

**An investigation into the implementation of oral history  
in the Further Education and Training (FET) phase in  
selected KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) schools.**

**By**

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## DECLARATION

The work presented in this thesis is my own original efforts and that I have not plagiarised the work of anyone else in completing the requirements for it. Where use has been made of the work of others, it has been duly acknowledged. Further, I declare that this dissertation has not been submitted in any form to another university. The University of KwaZulu-Natal has certified ethical clearance for this study.



BARBARA CLAIR WAHLBERG

## DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my loving parents Chris and Joan Wahlberg

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## ABSTRACT

The National Curriculum Statement (NCS) for history, in accordance with the pedagogy of Outcomes Based Education (OBE) and Curriculum 2005 (c2005), aims to make history learner-centred, emancipatory and skills-based. The inclusion of oral history in the Further Education and Training (FET) phase speaks to this methodology and aim, along with addressing the need to rewrite South Africa's history and acknowledge the biases that exist in the written record.

This study aimed to determine the perceptions, opinions and experiences in the implementation of oral history in the FET phase in selected schools in KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) through the 'voices' of history subject advisors, history teachers and former history learners.

To determine such perceptions, opinions and experiences, the methodology of qualitative research was employed. This included convenient sampling, semi-structured interviews and a document study. Data and document analysis followed, using the methods of coding.

The research revealed that while the sampled history subject advisors, teachers and former learners view oral history in the FET classroom in a positive light, problems and difficulties are being encountered. The implementers of oral history and of all official curriculum policy documents are the subject advisors and the teachers. The various levels of implementation that take place based on the

Department of Education (DoE) and the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education (KZNDOE) policy documents, are being carried out to the best of the implementers' abilities under difficulties that can be associated with a new curriculum, new methodologies, and a new content that has to be delivered in accordance with the NCS and c2005.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iii
ABSTRACT	iv
ABBREVIATIONS	x
<b>CHAPTER ONE Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Introduction to study	1
1.2 Background to study	2
1.3 Purpose and Rationale of study	7
1.4 Research problem	8
1.5 Theoretical position of study	9
1.6 A route map of the study	10
<b>CHAPTER TWO Literature Review</b>	<b>13</b>
2.1 Introduction	13
2.2 The nature of oral history – a concept clarification	13
2.3 What has been done around the implementation of oral history internationally?	24
2.4 How has oral history been viewed and implemented in SA?	34
2.5 Conclusion	45

<b>CHAPTER THREE</b>	<b>Research Design and Methodology</b>	<b>46</b>
3.1	Introduction	46
3.2	Ethical considerations	49
3.3	Selecting study participants and materials	52
3.3.1	Document study	52
3.3.2	History teachers	53
3.3.3	History subject advisors	57
3.3.4	History students	58
3.4	Methodology – Research design adopted for this study	60
3.4.1	Documents	62
3.4.2	Semi-structured interviews	64
3.4.3	Focus Groups	71
3.4.4	Research Journal	74
3.5	Conclusion	75
<b>CHAPTER FOUR</b>	<b>How are the teaching and learning of oral history envisaged in the FET curriculum?</b>	<b>77</b>
4.1	Introduction	77
4.2	Policy documents reviewed	78
4.3	Subject advisors' views on how the teaching and learning of oral history is envisaged in the FET curriculum	103
4.4	Conclusion	111



<b>CHAPTER FIVE</b>	<b>How do teachers experience the implementation of oral history and what are their perceptions of this inclusion in the FET phase?</b>	114
5.1	Introduction	114
5.2	History teachers' views of oral history	116
5.3	Support for the implementation of oral history	119
5.4	The teaching and learning of oral history in the FET phase	127
5.5	History teachers' perceptions and views of the implementation of oral history	145
5.6	Conclusion	151
<b>CHAPTER SIX</b>	<b>What are former history education learners' experiences of the implementation of oral history in the FET phase?</b>	154
6.1	Introduction	154
6.2	Students Responses	156
6.2.1	Group A's experiences of the implementation of oral history	156
6.2.2	Group B's experiences of the implementation of oral history	169
6.2.3	Focus group C's experiences of the implementation of oral history	174
6.2.4	Group D's experiences of the implementation of oral history	180
6.2.5	Group E's experiences of the implementation of oral history	185
6.3	Teachers and subject advisors views on how learners experience the implementation of oral history	189

6.4 Conclusion	193
<b>CHAPTER SEVEN Conclusion</b>	199
<b>APPENDICES</b>	213
Appendix A	213
Appendix B	214
Appendix C	217
Appendix D	219
Appendix E	221
Appendix F	223
Appendix G	225
Appendix H	227
Appendix I	229
Appendix J	230
Appendix K	232
Appendix L	235
Appendix M	237
Appendix N	238
Appendix O	239
<b>REFERENCES</b>	240

## ABBREVIATIONS

ANC	African National Congress
CNE	Christian National Education
c2005	Curriculum 2005
NCS	National Curriculum Statement
DoE	Department of Education
OBE	Outcomes Based Education
FET	Further Education and Training
KZN	KwaZulu-Natal
IKS	Indigenous Knowledge Systems
KZNDoe	KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education
OHASA	Oral History Association of South Africa
IJR	Institute of Justice and Reconciliation
UKZN	University of KwaZulu-Natal
OHP	Oral History Project
BEd	Bachelor of Education
LO	Learning Outcome
AS	Assessment Standard
SAG	Subject Assessment Guideline
CASS	Continuous Assessment
GDCAP	Guideline Document for Continuous Assessment Programme

WCDoE	Western Cape Department of Education
WWW	Worldwide Web
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
UDF	United Democratic Front

## Chapter One

### 1.1 Introduction to study

History is not just a collection of dead facts, it is the story of how the world of today came to exist. It is the record of the lives, the experiences and the struggles of those who have gone before – and of how their lives shaped ours (*Report of the History and Archaeology Panel, 2002*).

The study of history provides humankind with an understanding of who we are, where we come from and the possibilities of our future. Through reading, understanding and studying history we can develop the ability to understand society in order to make it better (Hobsbawm, 1997). However, in the case of South Africa's past education system, history was instead used (pre-1994) as a political tool of manipulation, oppression and indoctrination. History education during the apartheid era became an instrument for upholding and reinforcing the race and class-based ideologies of the National Party government. Divisions during apartheid were ubiquitous throughout society on many levels, which extended to a history curriculum that was chosen to conform to an Afrikaner Nationalist vision or ideology (Dean & Siebörger, 1995). Through this history curriculum, learners were prepared for their roles in society as perceived by the government in power. In the process, the racist *status quo* of the time was maintained and reinforced through the teaching of history (Fataar, 1997). The psychological effects of this on especially black youth ensured that many learners developed a specific view of themselves as marginalised and

subordinate (Molteno, 1984). This was strongly reinforced and emphasised by the textbooks, in which people of colour were left out or presented in a negative light (*White Paper on Arts, Culture and Heritage*, 2001).

In light of this, after South Africa's first fully democratic elections in 1994, education in South Africa underwent a much needed and imperative change. The African National Congress-led government (ANC) vowed to overhaul the apartheid-era education system, which was seen as a pillar of the old white-supremacist order (Polakow-Suransky, 2002). The previous prejudiced system of Bantu education and Christian National Education (CNE) was abolished and a new curriculum was implemented, Curriculum 2005 (c2005), which was created in 1997. Alongside, this many academics, politicians and educational theorists interrogated and proposed new methodologies and syllabi that needed to be enforced as a mark of a new and democratic country that wanted to present a better education system.

## 1.2 Background to study

Recognising the potential for the subject 'history' to be used as a means of redressing previous imbalances relating to the perceptions of the past and of achieving the ideals embodied in the National Curriculum Statement (NCS), it became necessary for a transformation of both the content taught and the methodologies employed. These ideals included ideas around fair and equal

education, free from biases and prejudices, that would emphasise and encourage ideas around multiculturalism and would therefore fit the face of South Africans. One of the issues that had to be confronted and dealt with was the way in which the apartheid education system presented history as being a grand narrative of 'big' men. In this sense, the historical record for generations was heavily biased and characterised by a Eurocentric perspective. As a result, the history of ordinary people and people of colour was falsely interpreted, went unrecorded, or was silenced altogether (Kallaway, 1997). Within this context, Africa and Africans were often seen as being backward and with no 'real' history to discover or teach. Consequently, a thorough revision of the history curriculum and teaching methodology was needed in order to redress areas of race, gender and class inequalities, which had become synonymous with the apartheid era (Kallaway, 1997).

It must be remembered that history had previously been taught predominantly through textbooks and only in a teacher-centred manner, with very little individual research, analysis or fieldwork for the learners. Considering these weighty problems and the reality that history as a school subject was losing importance, an attempt was made by the Department of Education (DoE) through the then minister of Education, Professor Kader Asmal, to address these issues and the immense baggage that was still present from the apartheid era.

*The History and Archaeology panel of the values in Education Initiative* was established and launched on the 12<sup>th</sup> September 2000, and an official task team consisting of well-known South African historians, archaeologists, educational theorists and other academics was launched to put together a report. The task team identified problems around the teaching of history in schools and suggested ideas around heritage, oral history and indigenous knowledge systems (IKS) as essential components for not only a democratic education system, but also as a way to teach history. This gave further impetus to the inclusion of oral history in the Further Education and Training (FET) phase of the curriculum.

As mentioned earlier, the remaking of history had to go beyond the content envisaged. It had to include a different pedagogy. This necessitated a paradigm shift that changed the focus from 'knowing' history as written by professional historians and academics to 'doing' history (*Report of the History and Archaeology Panel, 2002*). Emphasis shifted to a learner-centred and skills-based active participation within the study of history. A means of achieving this would be for learners to develop and study through investigating, researching, debating and interpreting history through various sources. Furthermore, in view of how history was studied and taught during the apartheid educational ideology, history teaching needed to go further to address the history of all people, a more inclusive 'history from below'. Through the nature of a social history, one needed to give the 'unofficial' histories a more 'official' status. One practical and pragmatic way of doing so is through the study of oral history.



Moreover, the DoE therefore, purposefully emphasised the importance of oral history as an alternative and effective methodological approach to recording and constructing social histories as a new paradigm or historiography. As such, oral history is seen as providing a voice to the voiceless, and as compatible with the 'doing' history approach and skills-based learning as expected in the history NCS (DoE, 2003). Furthermore, oral sources provide active documentation of ordinary peoples' lives that can be used towards recording neglected histories as an important component of social history. The clear link with Outcome Based Education's (OBE) recognition of a social history is commented on by Tony Cubbin, formerly of the Department of History, University of Zululand: "In order to bring History in line with OBE the focus of the subject should shift to community or micro-history...local History is a powerful means of restoring academic History to the realm of the active, relevant and real in our community lives" (Cubbin, cited in du Bruyn, 2002).

On these grounds, oral history can therefore be seen as a link between the intended aims of the NCS for history education and a practical means of achieving this. The skills that are involved in oral history are also key to what c2005 envisaged for history in terms of being learner-centred, outcomes-based and an active part of the historical process of researching, recording, documenting and writing. In addition to encouraging redress and the inclusion of left-out voices, oral history, according to Callinicos (2001), promotes indigenous

languages, introduces new research methodologies and nurtures the crucial skill of listening.

In relation to what is expected of history learners in the FET phase, oral history also forms the link between OBE and the teaching of a social history. On closer examination of the *Guideline Document for Grade 12 Continuous Assessment Programme* (DoE, 2008), awareness is drawn to the difficulty of conducting research with learners in less affluent, under-resourced schools, and this suggests that an oral history project (OHP) should consist of interviews with people from the local community, so as to eliminate the issue of not having adequate resources and historical evidence. This can both provide a service to the community and provide a practical way for learners to reflect on what they have been studying (Spivey, 2005).

As a result of the above arguments in favour of the implementation of oral history, it has become a compulsory component of the Grade 12 history curriculum, which serves to encourage learners to research and discover local and neglected histories. Recent developments within KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education (KZNDoE) have drawn attention to the need for oral history to be conducted in Grades 10 and 11, as well as this being mentioned in the *Learning Programme Guidelines* (DoE, 2008). It is mooted that learners who conduct an oral history project can engage in the practice of an authentic social history and

in the process of historical writing, will become active contributors to the recording, saving and documentation of South Africa's history.

### 1.3 Purpose and Rationale of study

The teaching of oral history in schools has been implemented with great success in Britain and the USA; however, little research has been done to investigate its possibilities in schools in South Africa. Research done on investigating the implementation of oral history in the above-mentioned two countries have revealed that learners respond positively to it as a teaching methodology, when contrasted to the traditional teacher-centred methods of teaching history (Ritchie, 1995; Thompson, 2000). In light of the above, this thesis becomes an important and necessary study towards the investigation into the implementation of oral history within South African schools. Furthermore, this study will provide insight into the problems and difficulties faced by teachers and learners who conduct oral history as part of the NCS requirements.

The purpose of this study is therefore threefold:

1. Firstly, to conduct a document study of the policy and curriculum documents related to (and relevant to) the implementation of oral history within the FET phase;

2. secondly, to investigate the implementation of oral history in selected KZN classrooms in the FET phase, through educators' experiences; and
3. thirdly, to examine past history learners' experiences relating to the implementation and conduct of oral history in schools.

#### 1.4 Research problem

The aim of this study is to investigate the implementation of oral history in the FET phase. This will be done through the guidance of the key questions created for this thesis. Through the qualitative nature of this study and the methodology of semi-structured interviews, focus groups and an initial document study, the data required to answer the key questions was formulated.

The key questions for this study are therefore the following:

1. How is the teaching and learning of oral history envisaged in the FET phase?
2. How do teachers experience the implementation of oral history in the FET phase?

3. What are (former) history learners' experiences of the implementation of oral history in the FET phase?
4. What are history teachers' perceptions of the inclusion of oral history teaching in the FET phase, and why do these perceptions exist?

### 1.5 Theoretical position of study

The dialogue that oral history aligns itself to is that of a social history. Social historians study the lives of ordinary people and how they have made an impact within their communities and the world at large, as opposed to the stories and events related to 'big' men. This is known as a 'history from below', or 'grassroots history'. In this process, social historians make use of a variety of varying forms of sources and methods in constructing a history of ordinary people. Within this context, social historians have viewed their work as a means to 'give voice' to the experiences of previously marginal groups and to recover the stories of regular people. The creation and acknowledgement of these 'hidden histories' have become synonymous with the democratisation of the historical record (Minkley & Rassool, 1998), in that a new and social history for all people can be written.

In order for learners to practise a social history within the South African context, it is indispensable that they get the opportunity to use the rich history of an oral culture, which this country has to offer (Callinicos, 2001).

This educational initiative is in accordance with the importance of being taught a social history, which embraces a discourse claiming that 'voices from below' can be recovered to create a less biased history that includes all people. The rationale behind this is that, through the practice of oral history, learners in schools can form an active part of the documenting of social history that feeds into IKS and produces "local knowledge that is unique to a given culture or society" (Warren, 1995). This thesis is therefore located within a social history theoretical framework, as it feeds into the need to rewrite biased histories and the importance of giving recognition to previously marginalised people and their histories.

#### 1.6 A route map of the study

I have chosen to write my thesis using first person narrative as a means of taking ownership of the research that I have conducted. It has been a long journey, and I have worked closely on this thesis to discover the results that it has produced. I felt that within the framework of educational research and my own insight and discoveries, it would be more empowering and 'real' to write this thesis as my discovery and process of realisation.

To achieve aims and to present findings adequately, the dissertation is organised into seven chapters.

- Chapter One sets the scene and introduces the study by presenting the background, purpose, rationale and theoretical location of the study.
- Chapter Two includes a selection of literature appropriate to the topic under investigation as deemed necessary for the review. Furthermore, it provides an examination of the key available literature and sources alongside the key theories, concepts and ideas relating to oral history as a study, and more specifically, oral history within schools, both locally and internationally. In addition, the main questions and problems that have been addressed to date will be examined.
- Chapter Three presents the conceptual and theoretical frameworks used within the study by discussing the nature of qualitative research and the methodology that is involved. Qualitative research employs the use of semi-structured interviews and document analysis, which is in keeping with the mixed mode methodology of qualitative research. Explanations and reasons as to why these methods were used, as well as the steps taken in analysing and coding the data, are included. The limitations of the study are discussed alongside this, as well as the ethical issues that come with the terrain.
- Chapters Four, Five and Six include the research findings. Chapter Four deals with the document study and provides answers to key question one,

this being “how is the teaching and learning of oral history envisaged in the new FET curriculum”. The chapter also includes discussion of the interviews that were conducted with the history subject advisors. The history subject advisors are viewed as the front line agents of the process of implementing oral history in schools and their views therefore add depth to the chapter.

- Chapter Five addresses the perceptions and experiences of the implementation of oral history as viewed by the teachers. This chapter presents the voices of the history teachers, who give their feelings and perceptions of oral history as a task to be conducted with their learners, as well as why these feelings and perceptions exist.
- Chapter Six, on the other hand, focuses on the voices of past history learners and their experiences of conducting an oral history project. This chapter presents their feelings, likes and dislikes, and they provide further insight into what the teachers are doing to assist in the project.
- The final chapter, Chapter Seven provides a conclusion to the study, in which the findings are drawn together. Finally, recommendations that arise from this research project will be made.



## Chapter Two

### Literature Review

#### 2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I shall explore a selection of appropriate literature surrounding the topic of oral history and education. Firstly, I shall look at a concept clarification of what oral history is, and at a brief history of its development as a component of history. Secondly, I shall look at what has been done internationally in relation to the implementation of oral history in schools. This will lead to a review of the available literature on the implementation of oral history in schools within South Africa. Furthermore, the major debates and issues surrounding the topic of oral history and its implementation in schools will be reviewed alongside the key theories, concepts and ideas.

#### 2.2 The nature of oral history – a concept clarification

The documenting and writing of history should be a process of enquiry, investigation and debate. Using this method, one is able to achieve as objective a view of the past as possible and therefore attain as close as possible to a real understanding of how people lived. This process is as important as the history itself, as it constructs awareness of what it means to be a historian and the importance and value of using a range of sources to document history. Historians create a past by writing it (Howell & Prevenier,

2001), and they write the past through the use of an array of accessible sources, which they use as evidence. Therefore, people who study history should be given the opportunity to understand the process of documenting, writing, reading and doing history through a range of available sources, including oral sources and methodologies including oral methodologies.

Sources (which can include primary and secondary sources) are the remains of the past used to construct meaning and explanation. These can include written (letters, diary entries, faxes, minutes, newspapers and songs), visual (buildings, relics, tools, paintings, cartoons and photographs) and oral resources. Just as a detective uses evidence from a crime scene, so does a historian rely on evidence to patch the past together, to tell a story and to gain illumination. A primary source (also known as an original source) is a piece of evidence created or written during the time under examination. Primary sources are the records of contemporaries who participated in, witnessed, or have commented on the events a person is studying (Furay & Salevouris, 2000). Secondary sources are based on primary sources and are descriptions of the time in question written after the events have taken place.

The work of a historian would be futile without the possibility of using a multitude of sources to achieve the clarity of an event or person that he or she seeks to know and understand. According to Furay & Salevouris, historians receive the raw information from the primary sources and record it in the written histories that subsequently endeavour to explain how and why things unfolded as they did (2000). Sources used by an historian range in type and

reliability and, more importantly, the historian must always consider the conditions under which a source was produced, the intentions that motivated it, and its inherent trustworthiness (Howell & Prevenier, 2001). Given this understanding of what primary and secondary sources are and how oral sources fit into the category of a primary source, this chapter seeks to understand the literature surrounding oral resources and oral-related methodologies that are used in the creation of what is known as oral history. This will therefore aid my investigation of the implementation of oral history as an alternative, creative and progressive form of documenting and learning about history in the classroom. This is commented on by Dorson (1972): "...oral historians sometimes consider themselves pioneers, working with nontraditional sources, outside the mainstream of the historical profession" (cited in Dunaway & Baum, 1996, p. 283).

The practice of creating an oral history is shaped through the method of interviewing people and transcribing their stories as a means of documenting 'their' or 'a' history. The transcription of the account or story to paper turns it into a primary source as the event is being documented via a first-hand account. However, in terms of an oral source that has been created through an interview process, a certain amount of scepticism can emerge. This is owing to the very nature of an oral source, as the interview process relies to a large degree on memory. The character of memory is based on a human function and an ability to be able to store an event and then recall the event at a later stage, but owing to our particular personal backgrounds, biases and opinions, it is possible to exaggerate certain details and overlook others

(Oelofse & du Bruyn, 2005). This is commented on by Ritchie (1995) who states that “dealing with memory is risky business, and it is inescapably the interviewer’s business” (p. 11) and Nevins, “Any man’s recollection of past events is untrustworthy” (cited in Thompson, 2000, p.159). For this reason, some historians have debated the reliability and the scientific use of oral sources in the study of history. Conversely, leading oral historian Jan Vansina has commented, “no one in oral societies doubts that memories can be faithful repositories which contain the sum total of past human experience and explain the how and why of present day conditions” (Vansina, 1985, p. xi). In this statement, Vansina is emphasising the value of oral sources within a particular context and how their contribution can aid in understanding the lives, experiences and circumstances of people. In addition, he is making reference to the nature of memory within the methodology of oral history. Although one may argue that memory can be selective, it is however still acknowledged as a mechanism to remember past events and commit these events to memory, able to be recalled at a later stage and to be acknowledged as reliable and trustworthy.

The discipline and representation of memory within historical studies has been growing since the 1980s (Kros & Ulrich, 2008). And, in fact, a significant development has been the way in which memory has become a focal point within the study of oral history. The interviewing process within oral history is centred on the very act of remembering and recalling events and histories, as is commented on by Denis (2008): “...the past should not be seen in isolation from those who generate memories about it” (p. 11).

Oral history, by its very nature, stems from a culture of oral tradition, and in this sense some might say predates history (Starr, 1996), as it has been in existence since before history was first recorded (Winther Scobie, 1979; Ritchie, 1995). Oral tradition can be defined as “verbal messages which are reported statements from the past beyond the present generation” (Vansina, 1985, pp. 3 & 27) and is similar to oral history in that it applies to both a process and a product – the product being the oral messages, and the process being the transmission of such messages. Oral history is derived from a non-written culture in which the only means of remembering and saving stories and histories through the generations was by way of oral process of transmission. Jacques Le Goff (1992) has often referred to oral tradition as ‘ethnic memory’, meaning it is the collective memory of people without a written culture. Both oral historians and oral societies alike value this form of documentation as an alternative pre-literate means of recording history.

Many pre-literate cultures passed historically important information from generation to generation through oral testimony and folklore. Examples of folklore can include traditional songs, stories and myths, such as the writings of the Zhou dynasty in China, who collected the sayings of people for the use of court historians over 3000 years ago. Similarly, during the 16th century European conquest of the Americas, Spanish chroniclers depended on oral sources to rebuild the history of the indigenous people, such as the Aztecs and the Incas who lived in South America (Ritchie, 1995).

In the light of the above, it is necessary to discuss the differences between the methodology and the nature of oral testimony and oral history. Oral history consists of sources that are reminiscences and/or eyewitness accounts about past events that are relatively contemporary (recent past events), as opposed to oral testimony, which no longer have contemporary status. 'Relatively recent' can be categorised as being from up to a hundred years, and with regard to oral history, the person being interviewed was usually alive during the event. Oral testimony consists of a far more distant past when the story or history being retold is beyond the lifetime of the informant. It tends to be a story or history that has been passed down from previous generations. The methodology involved in the collection and analysis of the sources created through oral procedures is also vastly different. Oral historians, in contrast to the passing down of an oral tradition, interview participants on relatively recent events when the "historical consciousness in the communities involved is still in flux". This is why oral history is often referred to as "immediate history" (Vansina, 1985, p. 13).

Oral historians and folklorists both use interviews to assemble information, but not essentially alike information. In terms of reliability, historians consider folklore the least reliable, as it consists of elements of fiction and make-believe mythologies to create colourful expressions of a culture. In commentary of this, it becomes apparent that there are different degrees of reliability in relation to the overarching theme of types of oral evidence. In terms of methodology, there is a difference, too, in that folklorists often collect data from chance encounters, whereas oral historians conduct interviews on

the basis of organised and prior research (Dorson, cited in Dunaway & Baum, 1996). For historians, oral sources would need to undergo a process of scrutiny and understanding in terms of methodology to determine their reliability as useful historical sources. The folklorist Barbara Allen has observed that oral historians see oral sources as “mines of raw data” from which they can dig up historical interpretations, whereas folklorists are more associated with “recognising identifiable patterns” in the ways people form their memories (Allen, cited in Ritchie, 1995, p. 16).

The application of oral, along with written, sources were generally acceptable up to the late 19th century and were considered valuable sources to be used in the process of documenting history, in addition to written sources. However, with the arrival of the German school of scientific history, and the promotion of documentary research, the use of oral sources and oral history was seen as less objective and not reliable. In addition to this, Leopold von Ranke, a German historian of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and one of the main instigators of the German school of scientific history, maintained that “documents created at the time that historical events occur are most reliable”, and that all oral related sources should be dismissed as folklore and mythical in nature and were generally used only by naïve amateurs, as they were merely “shoddy memories told from a biased point of view” (Ritchie, 1995, p. 1). It was only a century later that the value and use of oral sources and oral history were once again emphasised and embraced as a useful source contributing towards the writing and researching of history. This was owing to the need to re-write history that people could identify with – a people’s history, a history of ordinary

people, to provide a 'voice' to the 'voiceless'; and one means of doing so was through people's testimonies and stories – hence, oral history.

The term 'oral history' became synonymous with interviewing in the 1940s. Allan Nevins, an American journalist-turned-historian, author and educator, created the first modern oral history archive in 1948. His successor, Louis Starr, continued with Nevins's work and the development of oral history as a supplementary and alternative methodology of documenting and studying history. Nevins and Starr have often been referred to as the first generation of professional oral historians, who successfully invigorated the nature, importance and use of oral history (Dunaway, 1996). Through their pioneering work, many oral history projects started to develop on just about every continent. This was done alongside worldwide social and political changes, especially within the last decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. These changes included a need for society to confront past prejudices and crimes of humanity. Moreover, history as a discipline wanted to document these stories, so as to provide an outlet for previously silent voices and ignored histories, and therefore to strive for a history that is inclusive of all people, and not just the elite classes.

In addition, historians were confronted with the inadequacy of archival documents and the way that history had been documented and recorded. It was claimed that a vast amount of the history that had been written was one-sided and that many documents generally reflected biased and racialised views of former prejudiced societies. Most existent historical documents were



from those within society who had had status and power. In view of this, it became apparent that a new and uplifting means of rewriting people's histories was greatly needed. It was acknowledged by some historians that oral sources were just as unreliable or reliable as written sources were, and were therefore given recognition as a different and additional means of documenting history.

It is significant, then, that the use of oral history was welcomed by some historians who were seeking out an alternative and additional means of re-recording and investigating the many hidden and discarded stories. Many historians envisaged that the documentation of history through oral sources would provide a real and uplifting impetus to the historical process, and a valuable means of re-writing previously biased histories. This was further emphasised during the 1960s and 1970s, the second generation of oral history, with stress placed on the writing of what was known as social history, where the experiences of working class people are emphasised – also known as a “history from the bottom up” (Winther Scobie, 1979). As mentioned by historian William Cutler (1971), oral history can “fill information gaps in the written record” (p. 186). This becomes important for historians who aim at writing as objective an account as possible. Although oral history is not merely about filling in the gaps, its importance lies in the value of its oral sources and their contribution to the re-writing of history to include previously neglected peoples and their history.

To repeat for emphasis, social historians study the lives of ordinary people and how ordinary people have made an impact within their own communities and the world, rather than the stories and events related to 'big' men. This came to be known as a history from below, or grassroots history. Through this bottom-up approach, social historians make use of a range of different types of sources and methodologies in constructing a history of ordinary people. These methodologies and sources rely heavily on oral testimony, as it provides a voice to people whose stories have hardly ever been heard, documented, acknowledged or recorded. Source evidence favoured by social historians usually includes that of an oral methodology – that is, oral history. Within this context social historians have viewed their work as a means to 'give voice' to the experiences of previously marginal groups and to recover the stories of regular people. Furthermore, the recovering of these hidden histories has become synonymous with the democratisation of the historical record, in that a more open and levelled history of ordinary people can be written, in an attempt to challenge the monopoly of an academic elite (Tosh, 1991; Minkley & Rassool, 1998). This is emphasised by Minkley and Rassool's claim that "social historians have seen their work as characterised by the attempt to 'give voice' to the experience of previously marginal groups and to recover the agency of ordinary people" (Minkley & Rassool, 1998, p. 90). Finally, the practice of oral history helps towards reaffirming identities, especially subordinated identities, such as poor and vulnerable people. Oral history can help to transform such groups by increasing their own self worth and awareness of their own individual and community contribution towards the

documentation and creation of history. This too, helps to provide a healing dimension in their lives.

