dedicated to service and performance
PHYSICAL: 247 Burger Street, Anton Lembede House, Pietermaritzburg, 3201. Tel. 033 392 1004 beyond the call of duty
EMAIL ADDRESS: keholo@kzndoe.gov.za / NomangalisoNgubane@kzndoe.gov.za
CALL CENTRE: 0860 506 363; Fax: 033 392 1203 WEBSITE: www.kzndoe.gov.za

**APPENDIX 2: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH FROM
SCHOOL PRINCIPALS**

90 Ferguson Road

Glenwood

4001

12 November 2015

Attention: The Principal

[REDACTED]

Dear [REDACTED]

**REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT
RESEARCH AT YOUR SCHOOL**

As you are aware, I am a M.Ed student studying at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, School of Education (Edgewood Campus). As part of my degree requirement, I am required to conduct research. I therefore kindly seek permission to conduct this research at your school. My study title is: **To lead or not to lead: Lived experiences of teacher leaders in public and private schools**. The purpose of this study is to investigate and explore the lived experiences of teacher leaders in public and private schools in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa.

The planned study will focus on one purposively selected, post level one teacher within your school and will use approximately 3 audio-recorded, unstructured interviews, collage inquiry and artefact inquiry as data generation tools.

PLEASE TAKE NOTE THAT:

There will be no financial benefits that the participant may accrue as a result of their participation in this research project.

The participant's identity will not be divulged under any circumstance/s, during and after the reporting process.

All responses will be treated with strict confidentiality.

A fictitious name will be used to represent the participant's name.

Participation is voluntary which means the participant is free to withdraw at any time he/she so wishes without incurring any negative or undesirable consequences/penalty on his/her part.

The interviews shall be voice-recorded to assist me in concentrating on the actual interview.

The participant will be contacted in advance about the interview dates and times.

For further information on this research project, please feel free to contact my supervisor or the research office whose contact details are provided below.

Should you choose to accept my request for consent to conduct research at your school, please could you grant me this consent in the form of a **signed** letter on your school's **letterhead** and with your school **stamp**.

Thanking you in advance for your time and consideration.

Yours sincerely

Mrs E. Ballard

Cell no.: 074 159 3393

Email address: erinraeballard@gmail.com

Supervisor's details:

Dr Inbanathan Naicker

Faculty of Education

University of Kwa-Zulu Natal

School of Education

Edgewood Campus

Tel no.: 031-260 3461

Research Office details:

Mr P. Mohan

HSSREC Research Office

Tel no.: 031-260 4557

Email: mohunp@ukzn.ac.za

APPENDIX 3: INFORMED CONSENT LETTER FOR PARTICIPANTS

90 Ferguson Road

Glenwood

4001

24 May 2016

Dear Participant

INFORMED CONSENT LETTER

My name is Erin Ballard. I am a M.Ed student studying at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, School of Education (Edgewood Campus). As part of my degree requirement, I am required to conduct research. My study title is: **To lead or not to lead: Lived experiences of teacher leaders in public and private schools**. The purpose of this study is to investigate and explore the lived experiences of teacher leaders in public and private schools in Kwazulu Natal, South Africa.

You have been purposively selected to participate in this study. I therefore kindly request your permission to be one of my research participants. You will be required to participate in approximately 3 audio-recorded, unstructured interviews using collage inquiry and artefact inquiry. The dates and times for these interviews will be organized with you in advance.

Please note that:

- Your confidentiality is guaranteed as your inputs will not be attributed to you in person, but reported only as a population member opinion.
- The interview may last for about 1 hour and may be split depending on your preference.
- Any information given by you cannot be used against you, and the collected data will be used for purposes of this research only.
- Data will be stored in secure storage and destroyed after 5 years.
- You have a choice to participate, not participate or stop participating in the research. You will not be penalised for taking such an action.
- Your involvement is purely for academic purposes only, and there are no financial benefits involved.

- If you are willing to be interviewed, please indicate (by selecting as applicable with an X) whether or not you are willing to allow the interview to be recorded by the following equipment:

	Willing	Not willing
Audio equipment		

For further information on this research project, please feel free to contact my supervisor or the research office whose contact details are provided below.

Thank you in advance for your contribution to this research.

Yours sincerely

Mrs E. Ballard

Cell no.: 074 159 3393

Email address: erinraeballard@gmail.com

Supervisor's details:

Dr Inbanathan Naicker

Faculty of Education

University of KwaZulu Natal

School of Education

Edgewood Campus

Tel no.: 031-260 3461

Research Office details:

Mr P. Mohan

HSSREC Research Office

Tel no.: 031-260 4557

Email: mohunp@ukzn.ac.za

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.