Additional credence is given to the nature of social history as, according to Callinicos, it “fosters an understanding of multiple identities – the identities of colour, class, gender, culture, urban/rural community, sexual orientation, association, national consciousness” and therefore enables one “to nurture a respect for the experiences and cultures of the diverse populations in our country” (Callinicos, 2001, p. 14). Oral history therefore provides a means of overcoming the silences and biases of existing written sources and works and enhances these. By focusing on the voices of ordinary people, one can gain a better understanding of communities and cultures, and this by its nature, is the main endeavour of writing and studying a social history (Apartheid Museum, 2006).

Paul Thompson (2000), a highly proclaimed oral and social historian has commented:

Oral history is a history built around people. It thrusts life into history itself and it widens its scope. It allows heroes not just from the leaders, but from the unknown majority of the people. It encourages teachers and students to become fellow-workers. It brings history into, and out of, the community. It helps the less privileged, and especially the old, towards dignity and self-confidence (p. 23).

In light of the above, and in aiming at a concept clarification of oral history, it can be explained as the collection and study of historical information from people’s personal memories and experiences, through word of mouth. The process of collecting information is done through conducting interviews with

willing participants. Oral history thus turns ordinary people, their lives, experiences and their stories into historical sources, as well as being an active and hands-on attempt to document “tangible alternatives to ‘official’ history and one-sided presentations of memory” (Dryden-Peterson & Siebörger, 2006, pp. 394-403). This is of importance especially in relation to South Africa’s history, in that the majority of history recorded and taught in schools for many years was of a Eurocentric and Afrikaner Nationalist nature.

### 2.3 What has been done around the implementation of oral history internationally?

Teachers and educational theorists involved in history education in international schools have produced numerous works emphasising the value and importance of using oral history as both a methodology and as a field within history. Their research indicates that learners of all ages react more positively to oral history methods than to traditional teaching methods (Ritchie, 1995; Thomson 1999; Huerta & Flemmer, 2000; Spivey, 2000; Whitman, 2000). In the literature reviewed, the advantages and rewards experienced by both the teachers and learners will be emphasised especially in terms of the outcomes achieved. Moreover, the importance of using oral history as both a means of teaching history in terms of content and of methodological value, that is, in terms of the skills involved, will be highlighted.

Additionally, it has been both documented and observed that an oral history component in the classroom can elucidate a general upliftment and a renewed

interest for the subject history, as well as the development of numerous skills. The skills that can benefit learners can include research, language, technical, social and cognitive skills (Graves, 1983; Ritchie, 1995; Oelofse & du Bruyn, 2004). Literature around the implementation of oral history in schools internationally has shown that it is seldom experienced in a classroom that such an array of accountable skills can be achieved through any one other activity, and this therefore suggests that the methodology of oral history is an extremely useful and imperative activity to include specifically in the history classroom.

Furthermore, by the very nature of history and the activities that historians undertake, it is only fitting that the learners themselves are placed in the historical process of doing history and are given the opportunity to gain first-hand experience of the conduct of a real historian. From the emerging literature, it appears that oral history serves this purpose well, as the learners themselves, through oral interviews will be acting as real historians, formulating, documenting and transcribing a history. This is reiterated succinctly by Redfern (1996), who states that:

Although oral history has distinctive characteristics, part of its strength lies in the ways it deepens knowledge when used in school situations and it can also reinforce an understanding of historical methodology in general. There is an important relationship between oral and non-oral sources, and the general skills and objectives of the oral historian are the same as that of other historians (pp. 16-20).

The use of oral history in the classroom, as a means of adding onto a learner's holistic experience and as an opportunity to experience the skills and objectives of a practicing historian, aligns itself with the educational ideas of

educationist Paulo Freire (1970). He believes that there are two different types of education: banking and libertarian. In banking education the educator, the depositor, deposits information into learners, who are seen as empty vessels. Learners are therefore generally passive and tend merely to receive, memorise and repeat information through 'detached' brains. In libertarian education, educators and learners are partners involved in purposeful communication. Learners are actively and cognitively involved in the learning process. There is meaningful interaction and dialogue in a co-operative learning environment that subsequently contributes to the development of the learners' skills and abilities.

This is in line with the available literature that emphasises that the subject of history should not subscribe to the idea that learners are 'empty vessels' with blank minds. Consequently, oral stories brought into the classroom should be considered as contributions to the construction of historical knowledge. The learners involved are contributors to an historical account and are empowered and involved in the process.

In the light of the above, the successes experienced in schools internationally with the practice and use of oral history in the classroom has been made possible owing to the fact that learners are able, with the facilitation of their teachers, to construct histories on their own (Ritchie, 1995; Thomson, 1999; Edwards, 2006). In the words of Edwards (2006):

However imaginative and enquiring classroom history may be, the history itself is usually constructed by a historian, a textbook

author or a teacher. It is rare that pupils gain the opportunity to construct original histories of their own. Oral history can offer this opportunity (p. 21).

This is reiterated by Whitman (2000), who claims that oral history allows learners the opportunity to do history, to directly engage with those individuals who were makers, or part of history, rather than spend the year reading about voiceless men and women in textbooks. The above statements emphasise the importance of learning and experiencing real history in the classroom.

The subject history needs to be not only interesting and colourful, but relevant and identifiable to learners' lives and daily experiences, and by interviewing real people and recording their lives and experiences, their classroom experiences and the learning of history become something identifiable and relatable to their own lives. This is supported by Redfern (1996) who argues that "the reminiscences and reflections of people provide one of the richest sources of information for the recent past. If used carefully and selectively, oral history can add colour and depth to historical studies. Memories of family, friends and members of school communities can add a new dimension to pupils' understanding" (cited in Thompson, 2000, p. 191).

One of the most well known internationally-based school projects for the use of oral history as a teaching methodology within schools is the *Foxfire Project*, described by Thompson as an "extraordinary success" (Thompson, 2000, p. 196). This project was set up by a high school teacher, Eliot Wigginton, in Georgia, USA, who, because of the problems that he encountered via learners' attitudes towards school and learning, wanted to develop new

teaching methodologies in his school. Consequently, he believed that the key problem at the school was in fact boredom and apathy and not laziness and inability as was believed by many of his colleagues and peers. The project includes learners' efforts through the use of oral history in researching aspects about their local community, with the product being a locally produced school newspaper. The *Foxfire Project* has subsequently stimulated many other such school projects in the USA, as well as other parts of the world. Results of the above and similar projects have emphasised the wealth of histories waiting to be documented in relation to local school communities and surrounding areas through the means of oral history (Ritchie, 1995; Thompson, 2000). This is emphasised through one learners' involvement in the *Foxfire Project*:

I've learned through *Foxfire*... to express myself and communicate. Then by actually teaching a younger kid how to do something I've learned to appreciate the value of teaching and become excited when I see the kid's eyes light up...Then more significant than that, I've learned to appreciate the value of people working together, people being dependent on each other...It's made a difference in my life (cited in Thompson, 2000, p. 200).

Another similar example is *Talking Gumbo: A teacher's guide to using Oral History in the classroom* (1998) that was produced by the T. Harry Williams Center for Oral History, Louisiana State University, USA. The guide is a useful resource for any teacher embarking on oral history in their classroom (Dean, Daspit & Munro, 1998) and gives evidence of the wealth of positive outcomes that oral history can produce in the classroom. A few of the aims and goals achieved through this project include: experiencing different cultures and perspectives of different communities, improving writing and listening skills,



and developing the techniques and skills of conducting an interview (Dean, Daspit & Munro, 1998). One such teacher involved in the project concluded:

My students really got into it. They started out a bit weary, but once they got into it they really enjoyed it. I had several students who every day would want to work on their oral history projects. Our end result was a book containing all their interviews and my students were so proud of it – and knowing a book was going to be their end result really motivated them to do their best (Futral cited in Dean, Daspit & Munro, 1998, p. 7).

Such attitudes are key to oral history as the learners themselves generate their own motivation and eagerness, and in this way create rewards for themselves. They are able to see their own growth and achievements and gain a sense of pride and accomplishment.

Teachers in the USA who have experimented with oral history research in the classroom have found their learners highly engaged in the process of documenting history and see this methodology as an overall productive strategy for teachers and learners alike. The primary objective of oral history is to widen learners' understanding of events and to be a part of the process. When learners go beyond the role of passive learner to active researcher, they become active participants in the learning process, which can help them to understand the past (Dougherty, 1999; Huerta & Flemmer, 2000). According to Siiton (1983), oral history is an effective learning tool as it "teaches academic and interpersonal life skills in a real-world, experiential context" (cited in Huerta & Flemmer 2000, p 106).

As commented by Huerta & Flemmer (2000):

Teachers in high schools find maintaining student interest in academic content an ever-present challenge. When we guide our students through oral history research, we find them highly engaged in documenting history...by promoting creative use of oral history projects, we can help our students explore community life, analyse social problems, and consider possible solutions (p. 105).

This statement draws attention to the fact that an oral history methodology at school level aids learners in a holistic manner, and that it goes beyond the content learnt to provide valuable life skills as well as a high level of interest. As commented by a student, "...oral history is one of the most interesting ways to learn about the past" (cited in Whitman, 2000, p. 478).

As in the USA, in Britain, Chris Edwards, a high school history teacher in London, conducted an oral history project (OHP) in 2006 on the topic of Rights and Responsibilities, by posing the question: "Were children in the past more respectful of authority than children today?". The outcomes of the project were highly fruitful and created a necessary opportunity to move away from the classroom practice of worksheet and textbook learning. His research emphasises the importance of moving away from traditional textbook teaching and rather to incorporate methods that appeal to learners' bigger understanding of life and history, as explained by Kuhn & McLellan (1997), "They read all this world history, and it doesn't mean a thing to them out of the textbook, but when they are living it and seeing it in real life, it makes a big connection for them" (p. 29).

The above-mentioned projects and the literature reviewed emphasise that the outcomes achieved were the result of the learners being included in every

step of the OHP – from planning to gathering and evaluating the oral sources collected. Emphasis was placed on the importance of the teacher and learner working side by side in a co-operative learning environment. The aims of the projects were achieved in that learners were able to identify with people from the past and relate these past events to their present lives, while understanding the important historical concepts of the past and present and, moreover, the relationship between the past and history. And on these grounds, they were able to work with real sources and identify how such sources are created.

Furthermore, the following comment made by Edwards (2006) in relation to memory and working with evidence emphasises the rewards and processional understanding of oral history:

Memory is selective, it both remembers and forgets. Working in this way students can begin to make that vital distinction between the past and history. We were struck by the effectiveness of oral history to convey to students what were after all the main learning points of source evaluation. We felt that because it was personal, immediate and concrete that there is a good case for considering oral testimony as a starting point for source work in general (p. 25).

In addition, the above teachers found that the learners took on roles of responsibility in that they took ownership of their learning and began to take heed that school history has purposes beyond merely passing examinations. Similar projects in Britain have included outcomes such as “students increased their awareness of their own potential and significance as participants in history” and “the use of oral history as central to student-

generated activity resulted in personal bonding and intellectual understanding” (Butler & Sorenson, 1998, p. 212). These statements emphasise the benefits of using oral history in the classroom.

An article published in 1997 on a roundtable discussion included the experiences and opinions of three teachers in the USA, who commented on the use of oral history in predominantly rural, lower socio-economic, under-privileged and under-resourced high schools. The educators were interviewed by two professors at universities whose aims were to develop a well-rounded understanding of the processes, use and outcomes of oral history in the classroom. One of the teachers stated that he got involved in conducting oral history in the classroom as means of taking advantage of resources within the community owing to the lack of resources available at his own school (Kuhn & McLellan, 1997, p. 23). He saw oral history as a way out of a difficult learning situation, which, because of the economic situation, lacked resources, computers, internet, books and other resources that can contribute towards a learner’s understanding.

At the same time, he emphasised that “it was an opportunity to give them a chance to do some authentic research and work with some real material to sharpen their skills as historians, look at how to work with it, how to revise it, and at the same time work on their writing and communication skills” (Nixon, cited in Kuhn & McLellan, 1997, p. 28). Another teacher involved in the discussion commented on the amount of time and work that a good OHP

requires, and the dedication and perseverance needed by the educators and learners alike:

I mean there's a lot of work involved on your part to keep that momentum going. And sometimes at the end of the day, you're worn slap out, and sometimes your day doesn't end till nine o'clock at night. But the first reward I get from it is seeing students excited about learning and what they're doing. Their enthusiasm is contagious (Moon cited in Kuhn & McLellan, 1997, p. 31).

This particular round table discussion is an excellent starting point for ascertaining the realistic rewards and positive outcomes of OHPs that have been conducted in the USA. To conclude the review of literature on the implementation of oral history in schools internationally, a final point by oral historian Paul Thompson (2000) is fitting:

The educational arguments can be summarised briefly. A concrete objective and a direct product are provided for project work. Discussion and co-operation are promoted. Children are helped to develop their language skills, a sense of evidence, their social awareness, and mechanical aptitudes. For history teachers oral history projects have the special advantage of opening up locally relevant history for exploration (p. 191).

This section has provided an overview of selected literature from international key sources, providing a review of the key theories, concepts and ideas around the implementation of oral history within schools as well as the major debates, questions and problems that have been addressed to date.

## 2.4 How has oral history been viewed and implemented in SA?

According to du Bruyn (2002): "While the oral history teaching method has been implemented with great success in Britain and the USA, very little research has been done to investigate its possibilities in Africa and particularly South Africa" (p. 1494). However, there are a number of oral history-related studies that have been conducted around the overarching theme of oral history and its uses within South Africa (Witz, 1986; Minkley & Rassool, 1998; Callinicos, 2001; Hamilton & Harris, 2002).

I will start by examining the broad theme of oral history within South Africa and then move on to its involvement within education. An example of the wealth of historical knowledge that can be produced through oral methodologies is the work by social historian Charles van Onselen, who produced a voluminous account (over 500 pages), based on the life of a sharecropper, Kas Maine, from oral interviews. The book called *The Seed is Mine* is a social history that can be seen as representative of the social experiences of black rural lives in South Africa during the time of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. This book highlights the possibilities and wealth of information that oral history can provide as an alternative and accompanying methodology in researching history. As suggested by Minkley and Rassool (1998), "Van Onselen's history is meant to be read as a monumental counter-memory to the official record of segregation and apartheid, the biography of a man who 'never was'" (p. 90). The idea behind the production of this work is to create a social counter-history to the mainstream history that was being written, taught

and studied in South Africa during the apartheid era. Furthermore, it aims at challenging the racist *status quo* of the time and questioning what history is, and who qualified to be important enough to be in a history book or document. This is in line with the work of social historians who consider their work as an “attempt to ‘give voice’ to the experiences of previously marginal groups and to recover the agency of ordinary people” (Minkley & Rassool, 1998, p. 90).

Similarly, other literature from South Africa has stressed the importance, use and value of an oral form of methodology for the recovery and documenting of previously ignored histories (Minkley & Rassool, 1998; Callinicos, 2001; Hamilton & Harris, 2002). As such, within South Africa oral history is seen as giving a voice to the voiceless and providing active documentation of ordinary peoples’ lives that can be used towards recording their histories as an important component of social history and as an additional memory of past events (Oelofse & du Bruyn, 2004). Leslie Witz (1988) has emphasised that in this regard oral sources are especially important in finding out about the lives of ordinary people whose stories are hardly ever written down; and often the only way to find these stories is through interviewing individuals. This particular means of documenting history is itself, an act of rewriting history, and telling the stories of those who have been left out or were misrepresented during the apartheid era.

Another important local OHP that was formed in 1994 is the *Sinomlando Project*, which is run through the *School of Religion and Theology Department* at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. *Sinomlando* means “we have a history”.

The *Sinomlando Centre* is a research and community development programme that was founded by Professor Philippe Denis and uses the methodology of oral history and memory work in Africa as a methodology to attempt to recover the silenced memories of communities. The *Sinomlando Centre* was originally based in theological studies only, but has branched out to include research and training into HIV/AIDS, gender issues and family history, among other areas. They are well known for the *Memory Box Programme*, which attempts to address the psycho-social needs of children affected with HIV/AIDS through the methodology of oral history. The *Memory Box Programme* began in 2000 with the intention of providing care to AIDS orphans. The envisaged aims are for the children to have a memory of who their parents and ancestors were and to forge an identity for themselves under very difficult social and living circumstances. The project is suitably named in that these memories and histories of one's family are saved and recorded forever in these boxes. ([www.ukzn.ac.za/sorat/sinomlando/index.html](http://www.ukzn.ac.za/sorat/sinomlando/index.html)).

Within South Africa there are also a number of oral history societies, such as the Oral History Association of South Africa (OHASA) and numerous websites such as [http://www.dohistory.org/on\\_your\\_own/toolkit/oralhistory.html](http://www.dohistory.org/on_your_own/toolkit/oralhistory.html). In addition there are many locally produced guides that can be accessed online to aid in conducting oral history and the steps needed in conducting an oral interview. The Institute of Justice and Reconciliation (IJR) has produced two useful guides from projects done in the Western Cape to aid teachers in conducting oral history in their classrooms. Furthermore, a useful guide can be accessed through the University of the Witwatersrand, which provides a



manual that was researched together by the History Workshop group and the Mpumalanga Department of Education in 2005. The wide range of contributors came from both education and history. <http://web.wits.ac.za/Academic/Humanities/SocialSciences/HistoryWorkshop/Training.html>. Another guide produced through the University of KwaZulu-Natal in collaboration with the KZNDoE was produced through the process of a workshop conducted with history subject advisors and university lecturers within the discipline of history education and provides simple examples and ideas for teachers on conducting oral history with learners in the classroom (Wassermann, 2007).

These above-mentioned oral history societies provide the majority of work done on oral history within South Africa by academic and professional historians and, to a certain extent, projects done within an educational environment. Furthermore, two Master's theses have been completed on the implementation of oral history at a school level. These will be examined at a later stage in this chapter. However, little explanation of the actual theory of social history and overall support has been applied to the uses of oral history in South African schools, despite being a set component in the curriculum in the FET phase.

Against this background, an examination of what has been produced in South Africa in terms of oral history and its application at a school level is necessary. One of the earliest attempts at emphasising the importance of oral history is *Write your own History* by Leslie Witz (1988). This work was created out of a

need for writing and producing histories that were free from biases and prejudices during the time of apartheid. Witz claims that the motivation behind this is that:

many students are becoming dissatisfied with this type of history. They say it is teaching lies to keep people suppressed. We need to find information that has been left out of the school history textbooks and what has been distorted...writing our own history is an opportunity for us to give another view of history than the one which is taught in schools (Witz, 1988).

The book provides instruction on how to go about writing the history of one's community and feeds into the idea of creating a history through a range of methodologies, including that of oral interviews and oral history. In addition to this, more recent contributions to the implementation of oral history in South African schools are two projects, mentioned earlier, that have also come out of the Western Cape, produced through the IJR. One is *Forced Removals: A Case Study of Constantia: An Oral History Resource Guide for Teachers*, and the other is *Pass laws in the Western Cape: Implementation and Resistance: An Oral History Resource Guide for Teachers*.

These two projects illustrate how an interactive OHP can be conducted within the parameters of the NCS (IJR, 2005). These projects, which in addition provide a guideline for teachers on how to go about conducting an OHP with learners, can be downloaded from the internet. However this might not be a possible access point for all teachers in South Africa, especially those at schools that do not have computers or the internet.

The IJR proposes, however, that “learners can work like Historians engaging with issues related to local History and heritage and their findings should enable them to see the relevance of the past in their lives and the world today” (IJR, 2005). The outcome of the project has produced the two practical oral history resource guides for teachers referred to above. The booklets list the positive responses made both by the learners and teachers who were involved in the process, thus demonstrating the benefits of an OHP. The project around pass laws in the Western Cape aided learners in terms of empathy and acquiring an understanding about the atrocities of apartheid, as in:

Learners were given the opportunity to meet face-to-face with South Africans who were young when the Pass Laws were reality. They heard many tell their tales of hardship and fear with the humour that often comes from those who look back and remember. The experiences of Black Sash veterans gave learners a vivid sense of the struggle against complacency and prejudice that continued in the face of the state’s callous disregard of elementary human rights. The learners were inspired and moved. No banality here. No dry summaries. No superficiality, that the learners were enthralled, informed and saddened by much of what they heard meant that they had been involved in an activity of true learning about the past, because it affected their present (IJR, 2004, p. 38).

The booklet draws attention to the need for learners to engage in practical oral history activities where they are given the opportunity to do research themselves. They list the following in terms of the results that an OHP elucidates for learners (IJR, 2004, p. 24). It allows learners to:

- make use of relevant knowledge in real-life contexts;
- use both primary and secondary sources of information;
- collect, analyse, evaluate and organise information themselves;

- apply critical and creative thinking within the context they are researching;
- present and analyse their findings in the form of an essay;
- present source material which can be used in a variety of other classroom activities, e.g. discussion and debate; radio or television presentations, documentaries, interviews; newspaper research and comparison; role play; creative writing, etc; and
- develop and further their knowledge, skills, attitudes and values

These are achievable goals that teachers have obtained with their learners through the OHPs that they have conducted. Furthermore, the responses listed by the learners themselves provide evidence of the achievable rewards.

Some of the responses include:

- "I learnt how to listen to people's stories."
- "There were lots of things about apartheid I didn't know – the sadness when you are being oppressed. This project inspired me to learn about South Africa's History."
- "We learnt how to work in a group, collecting important data and conducting an interview."
- "I enjoyed interacting with other people and the ideas we shared with each other but most of all the diversity – being in one place with people of different races."

These responses seldom occur in an average, textbook-based, teacher-talk classroom environment and is 'stand alone' evidence of the positive and purposeful results that oral history can bring to the classroom.

Another useful and locally produced work is an ethnographically-based study, done by Dryden-Peterson and Siebörger, of history classrooms in sixteen schools in Cape Town, where the authors explored the degree of the use of testimony as a pedagogic tool. The results were as follows:

Teachers in fact felt this method of teaching history was successful for the same reason that human stories have the power to educate: the voices that teachers brought to their own classrooms portrayed the atrocities of apartheid and developed in students convictions of 'never again' while at the same time celebrating the triumph of the human spirit and the collective value of democracy in South Africa. (Dryden-Peterson & Siebörger, 2006, pp.394-403).

Apart from these three publications, there are no other widely available works or available resources that have been produced as an aid and an example of what an OHP in South African schools can produce, particularly within KZN. Furthermore, these publications provide guidelines for the implementation of oral history and are manuals in nature as opposed to literature being available on real research into the implementation of oral history at a school level.

Recent academic-based research around oral history in schools includes only two oral history in education-based dissertations that have been produced during the last decade, namely: *Ideology Challenged: Aspects of the History of St. Columbia's High School and their application to an Oral History Project in the High School Classroom* (Fernandez, 1998) and *The Relevance of Oral*

*Tradition and Testimony in the History Curriculum and History Teaching* (Moichela, 2002). These dissertations emphasise the need to challenge traditional teaching ideologies as well as the relevance and importance of implementing an oral history pedagogy and oral tradition and testimony within schools. In his work on the implementation of an OHP in the senior high school classroom, Fernandez came to the conclusion that “this is a most efficacious way of achieving the desired ends and, indeed, other positive results not anticipated” (p. 134). However, the lack of literature available, as well as the limited methodology on implementation, is emphasised making apparent the shortcomings within the existing literature.

Fernandez’s (1998) research into the value and benefit of oral history in the classroom included the following attitudinal changes towards the study of history: “an appreciation of the learning of historical skills, and joy at sharing in the ‘making’ of history” (p. 159). Similarly he concludes his thesis by stating:

The oral history project was an entirely worthwhile pedagogical exercise in the light of its overwhelmingly positive effects on students, notably their improved understanding of the nature of history, strikingly improved attitudes towards history as a study and as a school subject, and the acquisition by them of many most valuable skills, some history-specific, some not, some, indeed, not anticipated. No doubt, too, there were side-benefits, for example, in a deeper understanding of a number of key issues in the life of the school studies, and a greater appreciation of the institution itself. In the light of the above, I would recommerid strongly that oral history projects, similar in type, should be executed in other schools at the senior-secondary level (p.160).

This quotation is a true exemplification of the overall rewards, both expected and unexpected, that oral history can bring to the classroom. But Fernandez

and Moichela's studies predates the most recent publication that appeared during the time that this thesis was in progress, this being *Oral History in a Wounded Country: Interactive Interviewing in South Africa* (2008), which includes an article on teaching oral history in schools as well as other articles on using oral history methodologies within historical studies. The book is edited by Professor Phillippe Denis and Radikobo Ntsimane, director and deputy director of the previously mentioned *Sinomlando Centre*. The book seeks to:

help practitioners, whether they use oral history as one technique among others to gain a better knowledge of the past, or envisage oral history as an academic discipline in its own right, to reflect critically on their practice and find better ways of handling the interview process. The challenge is to appreciate the complexity of South Africa's diverse histories, while being attentive to the dynamics of the interview and their effect on both the interviewers' and interviewees' sense of identity. (Denis & Radikobo, 2008, back page).

Another valuable project that was set up by a group of academics at the University of the Witwatersrand during the 1980s was the *History Workshop* whose initial aims were to develop means of democratising history. A recently published article by historians Kros and Ulrich discuss the issue of oral testimony and teaching history in schools in relation to the work done by the above-mentioned *History Workshop*. The authors refer to the work done on oral history and their assistance to teachers in conducting oral history in their classes in the province Mpumalanga, run via the Mpumalanga Department of Education. Their aims include the necessity to work alongside the new curriculum in aiding the teachers to be able to teach oral history themselves and the issues relating to truth and memory. Their training encourages the

use of what they refer to as 'life history interviews' in that the interviews that they and their learners will conduct are about average people's lives and daily experiences, as opposed to the stories of 'big' men. This article provided insight into the necessity of confronting and implementing the curriculum and, therefore, the requirements of conducting oral history in the classroom. By means of the oral history workshops carried out, teachers are able to see the benefits of an OHP and learn valuable ways of teaching oral history to their learners. However, what was most interesting to read was the outcome of the workshops held with numerous groups of teachers, this being the realisation that the workshops in future would need to engage properly with the theoretical issues of oral history (and social history) if they really wanted to aid teachers in realising the full benefits and purpose of oral history.

The workshop leaders admitted that the workshops tended to concentrate mostly on the technicalities of oral history: creating interview questions, how to interview someone, and monitoring a project, where, in fact, the teachers needed deeper understanding of the nature and theoretical underpinning of oral history (Kros and Ulrich, 2008). This lack of understanding of the nature and purpose of oral and social history and of the need to give a 'voice' to the 'voiceless' is picked up in Chapters Five and Six, where it became evident that both the learners and teachers that I interviewed also lacked a sufficient understanding of the theoretical nature of oral history. Furthermore, the authors conclude that in their opinion "teachers need much more support to achieve the potential latent in the new curriculum" (Kros & Ulrich, 2008, p.105).



## 2.5 Conclusion

In concluding an overview of the literature available on oral history and oral history-related topics, it becomes apparent that in terms of this study there is very little material available for examination in relation to the implementation of oral history in schools in South Africa. In the light of this, it becomes clear that this study is both important and overdue in terms of aiding the development and progression of the teaching of history in a progressive and democratic South Africa, and in relation to the aims set out by the DoE. The research that has been conducted into the implementation and benefits of oral history in schools abroad and the small number in South Africa (particularly in the Western Cape) is testimony to the rewards that this study can produce for schools. The need and importance of this study in relation to the practical development of history teaching in South African schools, and specifically for the province of KZN, should therefore be apparent.

This chapter has provided a review of what constitutes oral history and how it has featured both within South Africa and internationally in terms of academic-based work and investigation and in terms of its presence at an educational level. Furthermore, the key theories and standpoints have been raised along with the main questions and problems that have been mentioned to date.

## Chapter Three

### Research Design and Methodology

#### 3.1 Introduction

This chapter seeks to describe and explain the research design and methodology adopted for this study. In order to investigate the implementation of oral history in the FET phase in KZN schools based on the experiences, opinions and views of history teachers, history subject advisors and past history learners, I chose to align this study within the paradigm of qualitative research. This was decided upon in order for the data collected to be centred on depth and interpretation rather than a “quantity of understanding” (Henning, 2004). According to Babbie and Mouton (1998), qualitative researchers study human action from the insider's point of view, through interviews or structured conversations. It is against this background that this thesis was able to achieve a coherent and holistic analysis and understanding of the participants' views and opinions in relation to the implementation of oral history in the FET phase (Mason, 2002; MacMillan, 2007).

According to Henning (2004), the three main categories of qualitative research include: observation, document studies and interviewing. This is in keeping with the research ideas of triangulation as a methodology. Cohen & Manion (2001) comment that the process of triangulation is vitally important in providing

collaboration of information gathered and as a means of avoiding restricted and misleading data. Furthermore, Denzin (1978) notes that triangulation entails the combinations and contrasting of varying data sources, data collection and analysis procedures that occur at the end of the study. This type of multi-method research approach which was employed throughout the study therefore provided insight and allowed for richer answers to the key questions through the range of methods used to attain the necessary data (Flick cited in Denzin & Lincoln, 2003; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Similarly, the use of a multiple method approach allows for in-depth understanding of the phenomena under investigation and adds breadth and richness to any enquiry (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). This study included the multi-method approach of using semi-structured interviews, focus groups, a personal reflective journal and a document study.

As mentioned above, data for this study was collected through the method of interviewing as well as an examination of related documents. Bogdan and Biklen (1992) comment on such methods as traditional data collection techniques, these being participant observations, unstructured interviews and document analysis. This range of methods strengthens the study and is appropriate in terms of answering the main research questions. These key research questions guided my interviews to ensure that the data I was receiving would aid the overall intention of the thesis as stated in Chapter One.

These key research questions were enquiring into the views and perceptions of history teachers, history subject advisors and past history learners. These participants have all been directly involved in the process of conducting or facilitating an OHP, and therefore through their responses during the interviews I was able to obtain a quality of understanding about their experiences and views of the implementation of oral history. Oral history can be viewed as aligning itself within the paradigm of a social history, in that through interviewing someone one can attain real perspectives on their views, opinions and experiences within a particular topic in a way that is able to achieve depth and quality. The discipline of oral history can therefore be viewed as qualitative and interpretive in nature.

This chapter will firstly examine the ethical considerations that were necessary prior to the commencement of this study and the steps taken to achieve ethical permission. Secondly, I shall identify and describe the participants who took part in the study, as well as administrative and logistical processes followed in selecting and working with them. Thirdly, the research design will be presented in terms of positioning the study within a qualitative and interpretive research paradigm, as well as an illumination of the chosen methods of data collection, these being a document study; semi-structured interviews; focus groups; and the personal reflective journal. This section will be followed by a description of the data analysis procedures that were adopted. Lastly, the chapter will end with a conclusion and a discussion based on some of the limitations of the methodology followed and how the enquiry attempted to address these.

### 3.2 Ethical considerations

Before embarking on data collection, ethical clearance was obtained both through the UKZN's ethical clearance policy as well as permission from the KZNDoe in accordance with the rules and regulations on obtaining permission to do research that involves close interaction and contact with people (See Appendices A, B & C). In all studies, it is necessary to be mindful of the rights of the participants whose views and experiences form the basis of the examination being undertaken. In the case of this thesis, ethical clearance included acquiring informed consent and informing the prospective participants of the rationale of the study, as well as their rights and roles within the study. This is necessary in order to conform to an established professional practice of conducting research (Bailey, 1982; Henning, 2004; Dennis, 2008). To ensure informed consent, an introductory letter was faxed and posted or given directly to the prospective history teachers, history subject advisors and history students informing them of the purpose and nature of the study (See Appendices D, E & F). This included their right to privacy, anonymity and confidentiality throughout the study, as well as full disclosure about the research and the right to leave the study at any point if they so wished (Mouton, 2001; Schostak, 2006). This was in keeping with the ethical policy of the UKZN and the requirements of the KZNDoe.

Unfortunately, some researchers in South Africa have been perceived by teachers as being exploitative in nature, in that they have failed to acknowledge

and include ethical considerations when conducting research (Vithal cited in Setati, 2005). In order to keep this in mind, all ethical considerations were addressed, and consent forms were given to all participants to sign, indicating their understanding of the study and their confirmation of participation. This very act also emphasises their important and valuable role as participants within the study and their contribution towards its success, and personal welfare and rights must therefore be recognised and acknowledged.

Furthermore, the necessity of ethical behaviour within social science research is emphasised more so in terms of the discipline of oral history. As this thesis is examining the implementation of oral history, it is fitting that it is viewed in relation to the ethical procedures required within the methodology of oral history research and, more specifically, the process of oral interviewing. For this very reason, the OHASA has formulated a code of conduct for oral history practitioners working in an African context (See Appendix J), which aids practitioners with the planning of an OHP as well as necessary steps that need to be taken during and after the interview in terms of ethical behaviour and moral obligation to the respondents. This includes showing respect, anonymity and acknowledgement of the participants, especially in terms of protecting the respondents' reputation and cultural habits.

It is necessary to mention that oral history interviews that are recorded are different from other discipline-based interview processes. It is common practice

that interviews conducted within the humanities and social sciences are discarded once the information is used as data within a study or academic paper. However within the discipline of oral history, interviews are saved and recorded as primary sources to be used again as archival sources. This is commented on by oral practitioner Denis (2008): "Due to the nature of their discipline, oral history practitioners do exactly the opposite. For them the main purpose of an interview is to collect oral information for future use (p. 65)". An interesting point to ponder is what level of cognisance and understanding of ethics within oral history is being considered and applied among the learners and teachers who are themselves conducting or facilitating an OHP? What understanding do they have of ethics, and is the use of a consent form within the process being applied? This will be examined and discussed in Chapters Five and Six.

In addition to the outlined ethical considerations and procedures followed, this study was also informed by what Bogdan & Biklen (1992) refer to as the common sense and moral responsibilities of a qualitative researcher. This included treating respondents as people and showing appreciation for information provided. Ways in which this was addressed will be discussed further in this chapter when looking specifically at the methodology employed.

### 3.3 Selecting study participants and materials

#### 3.3.1 Document study

The first step that was taken at the commencement of this thesis in terms of constructing data was to establish a basic understanding of what the DoE requires of history teachers and how they propose the implementation of oral history, as well as their reasoning and insight into the nature of oral history. All available official DoE curriculum policy documents and other related documents were located through speaking to history subject advisors who provided me with all available documents. In addition to this, I also searched and examined the DoE's website for documents relating to oral history that are made available for downloading - <http://www.education.gov.za/Documents/policies/policies.asp>.

The documents analysed and reviewed used in this study consisted of the following:

- Report of the History and Archaeology Panel to the Minister of Education.
- National Curriculum Statement for Grades 10 – 12, History.
- National Curriculum Statement Grades 10 – 12 Subject Assessment Guidelines, History.
- Guideline Document for Grade 11 Continuous Assessment Programme, History.



- Guideline Document for Grade 12 Continuous Assessment Programme, History.
- National Curriculum Statement Support Document for Grades 11 and 12, History.
- Grade 10 – 12 Learning Programme Guidelines, History.

The close examination and review of the above listed documents provided the necessary background and a deeper understanding of what was envisaged by the DoE in the inclusion of oral history within the history FET curriculum. I was then able to use this knowledge in the research steps that followed, namely: the semi-structured interviews with history teachers and history subject advisors and the focus group interviews with students. Furthermore, the document study aided in answering key question one, that being “How is the teaching and learning of oral history envisaged in the FET curriculum?”

### 3.3.2 History teachers

The teachers that were approached included history teachers from schools from the greater Durban and Pietermaritzburg areas. The only stipulation in selecting the teachers in terms of necessary characteristics for the study was that they had to be teaching history in the FET phase and would need to fit the criteria of having experience with conducting an OHP with their learners. Greenhalgh & Taylor (1997) comment that in qualitative studies, researchers should aim at

finding individuals who match specific characteristics, so as to gain in-depth understanding of the perceptions, opinions and experiences of the participants.

The schools and teachers for this study were selected through the methodology of convenient sampling, which refers to their availability, proximity and willingness to participate in the study (MacMillan, 2007). These teachers were selected from schools in KZN that are presently teaching history and would therefore be familiar with the topic of my study, namely the implementation of oral history in the FET phase.

However, it must be noted that one disadvantage of a convenient sample is that the participants may not be representative of a larger group, and this can be seen as somewhat limiting to the study. In attempting to address this, the teacher participants were chosen to be, where possible, representative of gender, race, age and socio-economic backgrounds, and were selected from schools with varying resources. This was in keeping with the method of convenient sampling, but also allowed for the voices and experiences of an array of different schools to be heard and documented. Furthermore, this was done so as to refrain from generalising findings and to be sensitive to the varying educational contexts that exist.

The convenient sample was therefore in keeping with the rationale of the study, being that of obtaining relevant perspectives and opinions in relation to the

investigation of the implementation of oral history in the FET phase (Bailey, 1982; Ezzy, 2002). This decision was both strategic and practical, as this convenient sample aided in providing the necessary data to answer the research questions (Ezzy, 2002; Mason, 2002). Confidence was placed in the teachers and with the students and subject advisors that were interviewed, in that the information provided by them would be seen to be of relevance and substantial use to the outcome of this study. However, owing to external problems and commitment constraints, not all original teachers and students approached did participate in the study.

Initial steps taken to make appointments with the teachers to be interviewed included phoning the schools to obtain the names of the necessary history FET teachers and the postal addresses and facsimile numbers of the institutions. This was for the intention of both faxing and mailing letters (See Appendix D) to the schools to gain the consent of principals and addressing the history teachers directly as individuals so as to ensure that the letters were successfully received by the respective teachers. The reasoning behind both faxing and posting the letters was to increase the chances of securing the co-operation of a purposive convenient sample. The letters provided the recipients with a clear explanation and purpose of the study and what would be expected of the teachers should they be willing and able to participate in the study. Letters were sent to 15 schools. This was done to eliminate problems of possible teachers' being unable or unwilling to participate in the study and therefore the intended number of

interviews with history teachers therefore being compromised. Furthermore, this would ensure an appropriate sample size that would be sufficient for a Master's thesis and similarly a convenient sample size that would be representative of a larger community of history teachers. Qualitative research is advantageous in the study of a limited number of cases that will be done in depth, in that it will allow for comparisons, descriptions and a deeper understanding of individuals' experiences (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004).

The letters were sent well in advance to avoid problems related to time. However, the method employed above proved unsuccessful, and very few responses were received after two weeks. It was possible that the letters had been filed away somewhere or were sitting in unopened pigeonholes or post boxes at the respective schools. It was then decided that the next step would be to proceed by phoning the schools and speaking to the identified FET history teachers directly. Schools were initially phoned to obtain the times of break periods when teachers would not be in class and would therefore be available. Follow-up calls were subsequently conducted in order to speak to the history teachers directly. The study was then briefly explained to the history teachers over the phone and notification of faxed letters was mentioned to them. The direct phone calls to the teachers resulted in immediate and positive responses. Subsequently, a week was spent phoning the identified history teachers directly to organise appropriate times and dates to conduct the semi-structured interviews. Once dates and times were decided and agreed upon, a schedule

was devised, and all the proposed interviews were written down. This schedule included the names of the teachers and the schools. All interviews with teachers were conducted at their particular schools in their classrooms or offices.

### 3.3.3 History subject advisors

Two history subject advisors were approached, one from the greater Durban area and one from the greater Pietermaritzburg area, the reason being to gain the perceptions of history subject advisors from two different regions in KZN. Both these subject advisors are in charge of over 200 diverse and varied schools in terms of resources and socio-economic backgrounds, and therefore their input, perceptions and experiences of the implementation of oral history were vital and necessary to the study. It was foreseen that they would be able to provide varied and experiential information on the topic. In addition, both interviewees have been working for the KZNDoE as history subject advisors for many years and therefore have directly experienced the conceptualisation and implementation of oral history in the FET phase. Through their experiences and their close contact with varying schools and teachers, they were able to provide a wealth of knowledge and insight into my study.

The history subject advisors were selected purposively, as through my present position of history education lecturer at the UKZN, I regularly participate in workshops and meetings both with members of the KZNDoE and, more

specifically, with history subject advisors from KZN. The advisors selected were people with whom I am familiar and with whom I have had numerous conversations in relation to the history curriculum and, moreover, oral history and its implementation. The selection of these subject advisors therefore suited my methodology of using a purposive sample (Henning, 2004).

It must be emphasised that the history subject advisors are at the forefront of the implementation of oral history as they provide the vital catalyst between the creation of policies and official curriculum requirements in schools and the act of actually enforcing the curriculum at school level. Their role and presence within this study were therefore both imperative and enriching.

#### 3.3.4 History students

The UKZN was approached in gathering groups of first-year history education students to determine who had studied or conducted an OHP in the FET phase during their school career. These students were chosen because of their availability as they are all studying at the Faculty of Education, where I presently lecture. Furthermore, as these students are all studying to be history teachers themselves, their views, experiences and perceptions were key to acquiring rich data from participants who would have a deep understanding and passion for the subject history. The motivation for using these students was to centre the study within the realm of history education, and their participation was therefore both in

keeping with selecting relevant and purposive respondents as well as convenient, as they would all be based at the university where I work (MacMillan, 2007).

The next step taken was to present these students with a simple questionnaire that posed just two questions: whether the students were willing to participate in the study and whether the participants had conducted an OHP in the FET phase. Eventually, students who responded positively to both questions were identified. According to Seliger & Shohamy (1990), questionnaires are referred to as forms used for data collection that include questions to determine participants' responses. In this study, the questionnaire was used in its simplest form to find participants who have had experience in conducting oral history in the FET phase. This method proved useful in that it was easy to administer, and the necessary data was speedily obtained.

The identified students were then divided into five focus groups and were notified of the necessary dates and times when the interview groups would be conducted. Furthermore, the students were fully informed about the purpose and reasons behind the study as well as of their ethical rights. These students consisted of a convenient sample which was strengthened by the fact that the selected students were all representative of varying schools within KZN, these being ex-model C schools, township schools, rural schools, affluent schools and under-resourced schools.

### 3.4 Methodology – Research design adopted for this study

Through the data collection methodologies used, these being semi-structured interviews, focus groups and a personal reflective journal, I was able to gain rich and relevant information that could be used in conjunction with the initial document study. Furthermore, as the study focused on history teachers', subject advisors' and students' views, opinions and experiences, the use of a variety of qualitative research methods allowed for in-depth insight and an opportunity to establish a rapport with the participants as research subjects in a natural setting (Mouton, 2001). In this process, the researcher is open to information emerging without manipulation, in the form of a naturalistic enquiry (Patton, 2002). This was effectively experienced during my focus groups and semi-structured interviews, which were conducted in a relaxed and natural environment that allowed for a valuable 'conversation' to take place, which enriched the study. Moreover, Denzin & Lincoln (2003) argue that qualitative research emphasises the importance of studying the phenomena in a natural milieu. This was taken note of in terms of the venues used for the interviews; that is, all interviews with history teachers, subject advisors and students were conducted on their terms, in settings that they found convenient and comfortable. This commitment to gaining as naturalistic a perspective as possible aided in the interpretive aspect of the participants' views, but also in applying the philosophy of oral history, in that I was providing an opportunity for the respondents to express their views in an environment in which they were at ease.



As my theoretical location within this study was that of a social history, I found it necessary to align and focus my entire thesis within the theory of oral history and applied the necessary 'rules' and considerations relating to conducting oral history interviews within the interviews that I conducted. This was emphasised especially in relation to my position as a researcher in that through the process of interviewing the participants I was giving a voice to the history teachers, subject advisor and students, and a historical conversation based on memory was therefore taking place.

The interview methodologies used were both exploratory and descriptive in nature, in that all participants were given an opportunity to answer posed questions in depth. Similarly, I was able to explore the answers and probe further (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). The act of probing will be examined later in this chapter. In addition to asking probing questions, all participants were given the opportunity to raise and discuss issues that they felt were necessary or relevant to the topic under discussion. As a result, most of the interviews conducted resulted in open discussion around the nature, value and use of oral history, for both their benefit and mine. I benefited personally by the opportunity to share knowledge and expertise on the nature of oral history through the research and investigation I had done. The participants provided varying but rich data from their various perspectives, experiences and opinions relating to conducting or being involved in oral history, and most commented that they themselves found

the interview beneficial and were grateful for the opportunity to speak about their experiences.

### 3.4.1 Documents

The official DoE curriculum policy documents associated with oral history that was used in this study provided my initial enquiry into the study. They also provided a springboard for the questions I wanted to ask the teachers, subject advisors and students. Moreover, they provided me with sound knowledge and insight into the purpose, aims and ideas behind the implementation of oral history in the FET phase.

All available history related documents were used within the document study, as outlined on pages 52 to 53. These documents provided essential information on the reasons behind, and the views of, oral history by the DoE and associated curriculum developers. The reason behind the inclusion of a document study in this thesis was to incorporate the value of a multi-method approach as discussed earlier and in providing a springboard for the study (Johnson & Christensen, 2004). These documents also helped to reveal possible reasons as to why or why not oral history is being implemented within the FET phase.

The analysis of the documents used included the simple method of interpreting and commenting on the policies as written down in the documents. There was no

need to apply coding or to create themes as the documents themselves were arranged into straightforward sections relating to the implementation of oral history.

I initially located all the necessary documents via the DoE's website and did a simple word search, typing in 'oral history' within all the documents. This narrowed down my search, and I was able to read up on and examine all information connected to oral history, its conception and how to do oral history in the curriculum. This provided me with a basic understanding and insight into the DoE's views and ideas of oral history.

As the documents are very straightforward in terms of understanding what is required and the instructions given to the history teacher, I used the documents to write up an explanation of what the DoE is expecting in terms of the implementation of oral history. Furthermore, many of the documents that were examined state the same expectations and I was therefore able to reduce the requirements while providing commentary on them.

By using document analysis as a method of data collection, this study was informed by both the need to capture and understand the 'official perspective', as well as the extent to which teachers use and understand the official curriculum policy documents. By ascertaining what the official documents state and require, I could then use this data to understand the teachers' views and experiences.

Furthermore, this document analysis helped to gauge the gap between the proposed implementation and what is, in fact actually happening in schools and facilitated further examination of choices made by teachers in terms of the implementation of oral history.

### 3.4.2 Semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the history teachers and the subject advisors. Semi-structured or guided interviews can be viewed as conversations where topics and issues are determined in advance (Mason, 2002). This methodology was chosen in terms of its appropriateness for the qualitative paradigm of this study, as semi-structured interviews allow for a level of flexibility, while still maintaining structure. Furthermore, the methodology employed is directly related to the theoretical location of this study's interest – that being oral history and a social history theoretical framework.

The pre-established questions for the interviews that were posed to the respondents were specific to the research topic and were organised into themes to provide direction and flow, but were not necessarily asked in a specific order, and the wording changed to some degree so as to create the relaxed atmosphere of a conversation (Cohen & Manion, 1990; Bailey, 2007). However, this was dependent on how the individual interviews progressed; for example, a question previously planned to be asked later in the interview could be asked

earlier, and sometimes a question was skipped altogether if it had been answered through another question. This provided a loose structure for the interviewing process, which was advantageous in often elucidating rich and uninhibited or restricted data. However, it must be noted that all the semi-structured interviews were carefully planned to ensure a sequential flow of questions and discussion points and to ensure that the key questions would be answered (Cohen & Manion, 1990).

In addition, interviewing requires active listening, and not merely asking questions. Through semi-structured interviews, one is able to have a focused conversation that includes active listening and also allows for in-depth and personalised information that can be used in a manner to 'push' or probe for further richer and in-depth answers (Seliger & Shohamy, 1990). According to Bailey "a probing question encourages the interviewee to expand on an answer, to say more to the original question" (2007, p. 103). I employed this technique throughout all the interviews conducted as well as the focus group interviews that will be examined later. Probing questions were done in a relaxed fashion that elicited further comments and revealed my interest and enthusiasm in the topic to the respondent in question.

The questions used in the semi-structured interviews were strategically linked to the initial research questions to ensure that relevant data was gathered (Marshall & Rossman, 2006; Bailey, 2007). I used my key research questions as outlined in

Chapter One to guide my interview questions, as ultimately I needed to get relevant answers from the interviewees in order to answer the research questions. This proved to be successful as all the key research questions were clearly answered on completion of the interviews. Two differing interview schedules were created that were relevant to the responses needed by the teachers and the subject advisors (See Appendices G & H).

Research writers Johnson & Christensen (2004) suggest that qualitative researchers should follow certain guidelines for successful interviews, and that these should include obtaining a certain amount of background information about the interviewees to gain trust and set up similarities with the interviewee and interviewer. Furthermore, consideration and sensitivity must be placed in terms of age, race, gender and socio-economic differences. With my particular respondents, a certain amount of background knowledge was already ascertained in terms of their all being connected to history and education in one way or another. In addition, before the interviews were conducted, I started the session with a brief discussion with the participants to put them at ease and as a strategy to obtain a better understanding of who they were and what their feelings were about education and history. This would furthermore feed into the information needed around the implementation of oral history.

All semi-structured interviews that were conducted with both the history educators and history subject advisors were conducted on a one-to-one basis,

without anyone else present, thus ensuring privacy and anonymity. These face-to-face interviews were conducted either in the teachers' private office or in their classroom after school hours. Each interview began by attempting to gain a general understanding of the teachers' experiences of conducting oral history in the FET phase with their learners. This helped in gaining insight into their general views and aided in what key questions should be asked first. It also helped position the respondent at ease so as to create a relaxed and comfortable environment and was done in a respectful and appreciative tone. Good interviews are those in which the respondents are at ease to talk freely about their points of view (Mason, 2002).

In administering the semi-structured interviews, an interview schedule (See Appendices G & H) was designed for use with the teachers and subject advisors which directed the interview process and listed the necessary questions to be asked and the topics to be discussed (Seliger & Shohamy, 1990). Questions were open-ended which allowed for in-depth insight and the opportunity to establish rapport with the participants being interviewed (Mouton, 2001). Furthermore, respect and interview courtesy was shown for the interviewees' valuable time and participation in the study (Bailey, 2007). In addition, interested teachers were provided with a CD of practical information on how to conduct an OHP with learners, as a token of appreciation.

The semi-structured interviews with the history teachers and subject advisors provided valuable and rich data for this study. Once the interviews were completed, a thorough process was undertaken to code and analyse the data that had been collected. Thereafter, the analysed and coded data were used to type up the necessary chapters and, more importantly, were used in answering the key questions of this study.

I will now include an explanation of the data analysis processes used to understand the data received through the semi-structured interviews. In qualitative analysis, data must be reduced to its basic essentials through a process that should be based on skilled perceptions and systematic analysis (Seliger & Shohamy, 1990).

Data analysis is the process of systematically analysing and arranging the acquired field notes, interview scripts and other materials gathered in the process in order to increase one's understanding and to present the findings to others in a logical way (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). Furthermore, the analysis of qualitative data is complex, and there are no set rules or steps to follow (Seliger & Shohamy, 1990). It is suggested that researchers should identify and organise data into pre-determined groupings, which will aid the researcher in identifying commonalities, patterns and variations. This step is also referred to as coding.



However, Seliger and Shohamy (1990) furthermore note that qualitative data analysis can be subjective during analysis and interpretation, and that the researcher must therefore be aware of this. Constant examining and reflection must take place. This was achieved through the use of my research journal referred to earlier. Bearing this caveat in mind, I constantly referred back to the notes that I had made in my reflective journal.

After transcribing all the interviews, I set up a systematic means of coding the information received through the interviews. By coding I refer to the process of taking sections of information and creating 'codes' or main themes to which data could then be transferred in. Making sense of massive amounts of data and reducing them to meaningful accounts is a difficult, but interesting task (Bailey, 2007). The process of coding and analysis aided my understanding of the data and added to their internalisation and my ability to transfer this knowledge through the writing up of the chapters in this thesis.

Stage one included the creation of four initial folders, with each folder being representative of one of my main four key research questions. I then systematically went through every interview conducted with the history teachers and subject advisors and moved interview questions and responses into the respective folders. This systematic grouping would, for example, be dependent on whether the information was dealing with teachers' experiences or subject advisors' views on how the implementation of oral history is envisaged and

conducted. In addition, the second phase of coding involved the creation of sub-folders, where the response might not be a learner commenting on his or her experience, but rather a teacher commenting on how she/he thinks a learner experiences oral history. This would be added as additional data to the key research question that was examining the learners' views, in that it would provide a supplementary or contrasting view.

Once these steps, which I refer to as the systematic coding of data were done, I was then able to analyse the data and create further sub-folders, where I would break the information up into further sub-folders, such as positive responses to the OHP, negative responses to the OHP, instructions given and received on how to conduct a project, and so on. These categories are listed and discussed in the respective chapters that examine the key research questions.

Through my creation of sub-folders within the four main folders that were representative of the key research questions that were to be answered, I was able to identify the previously mentioned commonalities, patterns and variations and provide a platform from which to discuss the information within the respective chapters. However, I must emphasise that the analysis and coding of my data were not merely restricted to a process that was done once all the interviews were conducted. The process of analysis started from the moment I started to think about my research questions and from the commencement of the

interviews conducted. The analysis and systematic coding therefore unfolded simultaneously throughout the research process of this study (Bailey, 2007).

Lastly, it is necessary to mention the weaknesses of using interviews as a research methodology. The process of transcribing and analysing the interviews proved to be very time-consuming, and I therefore needed to allocate adequate time and proper planning to ensure that the study was running within the allocated time constraints. Furthermore, Mouton (2001) has argued that researchers can fall into the trap of not keeping in mind that all interviewees are equally articulate in the researcher's language, and that problems may therefore arise or responses maybe misinterpreted. In light of this, I reiterated and rephrased questions posed when necessary, if I felt that the respondent was confused or unsure of what was being asked.

### 3.4.3 Focus Groups

According to Cohen and Manion (2001), the methodology of conducting focus group interviews provides a structured conversation instigated by the interviewer for the specific intention of obtaining research-specific information through direct verbal interaction between the interviewer and the interviewees. The methods used in obtaining data were specific to the key research questions in terms of the type of information that I required. The aim was to obtain and determine past history learners' experiences of conducting an OHP in the FET phase. It is

suggested by Dane (1990) that focus groups provide a useful and practical means of obtaining the perceptions of participants in a constructive and sharing environment. As with the semi-structured interviews, the focus group interviews ended in a general discussion around history and education and, more specifically, oral history, which constructively benefited not only the students, but myself as well.

All focus groups with the history students were conducted in a comfortable environment consisting of their peers with whom they were familiar from lectures. I was able to have a focused conversation that included active listening, and this was conducive to asking probing questions, as mentioned earlier.

The focus groups were held in the history lecture room or, alternatively, in a private office. These venues were chosen for privacy and to ensure that there would be no distractions. The method of focus groups was decided on as the participants all relate to my study's key questions. In addition, it allowed for a relaxed and familiar environment as the participants in the focus group were all from the same history class at the university and therefore shared a common interest and goal. Through sharing their perceptions and experiences of conducting oral history, they were able to identify with one another and trigger off similar experiences and comments and discuss in a relaxed environment. This was true for the focus groups conducted, as the questions posed for the participants provided a guideline of important issues that were raised, but not

necessarily asked in the same order for every focus group; and, where it was deemed necessary, additional probing questions were used.

All the focus groups with the students ended in a general discussion and conversation around history and education. This aided in eliminating a superficial intention of merely using the respondents as sources of data and then leaving in a selfish manner, but culminated instead in a fruitful and symbiotic discussion around history education, to the benefit of both parties.

Responses given to the interviewees included empathetic yet neutral responses while listening actively and communicating through non-verbal cues. The method of active listening shows respect for the participant and ensures that the interview remains focused on the intended research questions. Responses were recorded both digitally while notes were written down during and after the interview to be used alongside the recordings in the analysis of the focus groups.

In terms of the methods of coding used for the focus groups, I employed the same method used for the above-mentioned semi-structured interviews, in that folders and sub-folders were created where the responses from the students and the questions that were asked could be filtered into the respective folders. Once this step was done, the folders containing the grouped relevant information could then be analysed and used to write up chapters.

#### 3.4.4 Research Journal

I decided that the use of a personal reflective journal would aid in the interviewing process and the fieldwork conducted. All field notes, reflections and other information deemed useful or necessary was added to my reflective journal that was used along with the typing up of my chapters in this thesis, and specifically this particular chapter. My notes proved effective for measuring interviewees' attitudes, internal meanings and ways of thinking and allowed for exploration into the responses given (Johnson & Christensen, 2004). Many of the entries in my reflective journal were based on observation and mental notes that were formulated during the actual interviews.

Field notes were written as soon as possible after the interviews and focus groups, while the interview was still fresh in my mind and thought processes. This aided in using the information gathered to its fullest extent and avoided rich data being lost or forgotten. Bailey (2007) has emphasised the crucial use of field as the backbone of collecting and analysing data: "If you are not writing fieldnotes, then you are not conducting field research" (p. 113). In light of this I utilised this method of writing field notes throughout the study, especially when conducting the interviews. Field notes were written down during and after interviews. Qualitative researchers Denzin and Lincoln (2003) comment on the production of field notes as key aspects of qualitative research. Moreover, the field notes and research journal assisted in providing data that could be used to

answer the key questions and develop greater insight into the topic under investigation. In addition, through the process of conducting research, during which I spent months in this particular frame of mind, I found that the interviews conducted and the discussions that were held with the interview participants, as well as the literature received, would constantly produce ideas and theories, which I would reflect on in my research journal. This helped in the conceptualisation and structuring of my overall thesis.