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT

DATE

.....

.....

APPENDIX 4: NARRATIVE INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

In order to answer the three research questions I used unstructured narrative interviews with each of the 4 teachers participating in the study. These interviews took place together with the collages that the participants made in the form of Pinterest boards (see appendix 5) and the artefacts that I asked them to bring in (see appendix 6)

In order to answer the first research question “**Who are the teacher leaders in public and private secondary schools?**”, I asked the participants to describe themselves and their personal and professional background. What follows are possible probe questions and prompt themes.

Personal prompt questions and themes:

If I were to write a brief biography of who you are – what are some of the most important, defining aspects of who you are that I should make sure not to leave out?

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

Professional prompt questions and themes:

How would describe yourself as a teacher?

What made you choose teaching as a career?

How do you think others see you? How would they describe you and/or the roles that you play?

What is like to be a teacher, in your experience?

The following probes will be used in order to answer the second research question: “**How is teacher leadership enacted on a day-to-day basis in public and private secondary schools?**”

Possible probes:

What are some of the roles that you see yourself playing as a teacher?

- in your classroom,
- in your school outside the classroom and
- in your community?

How do you think others see the roles that you play at school? How would they describe the roles that you play?

What are some of the responsibilities that you have as a teacher?

In what ways do you act as a leader in your school?

I will also answer the third research question, “**what are the enabling and constraining factors for teacher leadership in public and private secondary schools?**”, by using the following probes.

Possible probes:

What, do you think, would make it easier for you to play the role of a teacher leader?

When do you feel excited about acting as a leader within your school context?

What discourages you from acting as a leader within your school context?

What makes it difficult for you to play the role of a teacher leader?

APPENDIX 5: COLLAGE INQUIRY

In attempting to answer the first and second research questions I will use a narrative interview as described in appendix 3 together with a form of collage inquiry using a Pinterest board to facilitate the collection of images and/or words.

The first research question is: “Who are the teacher leaders in public and private secondary schools?”

The second research question is: “How is teacher leadership enacted on a day-to-day basis in public and private secondary schools?”

Pinterest is a free website that requires registration to use. Pinterest acts as a personalised media platform. Users can upload, save, sort, and manage images—known as pins—and other media content (e.g., videos and images) through online collections known as pinboards. These pinboards can be made private or public. For the purpose of this research the participants’ pinboards will be made private.

Participants will be shown how to register on the Pinterest website and create their own pinboard and will then be given approximately one week to collect images and words on this pinboard around the collage question: “*Who am I as a person and teacher?*”. I will also give them the following questions in a written format to think about as they put their pinboards together over the week that I will give them.

- Who am I as a person and as a teacher?
- If you were to write a brief autobiography of who you are – what are some of the most important, defining aspects of who you are that you would make sure not to leave out?
- What are some defining moments or experiences in your life that have played an important part in making you who you are today?
- How would describe yourself as a teacher?
- What made you choose teaching as a career?
- How do you think others see you? How would they describe you and/or the roles that you play?
- What is like to be a teacher, in your experience?

Possible prompts for participants during discussion of pinboard:

How did you feel doing this activity?

What did the activity mean for you?

Explain your Pinterest board.

What part of the Pinterest board represents you as the teacher and you as an individual?

Do any of the pictures or words on the Pinterest board signify a critical moment or incident that may have occurred in your life?

Do any of the pictures or words on the Pinterest board speak to the ways in which you might act as a leader in the school context?

Instructions on using Pinterest

Learning about what Pinterest is

You can start by visiting the following site and watching the video entitled ‘What’s Pinterest?’:

<https://help.pinterest.com/en/guide/all-about-pinterest>

From here you can learn more about Pinterest and how it works by clicking on the tabs on the left hand side of the page (eg. Pins)

Signing up

Go to www.pinterest.com

Type in your email address and create a password. Then click the ‘sign up’ button.

Enter your full name and age, and select your gender. Click the ‘come on in’ button.

On the next page the site will ask you to select 5 topics that you are interested in so that they can build a custom home feed for you. This means that when you log in to Pinterest next time there will be suggested pins on your home page of things that may interest you and which may like to save onto one of your Pinboards. Please select ‘Education’ as one of the 5 topics that you are interested in. You may also like to select ‘life quotes’ as another topic.