### 3.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have outlined and described the research methodology used in this study. It has provided illumination on how data was constructed, coded and analysed to serve the purpose of providing answers to the key research questions. The use of focus groups, semi-structured interviews and a document study as means of a multi-method approach has proven to be effective and worthwhile within the overall study and outcome. In the following three chapters, the research findings will be presented.

In terms of the limitations of the methodologies used, one disadvantage of using the methodology of semi-structured interviews and focus groups is its flexibility, in that not all participants might be asked the same questions, which might affect the validity (Dane, 1990). However, because of the nature of this study and, more so, the theoretical location, I felt that it was necessary to practise a qualitative

methodology that would and did allow for rich and relevant data. Furthermore, I felt that the methods used were complimentary and in accordance with the theoretical location and methodology of oral history. A quality of understanding was emphasised through the opportunity provided for the history subject advisors, teachers and students to be given a voice to comment on and express their views and opinions of oral history.



## Chapter Four

### How are the teaching and learning of oral history envisaged in the FET curriculum?

#### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter aims at a clarification of how the DoE and its policy and curriculum documents, and history subject advisors, envisage the implementation of oral history as a component of the history FET curriculum. Against this background, I will provide an analysis of the official curriculum policy documents and an understanding of the views expressed by the history subject advisors on conducting oral history in the FET phase. This will provide a backdrop to the analysis and outcome of what the teachers and learners actually experience and perceive in the classroom as well as provide answers to my research question – how is the teaching and learning of oral history envisaged in the FET curriculum?

The chapter will begin with a review of the documents available and what they prescribe pertaining to oral history and its implementation. Secondly, I will examine the views of the subject advisors on how they envisage the teaching and learning of oral history in the FET curriculum.

#### 4.2. Policy documents reviewed

My initial investigation was to analyse the official curriculum and policy documents associated with oral history developed by the DoE, and distributed via the history subject advisors to all FET history teachers. Through this analysis and investigation, I was able to formulate a foundational understanding of the DoE's foresight and aims related to oral history. Furthermore, it aided in providing a basic understanding and knowledge base, which I could then use later into my interviews with the history subject advisors, teachers and students.

With reference to the available curriculum and policy documents developed and distributed by the DoE, one is able to acquire an understanding of the intentions in implementing oral history. The analysis review and explanation of the implementation of oral history through the curriculum documents, as well as the meaning and purpose behind its implementation, will follow below.

One of the key documents produced through the DoE in relation to the implementation of oral history and the importance of rewriting a history that was representative of all people was done through the initiatives of the previous Minister of Education, Professor Kader Asmal. The document, known as the *Report of the History & Archaeology Panel to the Minister of Education (2002)*, was formed as part of an active aim to emphasise the importance and value of

history in schools. The understanding behind the use and emphasis of oral history and testimony was to embrace “an important pedagogic tool for history and as a potentially critical means to developing a vision of South Africa based on democracy and non-racialism among the next generation” (Dryden-Peterson & Siebörger, 2006, pp. 394-403).

This document elucidates that the decline in the popularity of the subject was owing to the poor quality of teaching, the use of discredited apartheid-era textbooks, a poor teacher training system, a lack of integration of South African-based history and a general view that the subject history is of no value and is irrelevant to the lives of South African learners. It was thus envisaged by the panel, which consisted of educational theorists, archaeologists, historians and related academics that oral history would help provide a catalyst towards encouraging and acknowledging previously ignored histories of marginalised people whose lives were undocumented during the apartheid era.

The above stems from the NCS for history Grades 10 – 12 defines the study of history as “the study of change and development in society over time and space. It also draws on archaeology, palaeontology, genetics and oral history to interrogate the past” (DoE, 2003, p. 9). This definition of history in the FET phase provides an understanding of how the nature of history is viewed by the DoE. The reference to oral history as a methodology to use within the study of history is emphasised. Moreover, the purpose of studying history as described by the

NCS states that the study of history “enables us to listen to formerly-subjugated voices, and focuses on the crucial role of memory within society. This comes particularly through an emphasis on oral history and an understanding of indigenous knowledge systems” (DoE, 2003, p. 9). The value of oral history is therefore key to what the DoE hopes to achieve in terms of acknowledging past one-sided histories by focusing on previous silent voices and memories.

The NCS document goes on to explain the Learning Outcomes (LO) for the study of history. By definition, “a Learning Outcome is a statement of an intended result of learning and teaching. It describes knowledge, skills and values that learners should acquire by the end of the Further Education and Training band” (DoE, 2003, p. 7). The LOs are by nature vital products of a lesson that must be achieved through the efforts of the teacher in relation to his/ or her learners and must reflect the competencies gained through the lesson or lessons. Additionally, they are key to what the curriculum, and therefore the DoE, requires of teachers to accomplish within their classrooms.

One of the key LOs of which oral history forms a part is LO4, which is directed at heritage and “introduces learners to the issues and debates around heritage and public representations” as well as the “different knowledge systems and the various ways in which the past is memorialised” (DoE, 2003, p. 14). Oral history as a means of gaining knowledge about one’s heritage is once again emphasised, as the outcome states: “...in this outcome local history, heritage

and public history are linked to sites, monuments, museums, oral histories and traditions, street names, buildings, public holidays and the debates around all of these” (DoE, 2003, p. 22). The link between achieving LO4 and using the methodology of oral history is therefore strongly emphasised. This outcome underpins the rationale behind the inclusion of oral history in the FET phase, as its implementation can be regarded as a powerful tool in recovering histories, and for learners to gain a sense of their identity and heritage.

Furthermore, the accompanying Assessment Standard (AS) for LO4 requires learners to “identify ways in which archaeology, oral history and indigenous knowledge systems contribute to an understanding of our heritage” (DoE, 2003, p. 22). An AS is explained in the history NCS as “criteria that collectively describes (sic) what a learner should know and be able to demonstrate at a specific grade. They embody the knowledge, skills and values required to achieve the Learning Outcomes” (DoE, 2003, p. 7). The emphasis on learners’ using oral history to achieve an understanding and knowledge of heritage is therefore highlighted. Furthermore, in light of the above, the argument can be made that oral history cannot be overlooked or ignored by history teachers in the FET phase. It is therefore clear that if oral history is disregarded and left out, LO4 and the AS accompanying LO4 will not be achieved, and the purpose of LO4 becomes null and void.

The NCS for History Grades 10 – 12 is further explained and unpacked by an implementation document, *The 2008 Grade 10 – 12 Learning Programme Guideline*, which states:

the approach to history seeks to address past imbalances by including the histories of marginalised peoples in the South African context, for example, women's history and labour and rural history. The approach highlights the significance of IKS, heritage and oral history in the understanding of the past and its relationship to the present (DoE, 2008, p. 15).

This document provides simple advice on conducting oral history with learners as part of the required FET curriculum, namely how to plan and structure an OHP with one's learners.

Through the review of the above curriculum documents, one is able to attain an understanding of the DoE's initial envisaged reasons for locating oral history in the curriculum, as well as how it should be incorporated and assessed in the FET phase. Additional DoE-produced reports on oral history suggest the possibilities of using oral history as a corrective, as the study of oral history enriches us by introducing new methodological approaches for the recapturing of the past, while also promoting the study of indigenous languages, which is essential for the re-writing of a more inclusive South African history for coming generations (DoE, 2002).

Furthermore, oral history as a means of overcoming the silences and biases of written sources, and as a principally useful means of focusing on the voices of ordinary people in order to teach and encourage a better understanding of communities and surrounding cultures, is firmly rooted in the discourse that defines what a social history is (Apartheid Museum, 2006). For learners to practice a social history as hinted at in the curriculum documents within the South African context, it is necessary to tap into the rich oral history culture of the country (Callinicos, 2001). However, the documents discussed above do not go into great detail of the theory of social history and therefore do not do justice in explaining and emphasising the importance of teaching and learning for a social history specifically in view of South Africa's history.

The available curriculum document policies are to be used in conjunction with one another and under the instructions given by the subject advisors. The latter are updated at a provincial level on a yearly basis by such means as the *Continuous Assessment Programme* (DoE, 2008). The above documents provide assistance and guidelines on how to implement the curriculum in the classroom in terms of application and assessment and include examples, suggestions, graphical explanations, visual sources, tables and related appendices. The technical aspect is detailed in nature and in some cases is quite repetitive in the accompanying documents, which can be viewed as confusing at times. Many of these DoE-produced documents are used to flank support workshops provided by the DoE, such as the *National Curriculum Statement Support Document for*

*Grades 11 and 12* (DoE, 2008). This particular document focuses on the selected content topics with the aim of providing guidance and support to teachers and learners and has been created in conjunction with the history subject advisors from the DoEKZN.

Furthermore, one of the most recently updated documents by the DoE is the *2008 History Grade 10 – 12 Subject Assessment Guideline (SAG)* document. This document provides teachers with an aid for the assessment of work to be done by learners in Grades 10 to 12 and is ultimately a guideline for the assessment of work required by the NCS. In addition, this guide lists what is expected of teachers in terms of the prescribed curriculum and programme, especially in view of conducting an OHP in class. The SAG document also provides instructions and guidelines on the various forms of assessment that take place within the classroom and what component the OHP fits into. The fact that it was produced and made available online during 2008 makes this document very important and valuable in the contemporary understanding of what the DoE expects of teachers in relation to the instruction and implementation of oral history in the FET phase.

Assessment as expected in the NCS forms an important role in determining a learner's growth, progress and achievements. Assessment is divided into four different types: baseline assessment, diagnostic assessment, formative assessment and summative assessment (NCS, 2003). The assessment that the



oral history component fits most comfortably into is that of summative assessment in that the OHP forms a percentage of the final summative mark for the learner.

All the above-mentioned forms of assessment are part of the principle of continuous assessment (CASS) and came into being with the introduction of OBE and c2005. Continuous assessment is defined as:

a strategy that bases decisions about learning on a range of different assessment activities and events that happen at different times throughout the learning process. It involves assessment activities that are spread throughout the year, using various kinds of assessment instruments and methods such as tests, examinations, projects and assignments (DoE, 2003, p.37).

Oral history as a suggested project is therefore a component of CASS and is important in determining a learner's progress, development and growth. In addition, the 2008 SAG document stipulates a choice of three tasks in Grades 10 and 11: either an oral history or research or enrichment task to be carried out in the third term. This assessment is weighted at 8% of the learner's summative assessment (DoE, 2008). The suggested weighting of the above assessment tasks for learners is between 50 or 75 marks, which is reduced to a final 20 marks out of 400 in total for the entire year in Grades 10 and 11 (DoE, 2008). This leads one to question why the oral history component is given such a low value despite all the documents produced on its implementation?

In Grade 12, the programme of assessment consists of a compulsory heritage task – an investigation into heritage, and an additional task, for which there is a choice. The choice tasks consist of an oral history or research or enrichment assignment similar to those required in Grades 10 and 11 and must be done in the second term. However, the weighting of this choice task is a lot heavier than in the previous grades. It is suggested that this task constitutes 20 marks out of a total of 100, which is four times more than in Grades 10 and 11 (DoE, 2008). In addition, the *Guideline Document for Grade 12 Continuous Assessment Programme* states that the learners themselves should be given the opportunity to choose which task they would prefer to do, and not the teacher (DoE, 2008). The oral history component in Grades 10 to 12, which is option Task Four, is described in the SAG document as having:

a number of components: key questions to focus the research, background research to set interviews in context; interviews and transcription of the interviews; a written discussion about how the information in the interviews relates to the period and, at grade 12 level, an evaluation of the interviews as sources about the past. Optional self-reflection can be included at the end: what has doing this project meant to me [the learner] in terms of personal growth and knowledge and understanding of the period? This self-reflection could also focus on more direct questions, especially in grade 10, such as 'what was the most important thing you learned from the oral histories? Having done the project, what would you like to know more about?' (DoE, 2008, p. 24).

The reflections that are intended for the learners to think about are in line with the aims of an OHP in that learners can achieve essential independent skills and values. In addition, the SAG document envisages that by the end of Grade 12 a

learner will be able to work independently, formulate enquiry questions and gather, analyse and interpret information, and will be able to explore the way the past is presented or remembered in different knowledge systems, such as oral history. This is the intended curriculum, but in light of this the learners will be equipped with useful and relevant skills that they will be able to take with them and use in the outside world.

Furthermore, the SAG document lists that the OHP activity should include key questions to focus the research; background research to set the interviews in context; interviews and transcriptions of the interviews; a written discussion on how the information in the interview relates to the period; and an evaluation of interviews as sources about the past. Optional self-reflections can be included at the end. The core assessment criteria and the criteria for assessing an OHP are listed as follows:

Table 1 (SAG, 2008, p. 24).

Core Assessment criteria for oral history project	
Criterion 1	Formulate questions for the project
Criterion 2	Identify and access a variety of sources of information
Criterion 3	Knowledge and understanding of the period
Criterion 4	Historical enquiry
Criterion 5	Presentation

Table 2 (SAG, 2008, p. 25)

Criteria for assessing an oral history project	
Criterion 1	<p>Interview questions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The questions were focused and open-ended.</li> <li>▪ The questions were appropriate and elicited information relevant to the overall question.</li> <li>▪ There were sufficient questions.</li> </ul>
Criterion 2	<p>Interviewee</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Person(s) interviewed was (were) appropriate.</li> <li>▪ The biographical details of the interviewee(s) was (were) given.</li> </ul>
Criterion 3	<p>Preparation and planning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ There is evidence of careful preparation for the interviews.</li> <li>▪ There is evidence of project planning.</li> <li>▪ All preparation and planning notes are included in the project.</li> </ul>
Criterion 4	<p>Presentation of the information from the interviews</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The interviewee(s) was (were) placed into historical context.</li> <li>▪ The context for understanding the interview(s) was given.</li> <li>▪ The information from the interviews was placed in historical context.</li> <li>▪ The information from the interviews was accurately transcribed (if a tape recorder was used).</li> <li>▪ The information from the interviews was analysed and organised coherently, showing different points of view, if appropriate.</li> <li>▪ The presentation of the project to the class was clear.</li> </ul>
Criterion 5	<p>Self-reflection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Comments show depth of thought about the process and the product.</li> </ul>

The above criteria listed for assessing an OHP can be viewed as somewhat rigid and product based. The value of oral history and its real mechanisms are left out completely, such as the connection to memory within the process of producing an OHP. A concerning factor is that history teachers might be left with the view that this is the only way that an OHP can be done and assessed. The results of this could be somewhat stifling in nature.

Another document, the *Guideline Document for Continuous Assessment Programme* (GDCAP), contains instructions on how to conduct an OHP and lists a suggested approach to the OHP for both the Grade 11 and 12 years respectively. Similarly, to the SAG document discussed above, the GDCAP document lists the differing approaches to conducting oral history, depending on which grade the learner is conducting it in. As all three grades in the FET phase are required to do an OHP or research assignment, they have developed a rollout plan for each of the three years, which makes up the FET band. In addition they provide the teacher with questions to ask him/herself to assist in making a judgement on the ability of the learners and the extent of the project. The questions posed to the teachers are as follows:

- Are your learners able to do a full oral project on their own with only minimal assistance from you?

- Would they be able to do a satisfactory project, provided they are encouraged to work in small groups?
- Are their skills limited to a substantial extent so that a teacher-mediated project would consequently work better? (GDCAP, 2008, p.18).

The suggestion made by the document is that a class-based teacher-mediated project should take place in Grade 10, a group project in Grade 11, and an individual project in Grade 12. The information and instructions for conducting an OHP seem straightforward and appear simply laid out for the reader. However, little room is allowed for the teachers to make individual and professional decisions and choices, as essentially these documents are manuals or recipes put together by policy-makers and bureaucrats with the view that they need to be carried out one way or another. This is important to understand, as teachers should be given the freedom based on their experiences and expertise to make conclusions and final decisions based on the context of resources available in their classroom, including issues of staffing, libraries and larger community structures.

However, the teachers are allowed to make only limited choices in terms of doing an individual or group project in Grade 11. The decision-making is left up to the teacher, and an individual project may be done, depending on the abilities of the

learners and their capability and confidence to cope and work individually (GDCAP, 2008, p.18).

With the Grade 10 teacher-mediated or group project the teacher would be expected to take a much more active role in the project with relation to assistance given to the learners. The example given in the manual is that of the teacher finding one or more individuals to come to the class and act as interviewees for the learners. Examples of participants that could be used are listed in the document, such as people who were involved in the struggle, community leaders, factory workers, artists, musicians, migrant workers, religious leaders, etc. The point made here is that any person from the community, who will be able to provide relevant information about their lives in terms of South Africa's history and past can be brought in. However, once again, although it is assumed, the document doesn't stress or provide background to the theoretical underpinning – that of a social history and the theory of oral history, and that people who make up the general community, average people, can be sources of history, and that through the process of speaking to them and interviewing them a historical conversation can take place.

Moreover, there is very little mention of the role of memory and its implications in terms of conducting an interview with the aim of rewriting and recording a previously unacknowledged or ignored history. These documents seem to ignore the theoretical underpinning of the nature of oral history.

The GDCAP document explains that the history teacher is required to give some background to the class in advance about the interviewee who will be visiting the class and about the nature of the project. Similarly, the teachers need to inform their learners about the person whom they will be interviewing regarding their role in history; for instance, if “the person was someone who was subjected to a banning order, the aspect of the apartheid state that involved banning, house arrests and confinement without trial” should be discussed, so that the learners can ask appropriate and meaningful questions and show consideration and insight (GDCAP, 2008, p.18).

Furthermore, the GDCAP document suggests that topics chosen should be in keeping with the topics or knowledge foci of the NCS for Grade 11. This could include “how unique was apartheid South Africa and pseudo-scientific racism”, or any other topic of local interest or relating to heritage (GDCAP, 2008, p.18). The reasons behind this required choice of topic is not explained to the reader, and no background to the importance of local history or heritage is given. The document therefore becomes a manual for application stipulating what is required by the DoE, but the value, purpose and possible problems that could be experienced are entirely omitted. In light of this, the document is merely a manual giving instructions and orders, with no space allowed for conversation, ownership, emancipation, interrogation or debate. Ironically, this is not in keeping with the very nature of social history and the reasons behind the teaching of oral history.



The GDCAP document also contains a section of delivering instructions on how the interview must take place; for example, as the whole class will be interviewing the same person, the teacher must assign different aspects of the interviewee's life to the respective groups. The teacher also needs to monitor and check the questions before the interview to ensure that there are different questions being asked and that they are open-ended. The learners will then be allowed to ask any follow-up questions after the main questions have been asked, in order to probe the interviewee further for deeper understanding and broader information (GDCAP, 2008, p.19). In this sense learners are still dependent on the teacher as opposed to this process being learner centred where the learners can take control and ownership of the process individually.

The instructions and aid for the actual interview process seem, at face value, to be clearly laid out for the teachers in the GDCAP document. In terms of assessment, it is required that the teachers use the rubric set up for the extended writing piece or the rubric provided for the assessment of OHPs (See Table 2 & Appendix L). Again, the teachers are expected to use an official document to assess the projects, but reasons as to why these rubrics should be used are not given. In terms of the vast range of schools and differing classroom settings and structures, the argument can be made that these rubrics may not be appropriate and fair to all classrooms in South Africa and furthermore, may be viewed as rigid and unadaptable.

In addition, the GDCAP document also contains step-by-step notes that can be used by the learners on how to do an OHP and includes brief notes on the nature of oral history and what is expected of the learners in producing their projects. Furthermore, the document discusses important aspects as to why an OHP is a necessary undertaking for history learners, in that original and genuine resources are created that would otherwise be lost forever, as well as contributing to a greater understanding of the past. However, once again the importance of rewriting a history inclusive of all people and creating a social history is not emphasised for the reader.

The document does emphasise further benefits of an OHP in terms of administrative issues. One of these is the issue of plagiarism, as there are usually an array of problems are found in the typical research project; however, with the OHP, which is centred on interviews and therefore original sources the element of plagiarising is limited. Moreover, the aspect of economics and varying resourced schools is raised, as any school, no matter how privileged or underprivileged, can conduct such a project, as the resources used focus on the greater community (GDCAP, 2008, p.20). And, lastly, the ample skills that such a project can produce, include research, listening, writing, analysing, empathy and social skills, to name a few. On completion of the assignment, it is suggested that the learners need to hand in any field notes that were produced during the interview, any planning done, research evidence, such as the transcripts of the

recorded interview, and/or the tapes used for recording, and finally a written report. This will provide proof of the learners' own and original work.

As touched on previously, assessment for this project can be done by using the guide provided in the GDCAP document (See Appendix K). It is suggested that any extra information that is needed on assessing an OHP can be sought through the subject advisors themselves, experienced colleagues from other schools, oral history professionals, courses and workshops. However, not all of these avenues may be possible for all teachers.

In addition, the GDCAP document recommends that the Western Cape Department of Education (WCDoE) website be used for additional help, as well as the *Daily News* Matric Matters Lessons, which are appended to the end of the SAG document. They also include a website to go to if additional reading on OHPs is required – [www.doinghistory.org](http://www.doinghistory.org). However, not all history teachers might have access, as many schools in South Africa do not have computers and therefore lack access to the internet. Accreditation for some of the documents used in the GDCAP document is given to the WCDoE.

The document on oral history produced by the WCDoE states that learners should be taught how to construct knowledge in history instead of being passive absorbers of historical information and that an OHP is one of the ways in which learners can be encouraged to construct historical knowledge. Similarly, they

emphasise that this form of activity is rich in skills and techniques and is knowledge-based and that this can all be assessed in such a way as to empower the learners themselves through their own awareness of their growth and development.

The accompanying notes from the WCDoE list a stage-by-stage approach to conducting an OHP. The stages include: initial research, planning, the interview, transcribing and editing, analysing and summarising, and finally the presentation of the project through means of oral testimony to communicate knowledge and understanding (GDCAP, 2008). There is also a checklist to mark, before arriving at an interview to ensure that all the necessary equipment is provided and the preparation done. The assessment rubric from the WCDoE can be seen in the appendices of the document (See Appendix K). There is also a step-by-step guide included in the GDCAP document, which contains more step-by-step instructions on how to do an OHP with one's learners, which is somewhat repetitive of the WCDoE's guide. Again the idea that one size fits all is apparent, with the emphasis placed on the product as opposed to the process of the project.

The *Daily News* lessons that are included as an appendix in the GDCAP document include two example lessons that can be used by teachers to explain to their learners what oral history is and how to produce an OHP in the history classroom. This inclusion stresses the nature of oral history as a valuable source

for historians to use in obtaining other people's stories and experiences. It also contains a great deal of relevant information as to why oral history is such an important tool in the recovery of people's histories. Its intentions are to lay the groundwork for providing teachers with an understanding of the nature of social history and its importance in the overall study and teaching of history at a school level. In addition, it affords information on the history and development of oral history and its use and views as a historical source. Some of the reasons as to the importance and value of oral history as a source are listed below, as outlined in the GDCAP document (2008):

- History based on documents often leaves out the perspective of the ordinary man or woman. Oral history is therefore an important part of presenting a people's history, as it brings in the perspectives of the previously marginalised.
- Fewer and fewer people keep diaries or write letters, and even official reports tend to be less detailed. Written sources are therefore declining, bringing about an increasing gap in our knowledge and our understanding of recent events.
- Although memory is a problem, oral sources are not necessarily any less reliable than written sources. Furthermore, oral historians can use the same process of cross-checking that is used by more

traditional historians by interviewing people with different perspectives on an event.

- Not surprisingly, oral history has become particularly popular in developing regions of the world, where a number of the adult population cannot read or write.

The *Daily News* provided pages in the GDCAP document that also include step-by-step instructions on how to conduct an actual interview and what to do with the oral source (interview) afterwards. What is interesting about this document is that it was, in fact, created by one of the history subject advisors that I interviewed, as part of his own initiative to develop materials to aid teachers in the application of oral history.

Another document that needs to be reviewed is the *National Curriculum Statement Support Document for History Grades 11 and 12*, known as the teachers' manual, which has been assembled together by the DoE and history subject advisors. This document consists of content-based pages that feed into the knowledge foci of the NCS, and includes practical aid on using sources to teach history and questioning techniques that can be used in the classroom. In terms of oral history and its application, it contains a four-page Powerpoint-based document that consists of the same information that is found in the SAG document analysed earlier. This document is similarly created for use along with

a KZNDoe-arranged workshop with the subject advisors for FET history teachers and would therefore be discussed and used during this workshop in a hands-on approach by the teachers and the subject advisors and organisers. However, as with all DoE-arranged workshops, it is sometimes difficult for all teachers to attend, especially teachers in township and rural areas. As commented by Johnson, Monk and Hodges, “township and rural teachers, who are most in need of support, find it difficult to attend training workshops” (cited in Harley & Wedekind, p. 207). The aspect of DoE-produced training and teaching workshops will be burrowed into in Chapter Five.

The final document to be reviewed is the *Grade 10 – 12 Learning Programme Guidelines for History*, which is ultimately a guideline for teachers to use in understanding the nature of history, its purpose, and how it should be taught. As mentioned earlier, the definition given at the beginning of the document states that:

History is the study of development and change in society over time and space. This study draws on archaeology, palaeontology and oral history. Through the investigation of the past, history enables us to understand and evaluate how past human action impacts on the present and influences the future (*Grade 10 – 12 Learning Programme Guidelines, 2008, p.7*).

This, too, is repeated in the NCS document, where history is defined as “the study of change and development in society over time and space. It also draws on archeology, paleontology, genetics and oral history to interrogate the past”

(NCS, 2003, p.9). And, furthermore, its purpose, as stated in the NCS, “enables us to listen to formerly-subjugated voices, and focuses on the crucial role of memory in society. This comes particularly through an emphasis on oral history and an understanding of indigenous knowledge systems” (NCS, 2003, p.9). The importance of oral history as a means to be used in the study of history is hinted at, but requires more emphasis, as do the reasons behind its inclusion. Oral sources need to be given as much prominence and reliability in the study of history as written and visual sources, and this should be done alongside the promotion of IKS and oral traditions in South Africa’s society. However, the *Grade 10 – 12 Learning Programme Guideline* does briefly mention the underlying nature and importance of a social history as is stated below:

The approach to history seeks to address past imbalances by including the histories of marginalised peoples in the South African context, for example women’s history, and labour and rural history...the approach highlights the significance of Indigenous Knowledge Systems, heritage and oral history in the understanding of the past and its relationship to the present (*Grade 10 – 12 Learning Programme Guidelines, 2008, p.15*).

As oral history is theoretically located within a social history, it is fitting that the DoE policy documents distributed should make strong mention of teaching and learning towards the creation of a social history and therefore the progressive implications for South Africa and the teaching of an unbiased history. Furthermore, this document should stress the holistic approach that, through the use of oral history, the importance of moving history beyond the confines of the classroom in order to engage with public history and heritage can be achieved.



On these grounds, the *Grade 10 – 12 Learning Programme Guideline* document provides teachers with a basic foundation and brief understanding of the reasons why it is necessary to implement oral history in the FET phase, whereas the SAG and GDCAP documents explain how to do oral history and other administrative aspects.

It must be noted that many of the documents are guidelines only and, by their nature, they might be ignored and left unacknowledged by many teachers, either by choice or because some teachers either do not have access to the internet or are not being visited by the DoE or the relevant subject advisors, and are therefore not being made aware of the programme and its suggestions for the FET phase.

In light of the above analysis of the official history curriculum policy documents developed by the KZNDoE, there is proportionately little literature that has been written on the actual implementation of oral history in South African schools. This could be explained by the fact that oral history as a compulsory component of the history FET phase has been added to the curriculum relatively recently.

In conclusion to the above analysis of the available curriculum and policy documents provided by the DoE, one is able to acquire an understanding of some of the intentions of the DoE in implementing oral history, as well as how the DoE would like the OHP to be incorporated and assessed in the FET phase.

However, all curricula produced can be viewed as somewhat politically created documents with particular intentions and agendas needing to be achieved by the people in power. Furthermore, this is an 'intended' curriculum that has been devised and put to paper through the formulation of documents, but the history teachers' and learners' experiences might be something entirely different. One also needs to keep in mind the 'hidden curriculum' in that other practices, forms and ways of implementation might be taking place based on the teachers' own understandings and efforts. These will be explored in the following chapter.

The point must be made that neat documents and good curricular policies do not necessarily guarantee success. Success is more than a good curriculum in that the larger educational situation and South Africa's political context must be taken into account in terms of applying and using these documents. Furthermore, these documents are lacking in some areas and there are silences present. Greater presence and emphasis need to be given to the ideology of a social history and how oral history is a means of achieving this. If the documents do not emphasise, discuss and debate this, the teachers will have a limited understanding of this and therefore a simplistic view of the mechanisms, reasons and benefits of employing oral history in the classroom. Similarly, the learners, too, will have a partial understanding of the nature, value and purpose of conducting oral history as a theoretical means of providing a voice to the voiceless and therefore an aid in the rewriting of South Africa's history. In light of this, the views of the history subject advisors will now be explored.

#### 4.3 Subject advisors' views on how the teaching and learning of oral history is envisaged in the FET curriculum

The semi-structured interviews that were conducted with the history subject advisors produced data that could be used alongside the initial document analysis. The subject advisors who participated in the study were interviewed at the UKZN, in offices where a comfortable environment conducive to interviewing was maintained. The two history subject advisors that were interviewed are both, by nature of their position, instigators and implementers of the curriculum policies and particularly implementation of oral history in the FET phase. The work they do can therefore be viewed as being at the initial level of the implementation of oral history. They provide the catalyst between the above analysed and discussed documents and the actual application of the OHP and oral history in the FET phase. Their role within this study is therefore an imperative one.

In view of this, I will now examine the history subject advisor's role and views on how the teaching and learning of oral history is envisaged and experienced in the FET curriculum. The two subject advisors that I interviewed were both well informed and knowledgeable with regard to oral history, its implementation and what instructions are available in the policy documents for teachers. Similarly, they commented that they are experienced and well versed in what the policies require and expect from the teachers in relation to what tasks and assessment are required. Furthermore, the history subject advisors interviewed had

themselves attended a workshop presented by lecturers at the UKZN on how to conduct an OHP with learners, the nature of oral history, and its uses.

Through their knowledge and experiences they are able to provide assistance to teachers in implementing the curriculum. Additionally, they are required to monitor policies and ensure that they are being implemented correctly in the schools. Their job takes a top-down approach, as they are required to ensure that the KZNDoe documents are being carried out appropriately in the schools. In relation to the curriculum document policies, one subject advisor remarked that he believes they are extensive in terms of assisting the teachers and that there is more than enough instruction, documentation and help in these guides for teachers to use in assisting them in conducting oral history: "They have more than enough guidance on how to do it, the documentation is clear, the support is there, the workshops are there" (Subject advisor interview B, 26 June 2008). However, this does not necessarily mean that the teachers themselves fully understand it, embrace it and therefore 'own' it.

The subject advisors are expected to distribute all DoEKZN and DoE produced history related documents to the FET phase history teachers at the beginning of every year with any additional updated information. These include a *Guideline Document for Grades 11 and 12 Continuous Assessment Programme*, a *National Curriculum Statement Support Document for Grades 11 and 12 Teachers Manual* and the *Subject Assessment Guideline document for Grade 10 to 12*.

Both subject advisors maintained that everything that is needed to conduct a functioning OHP is in these documents, and that the information is clearly laid out. This includes outlines on planning, content frameworks, history requirements, information on the CASS requirements and how to work with oral history in a step-by-step approach, a marking rubric (See Appendices K & L), a template on how to monitor the OHP (See Appendix M), a release form (See Appendix N), comments about the oral history itself, and notes on how to improve the project and recommendations for following years.

In addition to the above-mentioned documentation, there is a Grade 12 CASS contract that the learners have to sign that includes the OHP and other tasks and assignments. This contract is signed upfront and is a declaration for the learners to take ownership of their work and commit themselves to the year and what is expected of them (See Appendix O). The ideology behind this is for the learners themselves to be aware from the beginning of the year of what is expected of them and to take responsibility for and ownership of their work.

Subject advisors are required to provide all necessary support to the teachers in their respective district. This includes material support, support in terms of meetings and visits, and any other support deemed necessary. This may include, for example, what one history subject advisor did in aiding history teachers from his district. He contacted an oral history expert to be co-opted into a workshop provided for the teachers who came for a five-day workshop to instruct and assist

them on 'what is' and 'how to conduct' oral history in the classroom. This workshop presenter was an educational officer from the Chief Albert Luthuli Centre. He commented: "So I bring in people to help the teachers, and if you localise it, it is better. So if there are any people in my area I will ask them to do a presentation for us on oral history teaching" (Subject advisor interview B, 26 June 2008).

The other subject advisor indicated that he has up to six workshops a year within his district. He claimed that these workshops are well attended and that the teachers generally engage and walk away with something new for the classroom situation. However, this is his view and experience alone and needs to be examined in terms of what the teachers say and experience, which will be explored in Chapter Five. Furthermore, these are but one history subject advisor's claims, and he does not necessarily represent all the history subject advisors in KZN.

One of the subject advisors interviewed explained his understanding of the rationale behind the inclusion of oral history in the curriculum, this being cultural pragmatism in that, within an African and South African context, stories have been and still are told orally, and the DoE wanted to tap into some kind of oral research or tradition and to give the learners an opportunity to go out and interview people, to listen to them, to conduct an interview and to create their own piece of history. What's more, he claimed that this is not something

completely new to KZN, as it was in fact introduced unofficially before the new NCS, and it is just that with the new NCS it has become educational policy. It was originally started in approximately 1997 in the province. It began in a very small way, and gradually documentation has increased and it has now come quite a substantial way in terms of its instruction in the classroom, as is evident in the available policy documents.

In terms of the implementation of the oral history, one history subject advisor stated that oral history in the FET phase is one of three designed choice activities for CASS in Grade 11 and 12. He further commented that in the document provided by the DoE known as the SAG document, it is indicated that it falls under what is known as an enrichment activity, in which “learners are required to conduct research on community based, heritage, or family history and traditions” (Subject advisor interview B, 26 June 2008). This comment is true in the light of the above document study, where it states in the official document policy that the OHP is in fact part of a choice that can be made by the teacher and his or her learners. Therefore, despite the strong arguments made in favour of oral history being a component in the FET phase and the background and reasons for its implementation as discussed in Chapter Two, the actual policy ultimately allows for the OHP to be an optional in the classroom.

One interviewee elaborated further on his understanding and knowledge of the curriculum policy documents:

oral history is part and parcel of the programme of assessment for CASS, and therefore learners are required to conduct research on community based, heritage, or family history or traditions. It is in fact compulsory in Grades 10, 11 and 12, but should be implemented at differing levels in terms of the learners' differing ages and abilities. It is obviously not expected of a fifteen year old in Grade 10 to do a full-blown OHP, but rather to experiment with oral history to build up skills and experience (Subject advisor interview A, 22 June 2008).

Moreover, he emphasised the importance of the project to be viewed incrementally for each FET grade, so that the skills developed in Grade 10 and 11 can then be taken to Grade 12 when the learners are expected to conduct a substantial OHP and go out into the wider community and interview someone, along with additional research. In addition, he commented that it was created as an easy way for learners to get real evidence and conduct real research, in a user-friendly manner (Subject advisor interview A, 22 June 2008).

He further stated that the teachers have to implement oral history, as it is policy and part of the requirements of the curriculum. The subject advisors interviewed feel that teachers are starting to conform to what is expected, and the subject advisors view this as possibly owing to the improved and continual development and updates of the documents, which have helped to make them more accessible and understandable for both teachers and learners. In addition, the subject advisor mentioned that the DoE has provided the learners with a checklist that stresses all the steps and requirements of the project (See Appendix M). This document requires a stamp by the respective school and is supposed to be regularly checked by the teacher to ensure that the learners are



doing all the necessary work and steps of the assignment. The interviewed subject advisor said that if teachers complain or have problems with the implementation of oral history, then the department and the subject advisors will produce additional documentation or research to include in the subsequent years' SAG document to help the teachers. The solution to problems is viewed bureaucratically in providing more and additional policies and documents.

This provides evidence of the willingness of some history subject advisors to help and to hear the teachers' actual voices and then respond to their concerns accordingly. But this could also be viewed as a mechanism used by the DoE and the associated subject advisors to get the teachers to be policy-compliant, and not necessarily as a means of empowering the teachers.

The history subject advisors interviewed both believe that, in general oral history is on track. The only problems that they have encountered concern those teachers who do not believe in the system and who do not employ oral history in their classes, either by choice or owing to problems experienced. These teachers "are viewed as doing a disservice to their learners" by not following the intended curriculum. The interviewee further commented that on many occasions he has come across teachers who ignore the system and give the learners their own projects to do, which are not related to the syllabus or curriculum (Subject advisor interview two, 26 June 2008). This might, however be due to a lack of

materials, documents and support, especially within schools that are not as easily accessible as others.

As from 2008, learners are now expected to do a heritage and an oral history assignment in Grade 12. The SAG document states that in term one learners have to undertake a heritage investigation, and in term two an OHP. The aim of this is to give recognition to LO4 and achieve its aim. The understanding is that they wanted to keep the oral history as well as the heritage task. It was considered that there could not be an oral history component without a heritage assignment, and it has therefore now been specified in the policy that both oral history and heritage need to be included, and examples of topics that can be covered have been included for both tasks. (Subject advisor interview two, 26 June 2008).

However, it is believed by one of the subject advisors interviewed that this project can always be built on; that there is still a lot of training and development to be done with teachers; and that there needs to be on-going training, as oral history is seen to be a very important aspect of the history curriculum and must therefore be constantly updated and researched so that the learners will ultimately find it useful and rewarding.

Overall, the history subject advisors interviewed were both strongly in favour of oral history and commented substantially on its benefits and uses for learners in

terms of their personal growth and the skills involved, as well as the attainment of a professional view of the nature and discipline of history. The history subject advisors work under very difficult circumstances, and the vast range of schools to which they are assigned are sometimes problematic owing to the nature of the South African schooling situation, in which some schools are dysfunctional and grossly under-resourced. However, despite the differences in the schools, which they visit, and implement the policies, they expressed positive views about the presence of oral history within the curriculum and are happy overall with the outcomes and the projects that are being produced by the learners. They did, however, feel that improvements can and will be made in terms of providing further workshops to aid the teachers' understanding.

#### 4.4 Conclusion

The implementation of oral history in the FET phase is ultimately required in the official curriculum documents, which have been designed, by the DoE and KZNDoE. These are subsequently given to the subject advisors, who then pass and instruct the documents onto the teachers. Thereafter, the teachers implement this information to the learners. The implementation of oral history in the FET phase must ultimately be seen as a highly constructed and planned arrangement devised by the DoE to serve the necessary curriculum requirements that have been examined and studied at length, that is, there is a key purpose to it all.

In light of this, the documents and requirements in the NCS and the official document policies can be viewed as political representations and aims of and by the government to serve and achieve a particular purpose during a particular time. This is carried out and enforced at various levels, and in this case through the history subject advisors onto the history teachers and lastly onto the history learners.

The DoE documents emphasise that oral history has something to offer learners and that it can be effectively implemented in all the phases in the GET as well as in the FET phase. However, there is little discussion or illumination of possible problems or difficulties that may be encountered and thereafter possible solutions for the teachers. Furthermore, there appears to be an overload of curriculum policy documents that are rather repetitive and complex. This deters away from the documents practicality in implementation. Moreover, this overload of information may be the reason as to why some teachers follow the documents and why others do not.

This chapter has provided an initial look into the available curriculum policy documents as prescribed by the DoE, the history subject advisors and associated policy-makers. In addition, it gives clarification of the views and outlooks of the subject advisors in relation to how the teaching and learning of oral history is envisaged in the FET curriculum document policies and sets the tone for the chapters to follow. Furthermore, it should be seen as a springboard

for later discussions in terms of how teachers and learners actually experience oral history in the classroom, their perceptions and experiences, and the reasons for these.

## Chapter Five

### **History teachers' perceptions and experiences on the implementation of oral history in the FET phase**

#### 5.1 Introduction

This chapter will firstly look at history teachers' views of oral history and its implementation in the FET phase, as well as their understanding of the purpose of it. Secondly, the support given to the history teachers will be analysed. This will be in terms of the support received from the DoE and KZNDoE, the subject advisors and the official documents and other possible outlets that the teachers use. Lastly, I will examine the actual process that the teachers undertake in the teaching and learning of oral history with their learners. This will include the successes and constraints experienced, an explanation of what instructions they gave to their learners, notes and any additional aid, as well as their overall perceptions and views of oral history in the FET phase.

Information gathered for this chapter was done through the use of semi-structured interviews with the individual history teachers. Furthermore, these interviews helped to determine how history teachers interpret and understand oral history as a component of the NCS as embodied in the curriculum document

policies as analysed in Chapter Four, as well as their views on oral history as a methodology and tool to teach history. The outcome of this provided me with an outsider's view of the understanding, expectations and initial thoughts of teachers teaching oral history in the FET phase. On closer examination, this would allow for the theoretical location of this study, that of a social history to form a milieu for the research.

In addition, my initial review of the available curriculum policy documents completed in Chapter Four helped with the formulation and direction of the semi-structured interview questions posed to the teachers and subject advisors and provided a substantial understanding and background to what the KZNDoe expects and envisaged through the implementation of oral history in the history FET curriculum. In addition, this helped in forming a link between the learners' understanding of the OHP and the understanding and commitment of the teachers to oral history and, more specifically, the actual project.

Finally, through the process of interviewing history teachers I was able to provide the teachers with a voice for them to talk about the brief histories of their memories of the teaching and learning of oral history.

## 5.2 History teachers' views of oral history

The views presented by the history teachers on their understanding of oral history and the purpose and reasons behind conducting it with their learners varied. This was both in terms of their views of implementation and their concrete understanding of what oral history is. Some teachers displayed insight and a solid understanding into the nature of oral history and the reasoning behind it in terms of the importance of creating a social history of South Africa's community, and others viewed it as merely an assignment that needed to be done in accordance with the curriculum. From this, it can be suggested that there are two main groups of thought in terms of the value and purpose of oral history in the classroom; namely, teachers who provide a good standard of implementation of oral history and teachers who provide a poor standard of implementation of oral history.

One teacher interviewed remarked that he believed that the whole purpose of oral history was to "narrow the gaps in history", and that anyone can do it, not necessarily just history learners. He emphasised the pragmatic and accessible nature of sources within oral history in that one's resource can be one's community and therefore one doesn't need to rely on the internet, which many schools cannot afford, "and in that respect I think its achieved it's purposes, as anyone can do it" (Teacher interview E, 12 June 2008). Similarly, another interviewee also spoke about oral history being an appreciation for one's



community and realising that anyone can be a historical source. She commented further on how, through the process of oral history, her learners were given the opportunity to discover local heroes:

You know normally when you speak about heroes you think of politicians. And when they go into the community and learn about certain people, it could be an old lady down the road, and when they discover the amount of input she has made in the community, they have learnt something. So it really develops a child (Teacher interview G, 23 June 2008).

This comment shows the teacher's insight in terms of the benefits of oral history for learners who can gain insight into the effects of providing a voice to the community and allowing for one's memory to be called upon and documented as part of the historical process.

A third interviewee commented on the inherent nature of history and heritage in that learners today need to know where they come from, that they need to know their roots and identify and show an appreciation of the different cultures and communities in an integrated society, and that:

By doing oral history we tend to appreciate the value system and beliefs of races other than our own, so in that way it is important. Also it is important, by the fact that there is a type of relationship with what happened then and what happened now, and drawing parallels with history then and history now, so I think that is important (Teacher interview F, 20 June 2008).

These views expose some of the interviewees' knowledge and understanding of the nature of oral history and reveal an understanding of the purpose of the method of using oral history as a means of recording and studying history that is inclusive of all people, as well as an alternative methodology of experiencing and being a part of the historical process (Ritchie, 1995; Minkley & Rassool, 1998; Thompson, 2000; Callinicos, 2001).

In view of Chapter Four where the documents were reviewed, it is apparent that most of the interviewees are silent regarding a deeper understanding of oral history. The available curriculum policy documents mostly talk about 'how to' implement oral history, but are lacking in providing a deeper understanding of social history, the theory behind oral history, its purpose and philosophy. The interviewed history teachers are implementing oral history and are following the documents and listening to the subject advisors but are not necessarily grasping the subject adequately. The argument can be made that this 'how to' approach that is exclusive of a 'what is' and 'why' approach will have a knock-on effect on the learners, who will inevitably be deprived of a substantial theoretical base, and therefore a low level of understanding of the nature and purpose of oral history will be achieved. In the light of this opinion that the interviewed history teachers have a low level of understanding of the nature and purpose of oral history, I questioned the teachers on the support they receive from the DoE and KZNDoE, their subject advisors and the NCS documents.

### 5.3 Support for the implementation of oral history

My next point of investigation was to determine the history teachers' views of the support that they receive from the history subject advisors, who are the agents of the KZNDoE. Alongside this, I aimed at gaining an understanding of the teachers' knowledge and use of the official curriculum policy documents as examined in Chapter Four.

Interviewee A informed me that she is regularly visited by her subject advisor and is constantly given updates of materials and notes, that she has a good relationship with him and that he often visits her in her office where they talk on a one-on-one basis. She remarked that this relationship helps her to stay afloat and cope with the curriculum and the Grade 12 year and that she feels confident conducting oral history as her subject advisor gives her any new materials related to conducting the projects that are produced. This demonstrates the existence of good helpful relationships that are formed in this case between the subject advisors and teachers, and that a good bond can help with the teachers' management and application of oral history.

In contrast, when I asked interviewee B about the official curriculum policy documents, she commented that she knows about them. However, she does not make use of all the documents, such as the monitoring sheet (See Appendix M) or the consent forms (See Appendix N). Additionally, she commented that the

history subject advisor allocated to her school seldom visits her, “that he is so busy and there is little one-on-one contact” (Teacher interview B, 4 June 2008). This variation in support and presence of the history subject advisors is apparent, as will be seen from the various views of the interviewed teachers to follow. It appears that some history subject advisors visit their teachers regularly and provide updated support materials and other history subject advisors do not.

Similarly, interviewee C (Teacher interview C, 5 June 2008) commented that he used to be visited regularly by a history subject advisor and that he is aware of all the documents and guidelines, but that his previous subject advisor had left, and the new one is not as helpful and efficient. Furthermore, he said that he is not too concerned as he does a great deal of his own research and uses this to aid and help the learners in the implementation and understanding of oral history. Interviewee D similarly commented on the lack of presence of her subject advisor and in addition commented on the role of workshops that are sometimes arranged for the teachers: “I have been at workshops, where they just don’t have a clue what is going on. They really just don’t have a clue” (Teacher interview D, 10 June 2008). The issue of workshops that are organised and run by the KZNDoE is another source of document implementation where teachers are provided with instruction related to the curriculum. This interviewee’s views expose a negative experience of the workshops, where she finds them ill-planned and the organisers themselves ill-trained to conduct the workshops.

Interviewee E made it clear that he seldom attends the workshops as he finds them a waste of time and poorly run. He also commented that the documentation provided by his previous subject advisor was extensive and that the guidelines were very clear, but that his present subject advisor seldom visits or shows an interest in the progress of the learners and the work being done.

This, however, is in contrast to interviewee F, who commented that his subject advisor is a great help and frequently meets with him and other teachers within his particular district. He said that he has a very close network of teachers within his area that meet within their clusters on a regular basis. A cluster group consists of teachers within a district who are all teaching the same subject and grades. They meet to exchange notes and seek guidance on any problems being experienced with regard to teaching history in this case or any related curriculum matters and concerns. This introduces the idea of forming a “community of practice” amongst similar teachers, as espoused by Wenger (1998), who suggests employing a “community of practice” for teacher development when there is restricted support from the Provincial Department of Education for teachers. These cluster groups similarly provide support and a valuable space in which teachers can raise similar problems with other history teachers. Furthermore, Maistry (2007) argues that owing to a substantive lack of teacher education programmes to aid teachers’ development and needs, some teachers have taken the initiative to create “alternative mechanisms for learning”, this being a “teacher community of practice” or cluster group (p.56). These usually

consist of voluntary groupings of teachers at arranged meetings, as is adopted by the teacher interviewed who belongs to such a cluster group.

The history teachers that were interviewed revealed that the necessary documentation and teacher guidelines produced by the KZNDoE are generally being regularly distributed to their respective schools and included the official policies and curriculum as well as separate official booklets created by the history subject advisors on how to conduct oral history and on the nature of oral history. Most of the teachers interviewed are well aware of the official curriculum documents as listed in Chapter Three and reviewed in Chapter Four, but, as mentioned earlier, a number of the teachers interviewed are familiar with only some of them. This could be directly dependent on the subject advisors' distributing the documents, and is understandable as there are so many documents to locate and use. The gathered constructed data showed that some teachers had received more documents and better support than others, and this appears to be directly related to the specific subject advisor allocated to their respective area or district, in terms of varying competencies.

In addition, some of the history teachers interviewed also took it upon themselves to download updated documents from the DoE website on the internet - <http://www.education.gov.za/Curriculum/Curriculum.asp> - and have conducted their own research into how to teach oral history in the classroom. The interviewed teachers generally felt that the documents guided both them and

their learners in the understanding and application of oral history, and the history curriculum in general. As a result, only one teacher commented that she had initially found the documentation vague and confusing, but has subsequently managed to interpret and understand it (Teacher interview A, 29 May 2008).

Materials supplied by the respective history subject advisors includes; the SAG document that contains a step-by-step guide on conducting oral history in the classroom. Examples of topics that can be used, the specified length of the project, and other similar administrative information relating to conducting oral history in the classroom are also included. One history teacher commented that the instructions are straightforward and "if you can read then you should be able to do it" (Teacher interview A, 29 May 2008).

The effect of these preliminary discussions was to gain some understanding of whether the teachers feel confident and prepared in conducting oral history through the availability and accessibility of policy documents and other related aids provided by the KZNDoE and their district-allocated subject advisors. Similarly, it provided an idea as to how the history subject advisors' supports are viewed and experienced by teachers, and therefore how much they are relied upon in terms of the actual implementation of oral history.

Furthermore, the data constructed revealed that the history teachers interviewed perceive some subject advisors positively and see them as making an effort in

their liaisons, meetings and delivery of materials in general. This included regular updates of booklets that contain new and additional aid and instructions on how to do oral history. On the other hand, some subject advisors are viewed less positively in that the teachers feel they could be doing more in terms of verbal support and one-on-one meetings in relation to the difficulties the teachers are experiencing in conducting oral history. Similarly, the teachers' views of the subject advisors differ in direct relation to the various districts in which they are teaching and to the allocated subject advisor. Some teachers are visited regularly by a subject advisor and view him/her as "someone you can meet and talk to and phone" (Teacher interview A, 29 May 2008), and others feel that their subject advisor is not providing enough support in the implementation of oral history.

The analysis of the interviews for this section pertaining to the amount of support received from the subject advisors showed that the majority of the teachers interviewed were seldom visited by a subject advisor on a one-to-one basis. The reason given by one teacher is "our two advisors are very nice, but they are so busy and they know our school is working so they are so busy that they just leave us for more drastic schools who need help" (Teacher interview D, 10 June 2008).

On these grounds I decided to examine further the role of workshops and training provided by the KZNDoE, and the issue of subject advisor support. This is in terms of guidance and assistance to the teachers in the understanding, teaching



and implementation of oral history in their classrooms. Some of the teachers interviewed have attended available workshops on oral history, but most of the teachers interviewed had not done so, usually for the reason of not being offered one in their district. Those who did attend workshops offered by the KZNDoE found them useful and explanatory. It is significant to note that the teachers interviewed strongly believed that the most support in terms of teaching and implementing oral history came from cluster groups or networks formed by the teachers and subject advisors within their district or vicinity.

I found that one district relied heavily on peer history teachers in their area to share ideas, materials and give support and guidance in terms of conducting oral history in their classrooms. These cluster groups, also known as communities of practice, appear to provide a network for teachers to discuss ideas, share resources and help in teaching related problems and queries, as well as the marking of OHPs, so as to compare and standardise the results. However, this was not always plain sailing, and some of the teachers interviewed felt that their particular cluster groups did not work very well and were a waste of time and were used generally for “face showing”. This can be so in some cases, as is suggested by Clark (2001) and Sayed (2004), in that some teacher professional development initiatives are frequently superficial, short-term and insufficiently perceptive regarding complex local conditions and problems.

The views provided by the teachers as to how they see the teaching and learning of oral history in the FET curriculum provides added insight into what the history subject advisors feel and what the actual documents state. Furthermore, it must be emphasised that the teachers, too, form part of the policy implementation in that they provide a catalyst between the expectations of an OHP and the actual product produced by the learners through the instruction that they deliver in the classroom. In terms of an overall structure of the support for the implementation of oral history in the FET phase, a conclusion can be made that the support being produced can be divided into three categories, these being; good support, some support and no support. Furthermore, the type of teacher that is envisaged by the DoE is one who will implement the documents and policies regardless of the support and understanding being provided to them. There is no accommodation for variation in this – all teachers must act and behave the same. However, in view of the nature of oral history, OBE and the NCS, which is intended to be emancipatory in nature, especially in relation to Freires' (1970) ideas around libertarian education, as discussed in Chapter Two, the expectations of the teachers and the implementation are contradictory. It can be concluded that, realistically speaking, there are several types of teachers in relation to how they view, implement and cope with oral history in the FET phase. These are:

- history teachers who rely on the history subject advisors and curriculum policy documents;

- history teachers who rely on some of the documents, the worldwide web (WWW), and their own research; and
- history teachers who receive no help and therefore do not produce an acceptable oral history outcome.

#### 5.4 The teaching and learning of oral history in the FET phase

In relation to the research question, which aimed at determining how history teachers experience the implementation of oral history, a solid understanding of the actual process undertaken by the teachers to conduct an OHP was necessary. Moreover, the process that is undertaken by the history teachers in implementing oral history in their classrooms aided in a concrete understanding of how the teachers understand the nature of oral history. That is, what guidance and mentoring do they provide for their learners in terms of interviewing someone, selecting questions, conducting further research and compiling the project, especially in relation to what the curriculum documents and support documents state. These queries helped in determining how the teachers assisted the learners in their unfolding projects from the initial inception to the handing in of the project. I also questioned the teachers interviewed in terms of their experiences of conducting oral history and the reasons for doing this.

One of the teachers given a voice through this study offered great insight into the nature of oral history and provided an understanding of the need for the teaching of this form of history to be developmental and progressive in character in order for the learners to be able to grasp and conduct an OHP successfully. She explained that it is far more beneficial if the OHP is started off in Grade 10 where the learners can conduct a mini project so that they can understand and grapple with the nature of oral history, especially the problems and difficulties associated with interviewing someone for the first time. The respondent went on to explain that she encourages the whole class to each come up with one question to ask an interviewee that she brings to the class. This is then developed further in Grade 11, where the learners conduct an OHP in groups, and then finally in Grade 12 where they are expected to do an individual OHP and interview up to four different participants and put a final project together. In addition, the learners are then required to present their final OHP orally to the rest of the class (Teacher interview A, 29 May 2008).

This process can be viewed as developmental in nature in that reasonable steps are taken over three years to ensure that a beneficial outcome is achieved and that the groundwork for a solid understanding of conducting oral history is achieved. Similarly, this teacher can also be viewed as one who is compliant with the documents and is helped with adequate support from her subject advisor.

Furthermore, interviewee A commented that, in terms of conducting oral history in Grade 12, she informed her learners of the project towards the end of the year in Grade 11, so that the learners have ample time during their December holidays to start working on the project and to find possible topics and interviewees. They are then given until after the July holidays to hand in the project. In terms of the nature of a project, and more specifically the OHP, this gives ample time for learners to conduct oral history research. Moreover, the process described by the teacher emphasised the importance of the creation of interview questions. She remarked that she spent a great deal of time going over the interview questions posed by the learners and constantly advised them where to adapt and change them if necessary. She commented that the learners must “double check that they are asking the right questions beforehand because the question must give you the right answer, so that you have information. It is a skill to ask the right questions” (Teacher interview A, 29 May 2008).

I then asked interviewee A whether she experiences any difficulties or obstacles in conducting an OHP, to which she replied that time was the biggest obstacle for her. There is so much to cover in the Grade 12 year, and the learners have so many other projects to do in their other subjects, which is why she gives them the project to start in the Grade 11 year and the December holidays. She again emphasised how important it is for the learners to create good purposeful questions that they can pose to their interviewees.

In the interview with history teacher B, the initial focus was on the challenges that she is experiencing with the implementation of oral history in the FET phase. Her class battled mostly with the writing up of the final project or report. Interviewee B said that as all her learners are second language speakers and battle with the format of writing up a report based on interviews, they needed a lot of guidance in synthesising the data and drawing it together into a single written report. In light of this, she provided assistance to the learners, as she said, “they really battled with that, so I will give them an example of a report that was done, where you actually have to help them with the introduction. It took them a long time to understand how to compile it” (Teacher interview B, 4 June 2008). This serves to highlight the curriculum documents’ emphasis on the final product that needs to be produced, a ‘one size fits all’ ideology as opposed to seeing the value and importance of the actual individual process that the learners undertake and the unique benefits of this for them.

Interviewee B told her learners about the project at the beginning of the Grade 12 year and explained the importance of proper planning and time management, especially regarding locating someone to interview and setting up appointments and choosing an appropriate topic. The learners were then given two terms in which to do the OHP. Similarly to interviewee A, she also helped the learners with the setting of the interview questions and practised trial interviews in the classroom with the learners and their peers to gain an understanding of the

process of interviewing a person and the types of questions that should and should not be asked.