Once you have selected 5 topics click ‘Done’.

You will now be taken automatically to your ‘home feed’ page. There will be a number of pictures on this page which have been selected for you based on the 5 topics you have just chosen.

Creating a board

Click your name on the top right hand corner of the home feed page.

Click ‘Create board’

Give the board a name (eg. ‘This is Me’ or ‘My story’ or ‘Who I am’)

Next to description you can type a brief description of the theme of this board.

From the drop down box next to category, select ‘Education’.

Next to Secret set the slider to ‘Yes’. This way, no one else can see this board.

Click ‘Create’.

Adding Pins to your board

Using the ‘Pin It’ button whilst browsing the internet

On the next page to which you will be directed there is a button that says ‘Get the Pinterest browser button’. Click this button.

The next page will show you what the browser button looks like. Click ‘Get our browser button’.

A pop-up will appear at the bottom of the page. Click ‘Run’

On the next pop-up, click ‘Install’.

Click ‘Next’.

You should now see a ‘Pin It’ button (as you were shown earlier) at the top of your Internet Explorer page when you open it.

When you are searching in google or browsing the internet and you come across an image or page that you would like to save to your Pinboard, simply click the Pin It button.

You then need to select a pin to save – hover the mouse over the picture you want to save and click ‘Pin It.’

Another window will open. Select the board that you would like to save the image (or pin) to.

Done!

Searching for pins in Pinterest

Log in to your Pinterest profile.

At the top of your home feed page you can type in what you would like to search for.

You can also refine your search by selecting one of the tabs under the search bar.

You can then scroll through the pins and save those that you would like to save to your board.

Hover the mouse over the pin you would like to save and click ‘Save’.

Select the board you would like to save the pin to.

Done!

Take-home instructions for Pinterest board

Who am I as a person and as a teacher?

Please take some time to pin some images/words/photos/quotes to your pinboard that mean something to you in terms of describing who you are as a person and as a teacher.

Feel free to use the following questions to help you as you are thinking about this:

- If you were to write a brief autobiography of who you are – what are some of the most important, defining aspects of who you are that you would make sure not to leave out?
- What are some defining moments or experiences in your life that have played an important part in making you who you are today?
- How would describe yourself as a teacher?
- What made you choose teaching as a career?
- How do you think others see you? How would they describe you and/or the roles that you play?
- What is like to be a teacher, in your experience?

APPENDIX 6: ARTEFACT INQUIRY

In attempting to answer the third research question I will use artefact retrieval as a way of generating data. The third research question is:

What are the enabling and constraining factors for teacher leadership in public and private secondary schools?

The artefacts will be used to enhance the richness of the data generated through the interviews because the pictures, symbols, sayings and metaphors collected by each participant in his artefacts will help the participant to describe and explain those factors which he finds enabling or constraining when it comes to his day-to-day experiences of acting as a teacher leader (Clandinin, 2013; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

Participants will be asked to bring artefacts that they feel comfortable to share with me, the researcher. They will be asked to bring artefacts that have meaning to them with regards to aspects of their school environment that make it easier or more difficult for them to act as leaders in different areas of the school.

The following prompts may be used in order to stimulate discussion around the artefacts:

- Explain why you chose this artefact.
- What does this artefact represent or symbolise about your work as a teacher?
- What is the time period of this artefact?
- What metaphor would you choose to represent, symbolise and reinforce the significance of this object to you?

Take-home instructions for Artefact Inquiry

What makes it easier or more difficult for me to act as a leader/influence others in my school community?

Part of your role as a teacher is to lead your learners within your classroom. It is also possible, however, for teachers to act as leaders beyond the classroom, in the wider school environment and community.

Please take some time to collect some objects or photos of objects that have meaning to you in terms of aspects of your school environment that make it **easier** or **more difficult** for you to influence others and act as a leader in the different areas of your school.

APPENDIX 8: LANGUAGE CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

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18 JUNE 2017

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

LANGUAGE CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

This serves to inform that I have read the final version of the dissertation titled:

LEADING THE CHANGE YOU WISH TO SEE IN YOUR SCHOOL: LIVED
EXPERIENCES OF TEACHER LEADERS IN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SCHOOLS
by E. R. Ballard.

To the best of my knowledge, all the proposed amendments have been effected and the work is free of spelling and grammatical errors. I am of the view that the quality of language used meets generally accepted academic standards.

Yours faithfully



DR S. GOVENDER

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