In terms of assessment, Interviewee B commented on the marking of the project, where she allocated a mark to the interview questions, the construction of the topic, the presentation of their writing and the final oral presentation of their findings to the class. This is in keeping with the format of CASS, as is stated in the curriculum documents (DoE, 2003).

Similarly to history teacher A, teacher C also commented that he instructs his learners about the OHP in Grade 10 and then builds on this in Grade 11 and instructs the learners to “soup it up” for Grade 12 and hand it in after the first term. He commented that in Grade 12 there is so much content to get through that this helps to eliminate the stress and pressure. This is similar to what the first interviewee described in that the project development is seen in an incremental light. However, he was not a hundred per cent sure where he is allowed to do it this way: “what I do now, which is probably illegal, is that I encourage my learners to pick a topic in Grade 10 and in Grade 11 they just soup it up a little bit and then in Grade 12 they give in the final thing” (Teacher interview C, 5 June 2008).

This teacher showed initiative in that he made a decision to manage the project in the way that seemed manageable to him and the learners, despite a fear that

he might be following the 'official' bureaucratic policy incorrectly as required by the KZNDoe. This individual approach taken by the teacher is innovative in that he is developing a 'best way possible' under the circumstances to ensure that a useful and valid oral history assignment is achieved. Furthermore, interviewee C commented on how he is aware that they are supposed to monitor the OHP using a monitoring form in the SAG document, but that once again time becomes a huge issue: "We are supposed to monitor this thing all the time, but you actually just don't have the time to do that" (Teacher interview C, 5 June 2008).

Interviewee C also emphasised the importance of the technical side of things, which he referred to as the explanation given to the learners in terms of the "ground rules", how to approach someone to interview, setting up questions, and giving general instructions. Instead of handing out notes to them, he instructed his class to take down their own notes during the lesson on how to conduct an OHP and, even though he said that he was very involved in this side of the project, he did comment that "what I do find is that the guys don't always understand exactly what you expect from them" (Teacher interview C, 5 June 2008). He therefore gives additional aid throughout the project when the learners need it and when they go to him for assistance; otherwise, they are given the opportunity to take control of the work themselves. Interviewee C's learners are required to interview two people and are allowed to consult books and the internet for further research to add to their final project, but this is not entirely encouraged as "they can dig up information from books that is already there, but



you don't have access to someone who has experiences in the 1947 floods in Maritzburg, for instance, or something like that, so it's more oral history" (Teacher interview C, 5 June 2008).

This comment is very revealing as it shows interviewee C's understanding of the nature of oral history in that one is creating a new source that has previously been undocumented, and that the learners themselves have to go through the process of interviewing to create a new historical source through a historical conversation. He further commented on the challenges of the profiles of the learners and their different capabilities and weaknesses. Some of his learners battle to conduct research, and he finds that many learners merely "offload stuff from the internet and they just cut and paste and give it to me...it's actually quite terrible" (Teacher interview C, 5 June 2008). Moreover, because of the influence and presence of the internet, he really values the OHP as learners cannot rely on webpages as a source for downloading information. This teacher commented that he finds the internet a huge problem, that learners are losing the ability to think for themselves, and that much needed analytical and synthesising skills are being lost and left unpractised.

Interviewee C also said that some of his learners use a consent form, but not all of them. He emphasised that one learner interviewed someone in prison and therefore "had to use a consent form". However, on consultation with the official curriculum document policies and guidelines, a consent form should be used for

all interviews conducted and not just 'sensitive' cases such as the interviewing of a prisoner.

When I questioned interviewee C as to how the OHP is finally presented, he replied that the class does not do any oral presentation of the project findings owing to the time constraints: "No, I don't, I don't have time for that, if there were more teachers involved then perhaps...I think it's a good thing doing that, specially if you are a keen historian, but I don't do it that way, and it's sad in a way, but time is quite precious" (Teacher interview C, 5 June, 2008).

Elaborating on the assessment of the OHP, interviewee C commented that he placed a great deal of emphasis on the rough work and the development of the project, as he required that the learners give evidence that there had been a process and proof of research. Moreover, he said that, even though content is important, he was more interested in the actual process of compiling the project.

In stark contrast, teacher D followed the monitoring sheet (See Appendix M), as supplied in the SAG document, and has regular check-ups with the learners to ensure that they are on track and following all the necessary steps. She instructs the learners on how to conduct the project and monitors them in setting interview questions and allows them to use the interview questions with their interviewees only once she has checked to see that they are appropriate. Interviewee D stated:

I give them sort of ideas of what they can do it on and I say try and keep it local, try and keep it manageable. Then I say go home, discuss it, think about it and come back to me with a topic and then we will decide how you are going to do this topic. Then they have to do background research, to help them with what questions to ask. Then they do their questions, and they must have at least 10 questions, and not just 'yes' or 'no' questions. And then they bring me those questions and we go through them (Teacher interview D, 10 June 2008).

This teacher also commented on the use of the consent form supplied by the DoE (See Appendix N). This interviewee expressed positive views on conducting an OHP with her learners, but based a great deal of the project's effectiveness on her own research and efforts undertaken to ensure the smooth running of the project.

Interviewee E commented that the project is started towards the end of the Grade 11 year and that the topics were decided before the learners left for their December holidays. He also encouraged his learners to do as much work as possible during the holidays so that the OHP would be completed by the first term of the Grade 12 year. The class would also have to conduct oral presentations and usually these would be done in groups during break-time or after school, because of time constraints and the heavy curriculum that they have to get through in the Matric year.

In terms of the process, the class would be given a few lessons on the nature of oral history and what an OHP entails and the important mechanisms involved in

conducting an interview. The class would then be given time to choose a topic and would be given a week in which to finalise the topics which would then be checked by the teacher. Interviewee E also commented on issues that hamper the teaching and learning process such as “what happens is you get towards the end of the term and some of them haven’t even started it. They are all panicking, and then I give them an extension” (Teacher interview E, 12 June 2008). A monitoring sheet could be used to help such a situation, but the ability and room to make necessary changes to time frames is also an important feature in the running of a big project in the Grade 12 year.

The monitoring sheet, which is available in the SAG document, is used to monitor the various steps of the OHP to ensure that a process is taking place and that all the necessary steps are being made by the learners themselves during the project. Moreover, interviewee E remarked in the interview that the assessment of the OHP was broken up into the respective guidelines as listed in the rubric given by his subject advisor. He commented:

I think that was another positive aspect of it. The marking was very developmental, but also the rubric was easy to follow, as the learners had it in front of them and they knew what you were looking for and the brighter ones would look at that and could make sure that they covered everything that was there (Teacher interview E, 12 June 2008).

This is a key aspect in the assessment of learners within the ideals of OBE in that assessment should be open and transparent for the learners, especially in terms of continuous assessment (CASS).

In relation to problems encountered during the project, interviewee E said that some of his learners battled to find people to interview and, as he would encourage his learners to interview more than one person, the learners found selecting interviewees an obstacle. The process and administrative aspects such as setting up appointments and going back for further questions was also a difficulty experienced by the learners, as in some cases people would agree to be interviewed and then either cancel the interview or forget the appointment. This teacher further commented that the learners felt shy at first about speaking to strangers, but that their confidence grew during the process. This is a positive benefit and outcome of the OHP, and some of the history teachers interviewed commented that the learners' confidence grew as they became more accustomed to talking to someone they did not know.

Similarly to interviewee E, interviewee F explained the extensive process that he undertakes with his learners. He provides instructions on how to conduct an interview, how to approach interviewees, and the types of questions that should and should not be asked. He also instructs his learners how to set up an interview schedule of the times and dates in which the interviews should be arranged and how to record the interviews both by tape recorder and by jotting

down important notes during the interview. His learners are expected to conduct three interviews. The interviewee then went on to explain how he instructed his learners on the importance and value of the project, emphasising that the OHP is required in the NCS and counts for 25% of their continuous assessment mark. Interviewee F also spoke to the learners on the value of the OHP in that it would be a new experience and an interesting one at that. Furthermore, he told his learners that:

Should they wish to pursue a career at a tertiary level that involves a lot of research and a lot of investigation, then here is good practice, good training for that. And that is why history is a good subject to do at school, as it teaches you to be independent. It teaches you to be critical, analytical, to find resources, to make comparisons, to juxtapose similarities and differences. So those were the reasons I gave them from an academic point of view, and how it will help them in the future for self-fulfilment (Teacher interview F, 20 June 2008).

During the interview, teacher F went to great lengths with his learners to explain not only the methodologies and nature of oral history, but the valuable outcomes and skills that can be achieved through it. He had only positive things to say about the OHP and his attitude suggested a great liking for the project and its implementation within schools. Interviewee F remarked that he personally enjoys teaching about oral history, gets great satisfaction from the projects he reads, and finds the histories that the learners produce and the skills that they achieve very rewarding.

The following teacher interview revealed the teachers' emphasis on the process of conducting oral history. Interviewee G emphasised to her learners the importance of attaining a range of different views to get to the truth of any issue. She told her learners that they have to interview at least two people, so that they would be working as real historians who examine a range of views to get to the truth. Interviewee G encouraged her learners to look for different and varying points of views during the various interviews, as this is what a history requires. Teacher G wanted her learners to understand that through the process of an interview one learns a person's views and opinions about an event and accepts that their experiences and views might be different from another person's, but that through the interviewing process you can combine the views and arrive at one's own outcome and conclusion.

In an attempt to achieve the above, interviewee G said that she instructed her learners on the importance of the whole process of conducting oral history and told them what was required to undertake such a project; namely, that they would need an introduction, reasons as to why they had chosen their particular topic, a draft of the final report and an assessment of the experiences and skills that they had gained on completion of the OHP. They would also have a class discussion after the final individual oral presentations of the projects. She informed her learners of the project before the July holidays in their Grade 11 year and advised that the hand-in date would be after the July holidays in the Grade 12 year. This class was given more than a year to do the OHP, which should help

the learners in achieving the necessary outcomes as embodied in the policy documents.

Following this, I spoke to interviewee G about the types of projects that her learners produce. She told me that she persuades her learners to make the projects as personal as possible. One learner even produced a project that looked at a case of domestic violence:

...and when I read the project I was moved because she had chosen a mum as the subject and described what had happened at home and at the end of the session the child had learnt something: that 'I will not allow that to happen to me'. And that's my joy of getting them to do projects, as at the end of every project they are learning something valuable and no one can take that away from them (Teacher interview G, 23 June 2008).

In assisting them to find a topic, she encourages her learners to look at the local community newspapers for inspiration and to choose a topic from an article, as this ensures a localised topic and emphasises the community aspect of it.

Problems experienced in the teaching and learning of oral history explained by this interviewee included the efforts made by the teacher to get the learners to start the project. They often feel that the project is daunting when they are first told about it and it takes a few months before they finally find their feet. Furthermore, the teacher said that finding people to interview is difficult for the learners and that possible interviewees are not always accommodating. She teaches her learners to be persistent, and to be polite and patient, when



arranging the interviews. Apart from this, the participant had not experienced any major obstacles while conducting oral history with her learners. At the same time, the real art of teaching and learning as it relates to oral history is not being addressed by the documents, although skilled teachers who take the initiative will still cope and will manage to get the project done, while others are just unable to cope.

Like her colleagues, teacher H emphasised the importance of giving the learners adequate and proper instructions in the classroom, which she believes is very important to get right before the learners go out to begin the specific project. Teacher H commented that the learners need to have a good understanding of the rationale of the OHP and that the planning and conducting of the actual interviews are paramount. She explained how she gives her learners a breakdown of the project at the end of Grade 11 where they are told "Ok, you work with it in the holidays and think about the topic" (Teacher interview H, 30 June 2008) and subsequently they are given the whole of the first term in Grade 12 in which to complete it. In support of this, the class is given handouts on possible topics to choose and examples of an interview and previous projects that have been done by her class. They are also given an example of the final report that is required to be written after the interviews are completed. She also commented that she did a few practical exercises and demonstrations with her class on how to do an interview.

In addition, teacher H took her learners through the importance of being sensitive towards the interviewee: "You know the emotions that come through and about being sensitive and what to do if someone gets emotional about a question, and how they need to stop and be given time to express how they are feeling and then move on" (Teacher interview H, 30 June 2008). This step taken by the teacher stemmed from her own efforts and insight and is not mentioned in the official documents produced by the DoE, and no guidance or advice is given to the teachers on how to explain this to one's learners or how to manage such a situation. Yet this is in fact a very necessary and important aspect, as the very nature of an oral interview is dealing with real experiences and people's stories that might sometimes be difficult and emotional for the interviewee.

To achieve the outcomes in terms of the policy documents, interviewee H uses the monitoring report supplied in the SAG document (See Appendix M). The learners are required to keep to the allocated dates and hand in the questions, and then the interviews and the handwritten reports at particular times during the process. These would all be allocated a mark, this being a part of CASS. Moreover, this teacher explained that she:

...sat with them and tried to put the pieces together and see if they needed to go back and do certain things. And once everything was done I spent a few Saturdays at school in the computer room with my students. That was the only way we could do it. We had the computer room open and they sat and sort of put it together to present it well and typed it up (Teacher interview H, 30 June 2008).

When interviewee H was asked about the assessment of the project, she explained that she uses a combination of the rubric supplied by the KZNDoE and one of her own, to make it more accessible. She further commented that she broke the project down into sections and ensured that each learner was aware of how the marks were allocated and what was expected of them. This awareness by the teacher of the need to create an assessment rubric that fits the profile for her learners and their particular project to allow for individuality departs from the DoE's idea of a 'one size fits all' template.

Despite her enthusiasm and good management of teaching, interviewee H faced some similar challenges to those encountered by the other interviewed history teachers. Referring to the time factor of the project, she remarked that in the Grade 12 year time was an issue, and that the large size of her class exacerbated this difficulty. As far as outcomes achieved by the learners were concerned, this teacher commented that oral history can develop a range of skills, "but the teacher has to take the initiative and manage it and prepare the learners to go out there and conduct the oral history" (Teacher interview H, 30 June 2008).

This emphasises the teachers' awareness of the importance and role of the teacher within the OHP, and the need to be constantly involved and to monitor the individual learner's growth and capabilities.

The various steps and processes undertaken by the individual teachers raise an array of issues regarding the different approaches used in the teaching of oral history in the FET phase. Some of the teachers use the documents supplied by the DoE, specifically the documents relating to the process of oral history, that being the consent and monitoring forms, and others do not. The teachers all gave individual responses and reasons as to why they make various choices with regard to how they teach and implement oral history. The one constraint that the majority of the teachers experienced was that of the time factor, owing to having a large assignment like a project in the Matric year. The initiative taken by most of the teachers was to start the OHP in the Grade 11 year to alleviate the time difficulty and to address the OHP as a developmental process throughout the FET band.

These conversations with the history teachers led to a greater understanding of the self-empowerment process that some teachers undergo, in that owing to a lack of available aids they discovered alternative sources that could be used, in addition to using their own initiative and making their own individual decisions in the implementation of the project. Examples included searching for information about oral history with learners on the internet and finding books that they could utilise, as well as creating their own assessment forms.

What is becoming clear at this point are the shortcomings that the interviewees face. They might have good subject advisors and documents or 'recipes' on oral

history but 'how to' really 'do' oral history is a skill largely lacking in all of them. The experiential aspect – the actual teaching and learning with the learners-takes place while the teachers themselves have never done oral history before. They are therefore teaching in terms of methodologies that they have never experienced at first hand for themselves, but have only read about it or seen examples of it. And yet they expect a product from their learners that is nurtured and shaped through their own knowledge and experience and in many aspects this very knowledge and experience will be lacking.

#### 5.5 History teachers' perceptions and views of the implementation of oral history

Through determining the processes that the teachers took in implementing oral history, the history teachers exhibited their overall views and perceptions of the implementation of oral history in the FET phase. This allowed for the teachers' individual voices to come through based on their real experiences and was therefore in alignment with the theory of a social history and giving an opportunity for the teachers to comment on and express their personal views and feelings.

I asked teacher A about her own feelings relating to oral history, and she replied that she feels confident in conducting such a project with her learners, but that this confidence comes with experience and that the first time that she did the project with her learners it was daunting and stressful. She stated that "the first time was really difficult, and I think for everyone there is a difficulty. You don't

know how much to prepare them and how much to allow them to explore for themselves” (Teacher interview A, 29 May 2008). But she added that over the years new aids and instructions have been added to the curriculum document policies and further notes have been given by the subject advisors, which have helped with the overall implementation.

In summary, teacher A commented on the “beautiful projects” (Teacher interview A, 29 May 2008) that her learners produce and the enjoyment that she gets out of reading the projects and the histories that are created by the learners: “Every year, I get so much satisfaction from reading them that, it’s not like I have to mark them. I go home, I sit on a Sunday or Saturday and I can’t wait to read these stories, as they’re about interesting people out there, people whose stories have not been told” (Teacher interview A, 29 May 2008). According to interviewee A, the projects also had unintended benefits such as greater confidence and improvement in the learners’ overall writing skills after the project, which she believes can be attributed to the OHP. As a result, her overall view is that oral history is worthwhile and that she takes a pleasure in conducting it with her learners. She feels that everyone benefits from it: the learners, the person being interviewed, and herself. Consequently, it is beneficial within the curriculum as “it levels the playing field...a child in a rural area who doesn’t have a library, but his grandmother is a resource” (Teacher interview A, 29 May 2008). This teacher exhibits insight and shows understanding of the underlying importance and value

of the OHP, specifically in relation to the assignment being equally accessible to all schools regardless of their socio-economic positioning.

In making a judgement on oral history, interviewee C stated that the OHP can help develop skills that are specifically needed within the practice and study of history. Ultimately, teacher C indicated that he fully supports the implementation of oral history and commented that it is “highly beneficial and crucial for history learners” and that out of “all my candidates, none have every said that they wasted their time doing it. Most of them find it quite an enriching experience and they learn a lot from it. They said that when you start off it seems like a steep mountain and then when they finish it, it is something to be proud of” (Teacher interview C, 5 June 2008).

As with teacher C, teacher D commented that oral history is a good addition to the history curriculum and “from my point of view, I quite enjoy it” and “I think the learners learn a lot, so I am quite happy with it” (Teacher interview D, 10 June 2008). A further benefit according to this teacher is that it forces the learners to go out and have a conversation; for example, with their grandmothers, whose life stories and memories they possibly wouldn't have known about previously, and through this the learners feel they have achieved something. In this sense, it draws on the importance and appreciation of one's family and larger community and therefore helps in the creation of a social history. Important and lasting connections can be made. It also emphasises the classification of who can be a

source, and that anyone qualifies to do this and to have the opportunity to have a historical conversation.

Interviewee E felt strongly that the teaching and learning of oral history has been very beneficial for his learners and he has seen an improvement in their understanding of the nature of history. He also viewed it positively in that one is able to:

go out of the normal confines of the classroom and teaching methodology that you are using and actually do something different. And the topic also isn't confined either, you have to do local history but you can do any topic that you like. So I think in that respect, I saw it as a value tool for the teacher and certainly for the children as well, and the feedback that I received was very positive (Teacher interview E, 12 June 2008).

In light of the above, this interviewee has brought illumination to the issue of providing the learners with a different and new experience, in that the teacher is able to move the milieu and the learning process outside the confines of the classroom and introduce a new methodology of teaching and learning, that is learner-centred and skills-based, both of which are aligned to the nature and aims of OBE and the NCS.

In terms of outcomes and values achieved, interviewee G replied that the learners "learn a lot of manners and etiquette in getting these interviews down" (Teacher interview G, 23 June 2008). The history teacher added that in terms of the choice of activities, they are allowed to choose between the OHP and a



research project but that, compared to the OHP, the research project is meaningless as the learners simply take information straight from the internet and don't get the opportunity to think about what they are doing or to interact with a real primary source, whereas the OHP:

is original, that is what I like about it. And secondly, it involves themselves and their personal lives. They get an opportunity to meet people, they get an opportunity to interact with other people and it opens them up and builds their personality. It is very holistic in its approach. It builds up their entire personality (Teacher interview G, 23 June 2008).

Interviewee G similarly commented that her learners thoroughly enjoy the project and if they were given the choice they would choose the OHP over the research assignment. Interviewee G spoke at length about how she as a history teacher has benefited from conducting the OHP with her learners, and how much she has learnt from the learners. She mentioned how valuable the final oral presentations are for the learners, and that she thinks that the presentations are "the most exciting part of the entire project, sitting and listening to each and every one, how they started the project, what they put in, the people they interviewed, the personal experience they had" (Teacher interview G, 23 June 2008). In terms of unexpected outcomes, she commented on how she noticed that the OHP builds up the learners' self-confidence and that, by being forced to go and interview someone, they are able to expel barriers and learn to communicate well.

Overall interviewee H enjoyed the OHP: "I think it was a great experience overall and I think the oral history can really build a child up for later on, going out into the working world, or going out to study or whatever, it can really build them and take something out of it and use it later on" (Teacher interview H, 30 June 2008). She emphasised the skills that are attained through the project, specifically because it gives learners an opportunity to go out of the schools to conduct research, "which is such a crucial thing, as with them going out, they are learning so much, they are picking up so much and so many skills are coming into play. It is an excellent project for them to do" (Teacher interview H, 30 June 2008). Interviewee H mentioned that the project helps the learners to learn responsibility and that they become accountable as the responsibility lies with them to go and look for a person to interview and make an appointment with that person.

The commentary by the history teachers on their views and experiences regarding the implementation of oral history in their classrooms is generally positive. They enjoy the project and are aware of the array of skills, outcomes and benefits that the project produces both within the teaching of history and with regards to their learners' individual growth and accomplishments. In conclusion, the benefits and positive responses as verbalised by the interviewees can be seen to outweigh the problems encountered, the main problem that of time constraints, as most of the teachers interviewed expressed optimistic views about oral history and its implementation, and the initiative taken by many of them is commendable. However, reflection on possible silences within the

interviews conducted must be mentioned. It is possible, and quite understandable, that the interview schedules and instruments used might have restricted certain information or allowed for other information to escape or not be addressed. Although the method of probing was used, it is possible that the history teachers interviewed were giving responses that they might have felt I wanted or required, and not necessarily what they really felt or wanted to emphasise.

## 5.6 Conclusion

This chapter has provided an exposé of the views and perceptions of the implementation of oral history as experienced by the selected history teachers. These teachers are an important part of the process of implementation, and their understanding and views of oral history are key to how the learners themselves experience and view oral history, which will be examined in the chapter to follow. In view of the teachers' perceptions and experiences, I decided that a necessary step would be to discuss with the subject advisors how they believe the teachers experience the implementation of oral history. As the subject advisors are by nature in close contact with the history teachers, they should have a substantial opinion on what they believe the teachers feel and think about oral history.

As most of the teachers that I interviewed emphasised the problems associated with the time factor related to finishing an OHP in the Matric year, I raised this

issue with the history subject advisors. One subject advisor commented that, in view of this, they now give the teachers until the second term to finish the project with their learners, so the due date has been extended. The learners were previously expected to hand in the project during the first term. In addition to this, they also encourage the teachers to start experimenting with oral history from Grade 10 and to consider the final project in Grade 12 as developmental. In this way they are building onto the project every year and helping the learners with the process and the necessary skills that are required to ensure a proper understanding of the project and specifically how to conduct a beneficial and useful interview. In addition, the subject advisor remarked that all teachers are now given a year plan to follow, so that they can be guided in terms of sticking to deadlines and expectations, and that ultimately the teachers need to deliver as they learn what is expected of them during the workshops and meetings that are held for the history teachers.

I then questioned the subject advisors as to whether they are aware of any other problems that the teachers are experiencing. One subject advisor's view was that the teachers are battling with the rubric and the marking of the projects. He commented that, although there is a rubric that the teachers are supposed to use, many of them do not utilise it, and that "either they have their own kind of vision on how to assess or alternatively it is too lenient or too strict and not a happy medium" (Subject advisor interview B, 26 June 2008) and, furthermore, "the educators lack the ability to assess it properly on their own, and that is

obviously why every year you need to do training" (Subject advisor interview B, 26 June 2008). This accords with some of the history teachers interviewed who commented on using their own rubric or adapting the official one to suit their particular learners and the projects produced. What is greatly apparent are the differing views of the teachers and subject advisors on what rubrics should be used or not. One subject advisor emphasised that the teachers should and must use the official form, whereas in a teacher interview discussed earlier, commented that an adapted one is more beneficial and useful in her classroom situation. Again Freire's (1970) ideas around libertarian and emancipatory education may be relevant.

With reference to the teachers' main grievances relating to difficulties with time during the Grade 12 year, subject advisors' willingness to move the projects hand-in date to a later stage in the year is noteworthy and progressive in nature. It also shows the links and relationships that are developed between these two parties that contribute towards the beneficial management and implementation of oral history in the classroom. It emphasises the usefulness and purpose of having history subject advisors in the maintenance and implementation of the history curriculum and the application of the curriculum documents.

## Chapter Six

### Former history education learners' experiences of the implementation of oral history in the FET phase

#### 6.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I will discuss the experiences of first-year history education students who have all completed an OHP in the FET phase during their school career. The qualitative results were taken from five focus groups. The motivation behind using these particular students was to centre the study within the realm of history and education. These students, who have all conducted an OHP in the past, are presently all studying to be history teachers themselves, and therefore their views, experiences and perceptions were key to acquiring rich data from past history learners who would have a deep understanding of and passion for the subject. In addition, these students were representative of varying schools within KZN in terms of differing economic circumstances, histories and locations.

The focus groups started with a discussion on the students' experiences of conducting oral history in terms of both their positive and negative views. Secondly, a basic understanding of the process that the individual students underwent from the start of the project to the end was established. I already had an expectation that the students would have differing experiences and for this

reason would have achieved different outcomes. This was determinable because of the differing resources available at the schools, the teachers' commitment and understanding of oral history and the curriculum document policies, and how the history teachers taught and instructed the OHP to their learners. Consequently, I had a discussion with the students that burrowed into their memories of their teachers' assistance and role throughout the implementation of oral history. Finally, I looked at the individual students' feelings regarding the nature of oral history and the overall outcomes that were achieved.

In presenting the data, I have decided to discuss the students' comments and experiences separately within the individual focus groups in which they were interviewed. The reasons for choosing to present the responses individually within the separate groups is that through this process I will be able to bring out the individual voices of the groups in my research as opposed to dealing with their experiences as a generic group experience. In addition, this will aid the study in dealing with the "me" identity rather than the "we" identity (Brewer, 2001). In the end, I will conclude with an analysis of the students' overall experience of conducting oral history in the FET phase. In addition to this, I have chosen to include the history teachers' and history subject advisors' voices on what they view as being the learners' experience of oral history. This was done so as to provide a contrast to what the learners are experiencing and to add to the understanding of how the learners experience and perceive the teaching and learning of oral history.

## 6.2 Students' Responses

### 6.2.1 Group A's experiences of the implementation of oral history

The students interviewed in the first group expressed positive views about conducting oral history and claimed to have benefited from the project owing to the multi-faceted structure, which consisted of a range of activities, such as interviewing someone, transcribing an interview, and the final report writing of the project. The group commented that this range of activities helped them to develop skills and to focus on each component contributing to a final outcome. This range in activities is one of the factors that are stressed in the overall use and value of outcomes achieved through the teaching and learning of oral history (IJR, 2004).

One of the group members commented, "I liked the idea of interviewing someone, because that was someone else's history, and then I could relate to them by what I've learnt about history, and they could maybe even change the ideas that I had as maybe someone else's ideas are better than your own opinion" (Focus group A, 22 April 2008). This statement aligns itself to the very nature of the subject history in that it is a discipline that encapsulates a variety of different views and opinions and that one should, through studying history and oral history, learn to be objective and open-minded to new and differing ideas from one's own (Fernandez, 1998).



Another voice from this group showed an awareness of the value of the project in terms of giving a 'voice' to the 'voiceless'. This is a central feature of oral history in that one is providing the opportunity for a previously unheard story or voice to be raised, listened to and appreciated (Minkley & Rassool, 1998; Whitman, 2000). Furthermore, this interviewee commented on how the person that she spoke to was pleased that someone was interested in his life experiences and that it is not every day that a young member of society wanted to listen to his story.

However, an important point to make is that this student remarked that she only realised the importance of the project and the skills involved some time after handing in the project and did not fully realise the benefits of oral history during the actual process: "...even though I didn't realise it at that time, now I know I have to involve myself with other people" (Focus group A, 22 April 2008). On probing, it became clear that this appears to be owing to a lack of discussion about the purpose and value of oral history within the classroom environment itself. In the light of this, it is fair to state that the students in this focus group were only made aware of the nature of oral and social history only at a university level.

A student in the group also explained that she thoroughly enjoyed the process of "digging up" information from someone through an interview and hearing his/her story directly from the source, and that it made the learning process enjoyable and interesting (Focus group A, 22 April 2008). Moreover, this student offered a

very insightful comment about the benefits of oral history in that it made her more open-minded about different people in society and more tolerant of other people's experiences and cultures. This is an outcome that every history teacher should aim to achieve with his or her learners, specifically if we consider South Africa's own history. Moreover, it is commendable that the learners in this class were being guided towards showing respect and tolerance towards people's voices and histories different from their own ideas and cultural practices. This is an additional outcome that is being achieved, in terms of an unintended curriculum, as it is not mentioned in any of the curriculum policy documents.

Negative responses from this focus group generally resulted from their feeling of a lack of understanding and assistance from their teachers in grasping the method and nature of oral history. This particular group collectively felt that their teachers were either complacent or unhelpful during the process. One respondent said felt that her teacher never explained the project properly and that she never expressed how interesting it could be to listen to someone else's memories. In addition, the student commented that she had previously viewed history as including only the people mentioned in the textbooks studied. The point could be made that history consists of a range of different views and perspectives and is subjective in nature. Furthermore, the interviewee commented that her teacher relied heavily on a single textbook, and that teaching and learning in the classroom revolved around the prescribed textbook. Another student from this group commented on the interview process, in that she

experienced the process as being difficult, especially having to write down endless notes during the interview, and that this became stressful for her. This again emphasises a lack of understanding of the nature of oral history, owing to poor use of technology and lack of assistance and instruction about how to conduct an interview. Another possible explanation is that the stress experienced by the student was possibly due to a feeling of being unprepared, thus creating a feeling of general confusion about how to conduct a worthwhile interview.

After these initial questions around the students' experiences of oral history in the FET phase, I felt that it was necessary to enquire into the actual teaching and learning process as experienced by the students in reaching the final product. This included enquiry into the topics chosen and the teachers' assistance and instructions for the project. I wanted to find out if all the students were conducting oral history through a similar process, which one would 'ideally' believe to be the case if they were all using and applying the same official instructions and aids provided in the curriculum policy documents; or were their projects being carried out differently; and, if so, how and why?

One respondent explained the process in three steps, the first being the interview, the second being writing an essay, and the third being called up to the front of the class to present the project orally. Based on the instructions and guidance given by the curriculum policy documents, this does not include all the required and suggested steps for conducting an OHP as laid out in the

documents. However, the student did comment further that she felt that the teacher never really explained the project properly.

In similar vein, another student also explained the project in three steps (referred to as categories by the student during the interview); firstly, choosing a topic; secondly, constructing questions and then handing them to the teacher for examination, and then going out and interviewing people. It is necessary for me to comment on the idea of a form of 'recipe' being created by the teachers in terms of how to conduct oral history with their learners. The above three-steps 'recipe' is a watered down version of how to conduct oral history as per the documents, but provides insight into the teacher's understanding and teaching of the OHP, a theme running throughout this chapter. This teacher appears to follow steps so as to achieve the end product; however, in the process, the real gist of the nature and purpose of oral history is lost.

The above interviewee also commented on the construction of the interview questions. She explained that her teacher told her that they had to be mindful of language, to avoid slang, and to show respect during the interview. These are insightful instructions to give learners, and although this approach is not entirely thorough, it does however place the teacher in the role of assisting with the process and ensuring that the students are on the right track by reflecting on their questions before conducting the actual interview. The student then said that the final project was handed in to the teacher for assessment, and that they were

given an entire term in which to do the project. However, no oral presentation of the projects was done in class. An oral presentation of the project is stipulated in the curriculum policy documents and is supposed to be done in class with all the students (SAG, 2008). In view of the documents' requirements, this project therefore fell short in the absence of orally reporting back on the projects and in this way allowing the students to hear one another's findings, experiences and stories.

Another participant in this focus group commented that they were told about the project at the beginning of the year, but felt that the project as a whole was never properly explained, and that two weeks before the due date of the project the teacher reminded the class about it, and that the whole class was in a state of panic, as no real work on the OHP had taken place. The student felt that her class was not adequately prepared about the project or had it adequately explained, and was not assisted with the types of questions that should be asked in an interview. She further commented that the only instructions she remembers being given was "it's his or her story, so let them speak, and just write down what he or she says and write an essay on it" (Focus group A, 22 April 2008). She also said that her history teacher provided the class with very brief information on what the project was about and then left the learners to do the work during the term with no monitoring of the project, which resulted in the panic mentioned above.

Another group member said that she found the process difficult, as she battled with the setting of interview questions. In her case, she admitted that she never went to her interviews with any set questions and had what was more of a conversation with the interviewee, which was recorded on a tape recorder. Little or no substantial depth can be achieved within such an interview. Her understanding was that her teacher never expected them to have set questions. She commented that her teacher never provided any help on what type of questions should or should not be asked, and never mentioned the importance of being sensitive or mindful about asking certain questions. It must be noted that the creation of interview questions before going to an interview is an important part of conducting a good structured interview. This is mentioned in the curriculum policy documents and literature, in emphasising the process that should be followed and the necessary steps to be taken in creating interview questions (SAG, 2008).

In light of the above, I asked whether this student's teacher informed them about a consent letter. The respondent commented that the class did not use a consent form for any of the interviews and were not told about one, or given reasons as to why it is necessary to use one. My overall impression is that not a single student interviewed from this focus group used a consent form with their interview. They were not aware of what a consent form is, and none of their teachers had mentioned that using one was necessary or given reasons for why this was so. (See Appendix N). A consent letter or release form filled out and signed by the

interviewee is a necessary part of the process and is stipulated in the curriculum policy documents and literature (SAG, 2008). An interviewer is supposed to gain written and signed permission to use their interviews and stories. This is a key component of the entire process and conveys respect and appreciation for someone's stories, experiences and memory. A consent form, also known as a release form, is an integral part of the interviewing process and plays a deeper role in the philosophy, purpose and nature of oral history.

This student also commented that she hadn't really seen the point of the whole project and had felt very unprepared, but explained that after the interview was conducted she realised how important the process and outcome were, both in terms of the creation of historical sources and the fact that she had gained deeper insight and an appreciation for real stories and had been given the opportunity to listen to these hidden histories.

The above two experiences were very different from what other participants in group A experienced, as their teacher went through the necessary steps and distributed a booklet to the students, containing instructions on how to conduct an OHP and giving examples of oral history interviews. The teacher also gave the class feedback on their initial interview questions and allowed the student's to let her know when they felt prepared and ready to go out and do the interviews. In addition, the teacher also allowed the students to submit their interview questions for correction to be checked by her before they went out and

conducted the interviews. In addition, she also examined the topics that the students had chosen so that recommendations necessary could be made, if necessary.

This teacher also expected her learners to submit all rough work to her first for a mark and only after corrections and suggestions, could they then hand in their final essay on their topic. This essay would be based on the interviews and any accompanying secondary sources in an attempt to back up the information collected from the interviews. This student felt that his class were guided and helped significantly by their teacher throughout the whole process. He especially found that, owing to the project being broken into planning phases, the process unfolded efficiently. He mentioned that all learners in his class handed in an essay with the final project, which consisted of a write-up of their interviews and additional research into their topics. This class was also expected to hand in all rough work to their teacher, and this was marked in terms of the development and the process of the project as a whole.

In terms of the choice of topics chosen, it appears that all the students' teachers from this focus group were generally quite open regarding what their learners could choose. One student said they were told they could choose anything, as long as it was interesting. This doesn't give the students much direction or guidance in terms of choosing a topic, as it is rather too broad and doesn't emphasise the ideas about giving a 'voice' to the 'voiceless'. Disappointingly,



another student commented that they couldn't interview just anyone and that their teacher required them to interview someone who had lived through something "hectic", that it couldn't be just a neighbour or family member. It had to be an important person and "related to the major events in history that we learnt about in school" (Focus group A, 22 April 2008). This teacher is obviously not aware of the nature of oral history and its relevance in creating a social history, in that anyone can be and is involved in history and that, through a bottom-up approach, everyone's life can reflect experiences and memories (Winther Scobie, 1979; Minkley & Rassool, 1998). The student said that she was so stressed by what her teacher had said that she battled to find someone to interview. She eventually saw an article in the newspaper about a man who had received medals for fighting in World War II and she contacted him for her project.

This is in stark comparison to another student's response in this group, who said that his teacher encouraged her students to base their project on their community and to "pick one of the townships in the area and research about it" (Focus group A, 22 April 2008). This presents the vast differences in their understanding of oral and social history by the teachers and the inevitable effects of this on the learners in terms of their experiences and conceptualisation of the nature of this form of history.

The next area that I investigated was the individual students' feelings regarding oral history based on their personal experiences. The students' views and

experiences within Focus group one were rather different; some students enjoyed the project, and others did not. One particular student did not enjoy conducting interviews, but it must be noted that this comment came from the same student whose teacher had given very little direction and assistance during the process and had not provided the students with any examples. The student felt that she did the project because it was for marks and was therefore necessary and that she never really experienced much educational value from it, but rather confusion and stress. In addition, the assessment of the project was never stressed. The teacher never emphasised that it was quite a major project in the Grade 12 year, and this is possibly why this student never took the project seriously.

A different member of this focus group, who went to the same school and had the same teacher, similarly felt that the project didn't count that much, as the teacher never stressed the importance of the project and only reminded the students about the project two weeks before the due date. However, the student did enjoy learning about what her interviewee had said during the interview. She further commented that she learnt about South Africa's role in World War II, as can be gleaned from the following quotation:

It also taught me at the time that these people who were in the war are basically forgotten. He lives in a house and everything but he is so old, he's about 80 something, but he's not rich, he's not important. No one knows about him. I felt really bad. This person fought for his country and he's just left there, no one really cares about him. Probably if he hadn't been in the newspaper no one

would have come to interview him. No one would have heard his story (Focus group A, 22 April 2008).

This remark is significant as it brings to the fore one of the key aspects of oral history, which is an appreciation and awareness of other people and the different lives they have lived (Denis & Radikobo, 2008).

This student showed real empathy and understanding for her interviewee and his experiences during World War II. She also mentioned the effect that the interview had on the interviewee, in that he was excited and that she stayed and spoke to him for three hours, as he was so eager to talk and so appreciated that someone wanted to listen to his life story and memories. "He just spoke about everything, his family and other stuff not even relevant to the war and his part in the war, but I just thought it was nice for him, too. I think he's lonely and he felt the need to elaborate on everything" was her observation (Focus group A, 22 April 2008). This comment highlights the importance of one's community and how oral history can provide an opportunity to connect with one's community and form useful bonds with one's neighbours and community (Huerta & Flemmer, 2000; Thompson, 2000).

In this sense, the importance of oral history was confirmed; that is, that it allows one the opportunity to record previously unacknowledged history or persons' contributions and to find these hidden stories within our own communities. Through the creation of a safe and relaxed environment, these learners can help

their community to tell their stories and, through the process of memory recall, to provide a platform for them to recount and relive their stories and in this way to help in producing a positive change for the person being interviewed.

Lastly, I questioned the group in terms of the overall outcomes of the project. They commented on the skills that they had achieved, such as typing, empathy and acquiring a broader view of life and people within history, and realising that “everything is not as it seems or as it is written, perhaps” (Focus group A, 22 April 2008). The students also remarked that they enjoyed doing something outside of the classroom and having a different learning experience. I asked these students, whom are all studying to be history teachers, if they would want to conduct oral history with their learners one day, to which one student replied:

Yes, personally I would really like to do an oral interview with my learners. Then they can see from experience how other people have their own history and that will open up their minds to the fact that there is more than one side to a story. This is their facts, this is their truth, because this is the other truth of what ever happened so they can also get that diversity (Focus group A, 22 April 2008).

This initial group provides a blueprint and indication of the types of views and experiences elicited from the various students. In addition, this particular group was very responsive towards the questions asked and provided further information towards handling and managing the focus groups. After this initial focus group, I was able to adapt and change aspects of the planned questions. I found the responses given by these students highly useful, especially the skills

and outcomes that they achieved, regardless of the lack of guidance and assistance provided by their teachers. This is part of the hidden curriculum, in that through the very nature of oral history, positive achievements and benefits can be additionally gained.

#### 6.2.2 Group B's experiences of the implementation of oral history

The students interviewed in this group all claimed to have enjoyed the project, even though they found aspects of it difficult to contend with, particularly the time factor. The participants collectively commented that Grade 12 is a stressful year with all the work that needs to be covered, as well as trials and the final examinations, and that the OHP was an added strain. One student stated that she battled to find information on the original topic that she chose and as a result had to change the topic. In general, this focus group had no negative responses towards the project other than the above-mentioned time difficulties. Consequently, the interviewees emphasised the educational and beneficial nature of the project and the positive process experienced.

The next point of focus for the focus group interview was to examine the teaching and learning process of the project and the teachers' role within the OHP. The experiences in this group were somewhat different from the other groups with regard to the considerable amount of assistance received by the learners from their teachers and the high level of enjoyment gained from doing the project. One student explained that his class was given very concise instructions on how to do

an OHP and that his teacher had assisted the learners throughout the project. The learners were firstly required to choose their topics and devise their initial questions and then hand these to their teacher for corrections and comments. The teacher would then comment on the appropriateness of the questions and help them to decide whom they should interview and why their stories had been chosen. At this school, they also had a class discussion on who could be interviewed, in that anyone is a resource, any ordinary person who has lived through an event, whether significant in the public's eyes or not. The particular student said: "It really gave me an idea of getting information on both sides from people who were there at that time and people who are just ordinary. What do they think about the whole historical thing?" (Focus group B, 5 April 2008).

Once the above step was completed, the interviewers were then expected to go and conduct their actual interviews while at the same time carrying out further research to back up their findings. This particular student interviewed four people, after which he was then expected to discuss the interviews and the research collected with the teacher before completing and handing in the final essay. The student pointed out that any additional research that was done on their topics was done either through using available sources in the library or by using the internet, museums and any relevant old documents in the town and archives. The student further explained that they were given marks for the questions devised, the rough work, the final essay and the oral presentation of their project and findings. He said that the oral presentations ended in a class

debate about understanding other people's perspectives rather than criticising people, and that it helped the class to understand the importance of being open-minded and tolerant of people and of different memories.

This particular student also commented on the extreme lengths that his teacher went to, to support them every step of the way. In addition, they were provided with written guidelines and were constantly encouraged to go to the teacher for assistance if necessary, rather than to do the entire project on their own. They were required to report back to the teacher at regular intervals on the progress of the project, using a form given to them (See Appendix M). Moreover, the participant found the project challenging, but worthwhile and as commented: "It wasn't easy because we had to devote much of our time doing it and selecting the people. It really made us go through a hard time, as we even had due dates for reporting back our progress" (Focus group B, 5 April 2008). The student said that it had really helped them to gain valuable skills that they will be able to use in everyday life. His class were told about the project at the beginning of the first term and subsequently were assigned the entire term in which to complete it.

A further two student members from this focus group who had both attended the same school were given the option by their teacher either to do an 'oral history assignment' or a 'research assignment'. The class decided as a whole rather to do the OHP, as it seemed the easier option as well as being more exciting. As stated by one participant, "You got to go out and investigate any topic of your

choice and you got to go out and conduct interviews. You had to be very selective about the people you interviewed and you could use any approach that you wanted to" (Focus group B, 5 April 2008). They were told by their teacher that they needed to approach any organisation, school, or any aspect of historical interest within the community and decide on a topic that would include two interviews with people who had input or experience in the area of the chosen topic. Consequently, the topics chosen were very community-based, ranging from the history of the development of a local crematorium to a trucking company that had started from nothing. The main instruction given by the teacher was to find out about someone who had made a difference in the community or in someone's life. They were given approximately 12 weeks in which to do the project.

The teacher also encouraged the students to do the project on someone that nobody really knew about, so as to create awareness and write a new, previously unwritten history and be able to share this historical memory with everyone. In the light of the above, it is clear that both the teacher and thereafter the learners were aware of the nature of oral history and of the objective of giving a 'voice' to the 'voiceless'. A clear understanding of writing neglected or previously unheard histories is made evident through the teachers' instructions and the learners' commentary during the interview.

The above-mentioned students depended on the local newspapers for further research into their projects, as there was very little information on their topics in



libraries or through the internet. The students commented that they did not give a formal oral presentation on the project, but had to include a written speech that they attached to their final project when they handed it in. The speech was written in the first person and was similar to a final analysis, in that they had to write down everything that they had experienced or felt during the process, how they had engaged in the task, their reasons for choosing their respective topics, and how it helped them in their own personal development.

The assistance provided by the teacher to these students included being shown previous examples of projects and being given a guideline on the chalk board of how to go about doing the project and further specifications like: the essay; the interview; the conclusion; and the speech that they would have to hand in. They were also told that they needed to hand in all rough work with the final project. In addition, they were instructed on how to conduct an interview, how to approach someone, the importance of being neutral in an interview and to let go of biases, and to aim at being objective during the interview, and then how to write the final essay. The students were also given assistance whenever they needed it and were encouraged to talk to their teacher whenever they were confused or needed help. The class were informed about the project at the end of their Grade 11 year and could therefore commence work on the project during the December holidays. The project was due towards the end of the first term.

The participants in this focus group commented on the overall outcomes that they felt that they had achieved from conducting an OHP, these included; listening, analysing, questioning, synthesising, and acquiring empathy skills, as well as an appreciation for the people within their community whose shared stories had left them feeling differently regarding what history is about. As stated by one student: "The project opened up my eyes and my understanding of what history is really about" (Focus group B, 5 April 2008).

This particular focus group demonstrated not only positive experiences about completing an OHP, but also expressed the realisation that there had been overall growth in their confidence. What is interesting to note is the correlation between the amount of assistance provided by the teacher and the positive results and overall enjoyment experienced by the students interviewed. The interviewers exhibited a strong theoretical understanding of oral and social history and the methodology of questioning and listening in the interviews that they conducted.

### 6.2.3 Focus group C's experiences of the implementation of oral history

All but one of the students in the third focus group claimed that they had enjoyed the experience of undertaking oral history in their class. The one participant who displayed rather negative responses towards the project remarked: "I gained nothing from the project" (Focus group C, 6 May 2008). This is in stark comparison to another student in the group who commented: "It contributed to

my knowledge as an individual, as I got to know what happened there, and it built on my knowledge and contributed to my values and the history of the people who fought against the apartheid government” (Focus group C, 6 May 2008). Apart from the one student who felt that he had not gained anything from the project, the other interviewees generally felt that they had benefited from the project and gained historical information and knowledge from their interviews that they had previously not had.

However, after further probing, it emerged that all the students interviewed in this focus group had never been given any formal training in class on how to conduct an interview and therefore had a confused idea about what an interview is and how to go about it. They commented that they had merely had a ‘conversation’ with the interviewees. Furthermore, this group viewed the OHP as merely another minor class assignment or task that they were expected to do. They never felt that their teachers emphasised the seriousness and weighting of the project and the reasons for conducting oral history. None of the students in this focus group were aware of the real nature of oral history and the importance and role of memory in an interview.

Despite these comments, one student commented on how excited and interested his interviewee was, and that the interviewee was eager to talk with the student and impressed that a young person in the community had taken the time to talk

to her. This student commented that he had gained communication skills and learnt about other people's cultures and experiences in life.

After this, I asked about the choice of topics that the individual learners chose. One participant commented on the topics that his class was allowed to choose. He chose the Bhambatha rebellion, which he was personally interested in, and he appreciated having an opportunity to find out more about this historical event. He mentioned in the interview that he had backed up his project with articles from local newspapers and the internet.

Another student had the chance to talk to the head chief of his community, and commented that he had enjoyed the 'conversation' that he had had with him about the community and its history. It was something that was eye-opening for him and he would probably not have discovered this information had he not been expected to do so for his class project. However, it is necessary for me to comment on this and the understanding behind giving a 'voice' to the 'voiceless' and hidden histories in relation to his chosen topic. A chief within a community is not necessarily 'voiceless' in that he is already acknowledged as significant within his community and is praised and respected accordingly. In addition, the Bhambatha rebellion is already a studied and recorded part of South Africa's history of anti-colonial insurgency. But it is possible that a different view or another opinion was attained relating to the rebellion, and this might still have added to the knowledge base or to perspectives of this period of South Africa's

history. Furthermore, the interviewer commented that he had a 'conversation' with the chief, and it is important to note that there is a difference between having a conversation with someone and interviewing someone. The first is relaxed and has no immediate purpose and the second has a direct methodological purpose, aim and outcome. On this basis it became clear that the student lacked a full understanding of what oral history is, and this could be attributed to a lack of instruction and knowledge given by the teacher to the history class, in that this learner is still caught in the discourse of history being about 'big' men.

These two students who were required to go into their community to speak to the chiefs commented that it was difficult at first, especially with regard to gaining access to the chiefs. The students had to go back and forth on numerous occasions to make appointments, and this process took a great deal of time. They did not use a tape recorder and instead took notepaper and a pen with them and wrote down whatever was said by the interviewee. They then took the interviews back to the teacher to examine and provide commentary on them and then lastly combined their material with any further research that they carried out. It is true that not all schools have access to tape or digital recorders. While writing down an interviewee's responses on paper is not ideal, it is still acceptable under the circumstances.

The student in this group who had negative memories of oral history commented that he did not go to his interview with set questions, but instead just asked

whatever came into his mind during the interview. Furthermore, he commented that his class was never given proper examples or instructions from his teacher on how to go about interviewing someone. The approach followed was similar to that of another student in the focus group who said that he had just had a conversation with the person that he interviewed and had not had any specific questions written down. The final product that the latter student handed in was a two-page essay that he submitted to his teacher. This would appear to be a somewhat mediocre OHP and not in line with the requirements set out in the DoE and KZNDoE documents (SAG, 2008).

In the light of the above comments, I asked the group to comment on their teachers' guidance and assistance on the project. This would help me to ascertain how much aid and support they were given throughout the process. One student commented that he had merely received a final mark from his teacher after handing in his project. Moreover, he was not shown where he lost marks, or how he could make improvements. The student remarked that he didn't even recognise my mistakes (Focus group C, 6 May 2008). Another student also commented that his class was never told how they did and were never given a final mark for the project:

My teacher was not strict about the project. He wrote the topic on the board and said we must find information. He forgot and never paid attention to the assignment. We kept asking him what was happening. We never got feedback from the assignment. He left the essays till the end of the year (Focus group C, 6 May 2008).

This was similar to the comment of another student in the group who said:

We were never given proper instructions, or types of questions we should ask. There were no serious assignments in history. We were only told to find out about the causes of the rebellion and the outcome. He never explained how important oral history is, he just gave us the assignment, and did not mention what we will gain, or anything like that (Focus group C, 6 May 2008).

The above two comments from the students in the focus group, reflect a possible lack of understanding and commitment by the teachers in the teaching of oral history. As a result of this, the learners were negatively affected.

One group participant commented that his class was given only two weeks in which to do the project compared with another student in this focus group whose class was given one month in which to do the project. The range in time frames in which the project was conducted is vast, and this would have direct effects on the quality and final outcome of the projects produced by the class.

What is starting to emerge is the different experiences had by the students when conducting oral history in Grade 12. The topics done in this particular focus group ranged from a project on the Bhambatha rebellion, the Zulu people and their originations to interviewing parents about their lives. The instructions given by the actual teachers involved in this group appear to be minimal at best, and the confusion about the nature of oral history and conducting an interview was evident in this focus group. It would therefore be fair to conclude that, without

adequate instruction, teaching and support being provided by the teachers, the learners' total experience of conducting oral history and the final outcome is viewed negatively.

#### 6.2.4 Group D's experiences of the implementation of oral history

The fourth focus group included students from different schools in Durban who had very positive experiences in conducting oral history. Their responses were overwhelmingly optimistic, and their comments exhibited interest and enthusiasm for the project as can be seen in the following responses given by the interviewees: "I think it was fun, as I got to communicate with different people and it was a long time since I have been to an orphanage, and an orphanage like that is a big one, and it was nice for me to experience things and play with the children and hear their views. I enjoyed it" and "I enjoyed it very much. I think it is an excellent way to get to know other people's history, because they experienced it at first hand, and you are the secondary source, hearing it from first-hand people, and you have actually experienced it" (Focus group D, 15 May 2008). When I asked these students if they experienced any negative aspects in doing oral history, they could not recall any.

The next area to be investigated was determining what the overall process had been for the students in this focus group in terms of the teaching and learning experienced in completing the project. One group member said that they were



given a range of topics from which they could choose. They were told that the project involved fieldwork and that the nature of the fieldwork would be to interview someone. The student then explained that the teacher gave the class formal instructions and a lesson on how to conduct an interview, and to formulate a minimum of ten questions per interview. The teacher then gave them time to set their questions before collecting them to comment on their quality, relevance and style, while new ideas or questions were considered. The class was then expected to go and conduct the interviews. As a further part of the process, they were told that they needed to write down extensive notes during the interview and then after the interview to go home and rewrite the notes in a more appropriate way, after they could be handed to the teacher. They were also required to hand in all rough work to the teacher.

A reflective participant in this group commented that she felt prepared and confident during the interview, but that she also had to invent and come up with new questions during the interview as new issues and information arose. Probing is a very important aspect of oral history and probing an interviewee for deeper understanding, is vital to a good and thorough interview. This is part of the skill of listening tentatively during an interview so that questions not previously planned can be asked to add richness and depth to the interview. This learner furthermore commented that their teacher also gave them copies of previous learners' projects. In addition, the teacher provided further assistance specifically with regards to the actual process of the project:

Our teacher was very helpful because he told us we could come to him whenever we have difficulties. And most of the time we went to him with interview questions, and then he gave us a strategy for conducting the interview like using a recorder when conducting the interview so that we won't forget (Focus group D, 15 May 2008).

In addition the class were told that they could use the internet and conduct further research to back up the interviews. The process, as remembered by the student, was supported by a product, which was presented in a flip file and consisted of the interviews, the rough work and the final essay.

Another interviewee in this group had a similar experience in terms of the assistance and input given by her teacher. Her class was told to investigate and interview someone who is seen as an inspiration in the community, and to find out about their lives and what they have done to help the community or make the world a better place. In order to achieve this, the teacher also assisted the class in the setting of interview questions, and the class was given examples of the types of appropriate questions to ask and how to interview someone properly in order to elicit rich information. They were also required to get photographs of their interviewee to add to the final project to provide visual enhancement. Furthermore, they were told that it was compulsory to do further research either using the internet or books in the library to add substance to their final project. The final product to be handed in was an essay. This particular student used her mobile phone to record the interview, commenting that they were told by their teacher that they had to provide evidence that they had actually done an

interview, as the teacher had become aware of learners who were simply making up information and interviews.

Another student also said support had been good and stated that their teacher had given them an example of an interview that had been conducted with Nelson Mandela, and that the teacher had used this to show what type of questions to ask and in what order. In addition, she gave them thorough notes and instructions on the process of interviewing and what was expected at the end of the project. They were also told that during the actual interview they must just be themselves and make sure that the person being interviewed felt comfortable and at ease during the interview. They were initially told about the project in Grade 11 and were given clear instructions about how to conduct an OHP. They therefore had the whole of the December holidays in which to start the project, with the final project to be handed in in March.

My next point of investigation was to determine the outcomes of the project as depicted by the students in this focus group. One of the students reflected on the importance of giving recognition to people and to record and remember their stories, as "a lot of people outside are being unnoticed, and by us interviewing them, we will be showing that there are still people who care, even if they are not noticed by the whole world" (Focus group D, 15 May 2008). In addition, the learner commented on the questioning, research and referencing skills that she had acquired through the project: "When you interview other people you find out

how these people were involved in a certain part of history that were previously never noticed or recorded and that it is important to share other people's information and voices" (Focus group D, 15 May 2008). One of the interviewees agreed with these sentiments and had similar views on the importance of listening to people's memories:

Oral history helps the people who are not as famous as other people, and those are the only peoples whose histories are recorded. Whereas other people live normal lives but they also have their own history and difficulties that they have to go through and not only people who are famous. We must notice them too as everybody has a history (Focus group D, 15 May 2008).

Another participant added: "I learnt about the difficulties that people went through to get to where we are today, and the freedom that we have today and not only the recognisable people like Nelson Mandela, but other people also played a major role in developing freedom in S. A. today" (Focus group D, 15 May 2008). She backed this up with another insightful comment on how connected the African community used to be with their culture and origins and that today, because of Westernisation, many youths don't even know who their ancestors were and what their culture is about, and that oral history helps young people to go and find out about where they come from and to be able to understand the importance of heritage.

This student also achieved an unintended value from conducting oral history as she mentioned how shy she used to be when talking to strangers, but that,

through the process of interviewing someone, she was forced to speak to someone that she did not know and that through this she had gained confidence. She added that when she had to stand in front of the class and present her project orally, she felt more self-assured. This is the incidental learning that takes place as an additional outcome of conducting oral history. Moreover, this emphasises the wealth of skills, positive outcomes and valuable experiences and learning curves that are created through the process of conducting an OHP.

#### 6.2.5 Group E's experiences of the implementation of oral history

The final focus group, although generally responded positively towards conducting oral history, found aspects of it difficult. A case in point was the experiences of one who found that conducting interviews in his community proved difficult, as people were at first not sure how to respond to his questions and enquiries. His community consists of a largely illiterate population, and they were quite reserved and held back from fear of answering the questions. The student commented that, as he was educated and they were not, they found him intimidating and were concerned as to why he was asking questions and why he wanted to interview them. He had to go through quite a rigorous process to prove to them that he was not working for some organisation, but was merely a learner doing a class project at his school.

The participants that he interviewed also battled to understand his questions and he therefore had to translate the interview into their mother tongue. This is an acceptable feature within oral history, and more fruitful information is sometimes provided if you can listen to and question an interviewee in a relaxed environment where the respondent is able to hear and respond in a language that they are comfortable and proficient.

The student added that the process of developing and creating questions also proved difficult and that he had to change the way his questions were worded many times, but that his teacher helped him to do this. He commented that after a few attempts at developing interview questions he learnt that there are specific ways and techniques to ask questions that allow for a great deal of input from the interviewee, as opposed to questions that cut the responses short or pre-empt answers. In his case, the teacher required the class to interview a minimum of three people, and then to take these interviews back to the class for the teacher to read over and review them. After this, the final essay or report had to be written and submitted with references. The class did no oral presentation, as the student commented that they ran out of time during the term, and the teacher was forced to cancel the oral presentations.

A different interviewee said that his class was told about the project in Grade 11, and that they were allowed to do any topic as long as it involved South African history. He emphasised that his teacher told them that it was an important project

and that it would be counting towards their final Grade 12 mark, and that they should therefore take the project seriously and put effort into it. This student commented that he also used a questionnaire which he gave out to his interviewees. The questions relating to the chosen topic and while he was conducting the actual interview, he wrote down notes and comments made by the respondents. His final mark was divided into two components, one mark for the interview and final report handed in and another mark for the oral presentation of the project and findings.

This student's OHP was on the effects that World War II had on people in South Africa. The student commented that the overall process was enjoyable, but difficult at times, but that he had enjoyed it as "it was something different than what we usually do in class" (Focus group E, 16 May 2008). He further commented that he had never done something like this before, and it was interesting and daunting finding out someone's point of view, as opposed to just going to the internet and getting information from there; in his words, "to go out and just interview someone, even though it was my grandmother, someone I'm close to, is nerve-wracking, because you are asking them personal questions about their lives, their real experiences". He emphasised how he enjoyed interacting with people rather than merely "being behind a computer screen" (Focus group E, 16 May 2008).

In terms of the teacher's assistance and direction throughout the project, one interviewee' commented that his class was given two and a half terms in which to do the project. The differences in time allowances among the students interviewed have been vast, with some students being given two weeks for the project and others up to eight months. This emphasises the teachers' different understanding and interpretation of the NCS, the related curriculum policy documents, and the subject advisors' instructions. It also provides commentary on the teachers' ability to plan and administer an OHP with their learners.

Another member of this group remarked that his class was given notes and a worksheet from the teacher with examples of past projects and the type of questions that one should ask during an interview, "and that's about it and then we were left alone" (Focus group E, 16 May 2008). This may either be viewed as a poorly assisted project, or as the teacher's allowing the learners the responsibility of working on their own so as to grow through the project and develop. This student was given only three weeks in which to do the project.

Collectively, this focus group felt they had achieved the following outcomes: an awareness of other people's histories and life experiences; critical thinking skills; and developing the confidence to talk to someone whom they did not know.

As with the other groups, this group also addressed the role of the teacher and the assistance provided by him or her in administering and conducting a



beneficial OHP with learners. The lack of planning and understanding by some teachers regarding how to conduct oral history effectively became apparent. It is possible that the teachers themselves have never done any form of oral interviewing and that the outcomes achieved and understanding by the learners would consequently be weak and confused. The inadequate knowledge by the teachers themselves for implementing an OHP in a classroom is emerging through the focus groups that I interviewed. I will now therefore include a brief discussion based on the teachers' and subject advisors' views on how they feel the learners are conducting and experiencing oral history. This will provide a contrasting view in many cases and will add to the overall understanding of the implementation of oral history in the FET phase.

### 6.3 Teachers' and subject advisors' views on how learners experience the implementation of oral history

The teachers interviewed expressed positive feedback in terms of their observations of their students' experiences and views regarding the conducting of oral history. A number of teachers mentioned a 'surprise factor' associated with the results; that is, that a number of the outcomes achieved had not been foreseen at the start of the project. These outcomes included a deeper appreciation for knowledge, a greater academically-based understanding of the nature of history, and a growth in confidence and maturity. The students learnt about things that they wouldn't ordinarily learn about: "...they learn about their

families that they don't necessarily know, so it is beneficial from that point of view and the skills that they get" (Teacher interview D, 10 June 2008). This emphasises the broader role that oral history can play in a social sense; namely, that bonds are created between the interviewer and interviewee, in cases where family members are interviewed.

The interviewed teachers also expressed an awareness of the benefits of learning that takes place outside of the history classroom, in that the learners are faced with a more hands on environment, where they can actively experience rather than merely listen in class. One teacher interviewed pointed this out quite clearly in relaying what one of her learners had said after conducting an interview: "It's the first time that it came really alive for me" (Teacher interview A, 29 May 2008).

One teacher interviewed replied that their students were "pleasantly surprised", by the results of the OHP, in that some of them had never before realised the potential that they had and how their abilities would be manifested in the opportunity to conduct oral history (Teacher interview E, 12 June 2008). A different teacher commented that some of his students were very proud of their work and were eager to show off their projects and findings to their families and friends. The teacher felt that the project helped with the development of a number of other skills that were used during the process, such as computer skills and social skills (Teacher interview F, 20 June 2008).

A sobering reflection presented by one teacher was that she discovered that her learners found the project a bit daunting and difficult when they first heard about it. The reasons given were that they felt nervous about interviewing someone whom they did not know. However, after they had undertaken the interviewing they felt a huge sense of accomplishment, which helped with their overall confidence and built up their social, speaking and interviewing skills. The teacher said that comments such as these were found in the end reports submitted by the learners.

During my semi-structured interviews conducted with the history subject advisors, I spoke very briefly about how they viewed learners' experiences of the implementation of oral history. However, I realised that their views would be somewhat limited, as they themselves do not have direct contact with the learners, but only with the teachers. Nevertheless, my discussion with them proved to be of interest and added depth to the study. And, as I was aligning my study within the paradigm of a social history, and therefore their voices with regards to all facets of the study were necessary. In terms of their views of learners' experiences, we mostly discussed the problems experienced by the learners and the negative aspects associated with the project.

One history subject advisor commented that he felt that the biggest problem lies within the learners' inability and frustration in choosing or identifying a topic that will provide depth and relevance. He pointed out that many of the pitfalls with an

OHP arose because the learners chose a dull topic that inevitably led to a dead end, or with no one to interview, or with an interviewee who could not provide relevant or rich data. Secondly, he said that the learners battle to take the information from the interview and transcribe in an adequate and substantial report: "They lack the ability to synthesise, and I think learners can't do it because educators are not giving them that information, so you can see there are certain schools that get excellent history results and produce wonderful results and other schools that don't" (Subject advisor interview B, 26 June 2008). He commented that cheating is a problem, and that it is easy for the learners to make up an interview and "then you don't know who has done the work" (Subject advisor interview B, 26 June 2008).

The subject advisor also felt that the learners' knowledge of the basic fundamentals of the English language was not up to standard and that the learners battle to internalise the substance of the interview and add their own thoughts and ideas, and the final write-up therefore becomes a problem for them, as suggested in the following comment: "They can't put it together, although they have a lot of valuable information, pictorial sources, memorabilia, all of those kinds of things, but at the end of the day they can't compare an argument" (Subject advisor interview A, 22 June 2008). This comment raises the issue that additional assistance needs to be provided to the learners on the final writing of the essay, and that steps should be taken to monitor that the learners are able to

take the various components of the project and combine them logically and succinctly.

#### 6.4 Conclusion

The students' experiences of the teaching and learning of oral history varied in terms of the amount of guidance, direction and mentoring given by their teachers. Some students spoke about endless help from their teachers, which included choosing an appropriate topic and checking this with the teacher, creating interview questions and handing these to the teacher, and then finally going out into the field and writing up a final essay of the findings. Other students were given instructions on what an OHP is and then were left to cope and manage the project entirely on their own. Some students were given chosen topics to do by the teacher, and some classes included a final oral history presentation of their findings, while others did not. These variations by the teachers in instruction and understanding of what oral history is has a direct result on the end product produced by the learners, and it is possible to conclude that the more assistance and aid provided, and the more competent the understanding of the nature of oral history on the part of the teacher, the better the project produced by the learners.

The majority of the students interviewed understood the nature of an interview and the importance of being prepared for an interview and having set semi-structured questions in advance, but some of the students went to their interview

with no set questions and referred to the interview as an unstructured 'conversation'. And as commented earlier in this chapter, not a single student interviewed used a consent form in their interviews. In the light of the above, it becomes necessary to comment on the lack of real understanding of the nature and purpose of oral history amongst the interviewed students during the focus group discussions. The majority of the students' responses showed little awareness of the importance of the project in terms of giving a 'voice' to the 'voiceless' and the important role that memory plays in oral history. In most cases, understanding came about only during the focus groups that I conducted, when discussion around these issues was encouraged.

In relation to the above, all the focus groups were given the opportunity to comment on the role of their teacher and whether they thought that their teacher helped with the process and provided adequate information as to the purpose of the project and the nature of oral history. A very small percentage of the students interviewed had been given adequate knowledge or instruction on the actual nature of oral history, social history, and the reasons for conducting such a project.

Moreover, the focus groups gave voice to a range of the varying experiences of former history learners who have all conducted an OHP during their Grade 12 year. These experiences and opinions shed light on the validity of oral history and also expose the areas that still need attention and additional focus in

improving the implementation of oral history. A greater emphasis on the philosophy and nature behind oral history is needed in the learners' understanding and conceptualisation of this project. They need to be aware of the theory and role of memory during an interview, so that skills associated with critical thinking can be developed. In addition, they need a greater awareness of the actual process of the interview specifically that through interviewing a person, a 'change' takes place for the person being interviewed, and that this change could be cathartic in nature as it provides an outlet for a release and possibly for closure to events that might have been traumatic in their lives. Learners need to be taught to be sympathetic and aware of such possibilities and they need to take cognisance of the important role they play as a catalyst and emancipators in this process. Furthermore, there needs to be greater awareness as to why oral history has been implemented in South Africa and why it is such a useful tool for historians, taking into account South Africa's traumatic and painful past. There are many stories that need to be told. Oral history can provide an opportunity for the youth of this country to play a part in the capturing and recording of history and in the providing of an opportunity for our community to become a part of this process and be social actors and actresses within our country's history.

I feel that some teachers are, for whatever reasons, failing in their application of oral history, as the most important factor here is that history is all around us and includes all people, not just a select few. Oral history in schools needs to gain more prominence, specifically with reference to South Africa, and if a greater

understanding about its functionality can be passed on to learners in our country, the rewards and benefits will be numerous, both in terms of working towards an unbiased and objective history and the skills and values that develop out of an OHP. This can already be seen through the comments made by the students interviewed and discussed in this chapter, an example being: "I enjoyed it very much. I think it is an excellent way to get to know other people's history, because they experienced it first-hand, and you are the secondary source, hearing it from first-hand people, and you have actually experienced it" (Focus group D, 15 May 2008).

In general, there is a positive correlation between the quality of the project and the students' views on conducting an OHP. Learners who are given adequate guidance and support by their teachers found the project worthwhile and could attach educational value to it. In spite of some learners' negative experiences in terms of a lack of support from the teachers, the incidental learning was highly valued by the focus group participants. This incidental learning is part of the hidden curriculum, in that unexpected or unplanned outcomes and results are produced alongside the specified and anticipated products. Many of the students interviewed commented on the rewards that they received from conducting interviews and the process of the OHP, and these unexpected outcomes strengthen the argument for the value and importance of the implementation of oral history in the classroom.



Furthermore, the focus groups conducted with the students indicated that the 'voices' of the learners present vastly different experiences from one another. This is closely related to how they are being taught to conduct interviews by their respective teachers and their understanding of the nature of oral history. Moreover, the students' views on the poor administration and help from some teachers contrasts with what the teachers and subject advisors themselves saw the learners as experiencing and feeling.

Although it cannot be used to generalise, the following views of current history education students on their experiences of the OHP can be gleaned:

- Different learners have different experiences depending on their teachers' assistance and understanding of an OHP.
- There is a lack of planning in conducting an OHP as viewed by the learners in some cases.
- There is a lack of understanding of what an OHP is, in terms of its nature, and the alignment with social history and giving a 'voice' to the 'voiceless'.
- In other cases, teachers work very hard, and outcomes are achieved.

The focus group sessions revealed that the learners did not at times understand what the OHP is about. Although the official curriculum document policies are generally being followed, the teachers appear to be more concerned with the product and with finishing the curriculum than with the actual process the inculcation of the skills. As a result, there is a lack of substantial understanding of the nature of oral history by both the learners and the teachers. And therefore one needs to ask oneself: whose project is the OHP? Is the project being conducted in an emancipatory fashion where the learners are able to take ownership of their own work (Freire, 1970)? Or are the learners being 'pulled through' to serve the purpose of completing the project within the time constraints and therefore adhering to the official curriculum? If this is the case, then the documents can be viewed as being restrictive, and this is in a sense a contradiction to the nature of social history.

In the teachers' endeavours to complete the syllabus and finish the project, it is possible that the vital mechanisms and purpose of oral history are falling by the wayside. In addition, the constant monitoring that is supposed to be undertaken by the teachers, as informed by the documents, eliminates a certain amount of learner-centredness and freedom for the learners to construct their own projects. The emphasis by the teachers on achieving the end product, and in the process ignoring the value and purpose of oral history, can be seen as a coping mechanism in order to deal with the new curriculum, a new content, new methodologies, and other factors that teachers have continually to manage.

## **Chapter Seven**

### **Conclusion**

In the conclusion of this thesis, I will firstly address the key research questions that guided and directed the study. These key research questions, as listed in Chapter One, provided the backbone to the answers that I hoped to find through the process of conducting fieldwork; namely, to investigate the implementation of oral history in the FET phase in selected KZN schools. Furthermore, the research questions helped with the formation and direction of the semi-structured and focus group interviews that were conducted, and I attempted to answer them through the voices and memories of history teachers, history subject advisors and past history learners. The above was done as per the theoretical framework used in the study; namely, to give the participants in this study a voice. In my investigation, the key research questions have been substantially answered within the respective chapters, and I trust that this thesis will contribute to the scholarship around oral history with specific reference to the teaching and learning of oral history in schools.

The initial research question aimed at obtaining a thorough understanding of the official curriculum policy documents as devised and conceptualised by the DoE and KZNDoE and thereafter implemented through the history subject advisors. The data used in answering this research question, "How is the teaching and

learning of oral history envisaged in the new FET curriculum?”, was obtained through a thorough document review and analysis of all the available DoE curriculum policies and additional materials from the KZNDoE and history subject advisors. This was enhanced and contextualised by conducting semi-structured interviews with two history subject advisors. This research question was answered in Chapter Four.

It can be argued that the DoE and KZNDoE-produced documents are ultimately created to fulfil a particular purpose within the history curriculum, the educational system and larger political aspirations. Moreover, as with most curricula, the history curriculum cannot be viewed as neutral, since the documents are a by-product of a long process of addressing South Africa’s past biased educational system and, more specifically, how history as a subject was viewed and taught (Chisholm, 2004; Harley & Wedekind, 2004). As explained in Chapter Four, the oral history component within the curriculum is presented as a means of rewriting South Africa’s history and to address previously marginalised, hidden and subjugated ‘voices’ and ‘memories’ into history books. In addition, the new history curriculum addresses the issue of inclusiveness, IKS, and a syllabus that is relevant to the average South African child.

This movement was initiated by the *Report of the History & Archaeology Panel to the Minister of Education*, which aimed at redressing the nature and purpose of

teaching a history that is inclusive of all people (2002). Furthermore, the aims of the DoE were for history to:

...be taught in a way that will include the experiences of ordinary people, rural and urban workers, and of women as well as men, and it will specifically address human rights issues such as prejudice, persecution, oppression, exploitation, sexism and racism, xenophobia, genocide and other forms of discrimination (DoE, 2001).

This can be viewed as revisionist in the broad sense of the word. However, the presence of oral history within the curriculum has a particular purpose and intention that specifically desires to address the way that history was taught pre-1994, and oral history, in working towards a social history, can successfully achieve this purpose and intention.

The implementation of oral history in the FET phase is the product of insightful and thorough planning by the DoE and policy-makers, with the purpose of serving particular curriculum requirements that have been examined and studied at length. These requirements are carried out and enforced at various levels; namely, via the history subject advisors to the history teachers and via the teachers to the history learners. The oral history-related documents emphasise the multitude of skills and outcomes that an OHP can provide for learners at every phase of schooling (GDCAP, 2008; NCS *Support Document*, 2008; SAG, 2008). However, I must stress that the said documents do little to address the possible problems or difficulties that may be encountered, and possible solutions

for teachers and learners are barely mentioned. Furthermore, there appears to be an overload of curriculum policy documents in general that are repetitive and complex in nature, and this overload of information might be why some teachers follow the documents closely and others only partially. Owing to the time constraints that teachers face, a large syllabus, new content and new methodologies, it is possible that teachers selectively read and apply the documents. There is therefore often little ownership of the curriculum by the teachers, as they don't find the overload of documents manageable.

Moreover, the documents ultimately stress the product via a particular 'recipe' and do not allow enough focus on the process and the theory and purpose behind oral history. In terms of Freirean (1970) pedagogy, the documents are not libertarian and emancipatory in nature, owing to the restrictions they place on the history teachers, and the product-based emphasis that is displayed. The documents are good in terms of their aims, but generally focus on the 'how to implement' oral history. In the light of this, oral history is being implemented at a somewhat superficial level, as the theory and purpose behind oral history are being left by the wayside. It is therefore possible that the learners do not fully grasp the issue of giving a 'voice' to the memory of the 'voiceless', as was discussed in Chapter Six.

The next key research question, which was investigated in Chapter Five, was to obtain an understanding of how history teachers experience the implementation

of oral history as well as learn their views, perceptions and opinions. The history teachers interviewed generally expressed positive views on the presence of oral history in the curriculum. They provided commentary that elaborated on the value of oral history and its use in the classroom in terms of the skills and outcomes that are achieved, alongside the content that is learnt and created. The main problem for the interviewed history teachers associated to the OHP was the time factor, as well as some teachers' views that there was a lack of support by their history subject advisors.

The teachers interviewed were mostly curriculum compliant and were therefore following the set 'recipe' of how to implement oral history. However, this structure does not leave the teachers with much room to make individual choices or decisions on how they are going to teach and carry out oral history. By its nature, this is restrictive, and the results could be seen in the commentaries given by the teachers in Chapter Five.

Furthermore, the mode of delivery is not the same for all schools, and the varying socio-economic circumstances have to be taken into account, and allowances for teachers to make individual decisions based on their own experiences and what they are capable of coping with under difficult and varying circumstances needs to be addressed. Another point that needs to be examined is the issue of the experiential, in that none of the history teachers themselves have ever conducted oral history or interviewed someone, and yet they are teaching this method to

their learners. This is an obvious problem that needs to be urgently addressed. Other problems discussed in Chapter Five included that some of the interviewed history teachers own solutions to these difficulties. Some had the insight to start the OHP in the Grade 10 year, and then to build on it through to Grade 12, and therefore to view the OHP as developmental in nature. This also took care of any time frame difficulties. In addition, some of the interviewed history teachers commented on creating their own rubric for the assessment of the OHP that they felt was more efficient and useful.

The final research question that was addressed and answered through the use of focus group interviews was: "What are former history learners' experiences of the implementation of oral history in the FET phase?" This research question was answered in Chapter Six. Similar to the history teachers' views, the past history learners presented mostly positive feedback on conducting oral history during their Grade 12 year. However, what emerged was the lack of a solid understanding of the nature and purpose of oral history and the use of memory through the methodology of oral history. Ultimately, the students' experiences of the teaching and learning of oral history varied in terms of the amount of guidance, direction and mentoring given by their teachers. A few students spoke about endless help from their teachers, while some of the students pointed to a lack of assistance by the teachers in aiding them with their projects and intricate processes such as: how to interview someone, and how to write up an essay based on the interviews. Furthermore, none of the interviewed students used a



consent form during their interviews. The consent form is vital to a proper understanding of the nature and purpose of oral history and helps to inform the interviewee of the purpose of the interview (Denis, 2005). This again relates to the above-mentioned 'theoretical vacuum' in that there is a lack of sufficient learning and teaching the method and theory of oral history. Moreover, the students did not display a sufficient understanding of giving a 'voice' to the 'voiceless', and sadly missed the point that "approaching a person to record his/her story conveys the message that his/her life is of value and of significance in itself" (Oelofse & du Bruyn, 2004, p.158). This addresses the next difficulty experienced by the learners in terms of adequate training on how to conduct a proper interview. A few of the students interviewed described the difficulties experienced with conducting interviews and incorrectly referred to the interviews as having a 'conversation' with their interviewees. It is imperative that learners conducting oral history are provided with proper instructions and adequate training on how to carry out an interview, especially in view of traumatic histories that may be told by the interviewees, and how to be sensitive to this type of situation.

In light of the research questions and the voices of the history subject advisors, history teachers and past history learners, the following arguments can be made:

1. A range of different experiences undergone by the teachers and learners on conducting oral history does not allow for a generalisation to be made.

These differences take into account the differing socio-economic and geographical differences of the schools, as well as the varying support in the implementation in terms of subject advisors, documents and other resources such as the internet and in-service training.

2. Oral history is being embraced and is generally viewed positively. This is affirmed at all the levels of implementation: subject advisors, teachers and learners.
3. Challenges that face the implementation of oral history in the FET phase include: the time factor and extensive syllabus that Grade 12 teachers and learners need to cover; the lack of resources available in some schools; and the varying support for the teachers from the subject advisors.
4. History teachers are policy-compliant, as the documents are generally being followed as 'recipes'. This policy compliance and with the focus being on the end product, leads to the nature and theory of oral history not being addressed in an innovative manner.
5. The participants interviewed in this study can be viewed as 'willing' voices, in that they agreed to participate in this study and are therefore not necessarily representative of all. In light of this, one must address possible

silences from possible different groups having different experiences that have not been addressed.

The study drew from the work of local and international oral historians and theorists, such as Denis, Hamilton, Henige, Kros, Ritchie, Thompson, Thomson and Vansina, to name a few, who have used the methodologies of oral history and have argued for its value and use within the study of history. In light of this, the study has proven useful, as, despite the extensive research and developments in oral history, little investigation has been done on its use, implementation and the outcomes that can be achieved at a school level. As commented on and argued in Chapter Two, learners of all ages react more positively to oral history methods than to traditional teaching methods (Ritchie, 1995; Thomson 1999; Huerta & Flemmer, 2000; Spivey, 2000; Whitman, 2000). Du Bruyn, (2002) has commented: "While the oral history teaching method has been implemented with great success in Britain and the USA, very little research has been done to investigate its possibilities in Africa and particularly South Africa" (p. 1494). The need and importance of this study in relation to the practical development of history teaching in South African schools, and specifically for the province of KZN, should therefore be apparent.

In the light of the aforementioned summary of findings for the study, the limitations encountered will be addressed. As this study provided insight into a conveniently selected group of participants, generalisations cannot be made with

regard to all history subject advisors, teachers and learners on how they view and experience oral history. The views, opinions and perceptions of the implementation of oral history in the FET phase are those from the willing participants in this study and it may therefore be viewed that there are silences that exist in the findings. By dint of the above, this study has presented a small sample of the views, opinions and experiences of the implementation of oral history in the FET phase, which has provided a glimpse into the successes and problems that have been experienced. It is accepted that it is possible that the respondents were providing answers that were aimed at pleasing me, the interviewer. This issue is raised by Stern (1979), who comments on the weaknesses of interviews in referring to the “social desirability effect”, in that respondents give information to please the researcher, that this does not necessarily reflect their real views.

Another limitation which emerged was the narrowness of the study, which was conducted with a selection of KZN schools. This was unavoidable owing to the requirements of a Master’s thesis, and it was therefore deemed necessary to select a few schools within KZN that could be viewed as representative of the larger picture. Additional weaknesses associated with the methodology of qualitative research included time factors, data collection methods, coding and the analysis of data which, owing being time-consuming, may lead to one’s becoming distracted from the study.

Furthermore, Mouton (2001) refers to the problems associated with language, in that the interviewee may not be equally articulate in the researcher's language, and this may have a negative effect on the interview process. This was experienced somewhat during a few of the focus group interviews with the students where I had to reword and explain questions in terms of the type of information that was required from the questions posed. Lastly, I must make mention of the fact that the voices of the deep rural areas were not heard, but this was due to the nature of a convenient sample.

In the light of the findings for this study, the following recommendations can be made regarding the implementation of oral history in the FET phase:

- There needs to be greater focus on the actual process of the project and less emphasis on the final product.
- A substantial and thorough grounding in the theory and nature of oral history is necessary, and the need to work towards a social history needs to be emphasised both to the history teachers who are implementers of oral history and the history learners themselves.
- Purposeful and worthwhile workshops that focus on the experiential aspects need to be arranged for history teachers by the DoE and

KZNDoE, so that the teachers can experience actually conducting oral history, particularly in the field of interviewing.

- The large, repetitive and confusing volumes of the curriculum policy documents need to be streamlined, to allow the history teachers to become curriculum innovators and not merely compliers.
- The implementation of oral history should be built in incrementally across Grades 10 – 12, so that the learners can develop a substantial understanding of the theory and methodology over a realistic time period.
- An increase in the quality of support provided by the history subject advisors needs to be addressed and improved, so that better relationships and one-on-one contact can be made with the teachers.
- The development of cluster groups and the idea of a “community of practice” needs to be investigated and encouraged within districts. These should be initiated by the allocated subject advisors, and all teachers should willingly become involved.
- A manual on the theory and nature of oral history, the role of memory, and working towards a social history that draws into the NCS and the ethics of

conducting oral history should be developed and distributed to all FET history teachers.

- The KZNDoE should look to other provincial departments to see what progress and advancements are being made and should draw collectively and share in these advancements, specifically from the Northern and Western Cape, where the strongest projects appear to be produced.
- Teachers should be encouraged to join oral history societies where possibly both locally and through internet support groups, as mentioned in Chapter Two.
- Lastly, the findings of this thesis need to be cascaded down to the relevant organisations and departments, such as the KZNDoE and the policy makers.

It is my contention that the findings of this study could be useful to: history teachers who wish to investigate and explore the use of oral history in the FET phase and want to be aware of the strengths and problems associated with oral history, history subject advisors, and the DoE and KZNDoE policy-makers who wish to look at possible ways to improve and manage the implementation of oral history and assist the teachers more effectively. And, finally, the study could aid

history textbook and material developers in providing support materials and methodologies for the FET history classroom.

The value of this study is that it provides insight into what is currently taking place in the teaching and learning of oral history in schools after the best part of a decade. The good intentions of implementing oral history need to be further explored and enhanced to achieve a deeper understanding of the nature, purpose and value of oral history for learners, so that its practice can become more than a product that is merely fashioned to comply with the official curriculum.

In my estimation, the single biggest strength of my thesis is that it serves to identify the deficiencies of the teaching and learning of oral history, while at the same time affirming the goodwill and support for oral history as a viable extension of the history curriculum and, in so doing, creating generations of history learners who will be more attuned to the voices and memories of generations of people that were silenced in the past.



APPENDIX A

19 May 2008

Faculty Research Committee  
Faculty of Education  
Edgewood Campus  
University of KwaZulu-Natal



Dear Dr. Wassermann,

Consideration of Ethical Clearance for Student Research Project:  
Wahlberg, Barbara Clair - 991236087

Your Student's ethical clearance application has met with approval in terms of the internal review process of the Faculty of Education.

The application will be forwarded to the Ethics Sub-Committee of the University of KwaZulu-Natal. All PhD and Staff applications, will only be able to commence research once the USC has given their approval. All other students (MEd, Honours Undergraduate) may commence research upon receipt of this letter.

PhD and Staff applications will be advised as to whether ethical clearance has been granted for the research thesis/project, once the University Ethics Sub-Committee has reviewed the application. An ethical clearance certificate will be issued which you should retain with your records. Certificates are to be included in the final bound dissertation.

Should you have any queries please contact the Faculty Research Officer on (031) 260 3524 or on the email [buchler@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:buchler@ukzn.ac.za)

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D. Bhana", written over a horizontal line.

Professor D. Bhana  
(Acting) Deputy Dean Postgraduate Studies and Research





10. The Department receives a copy of the completed report/dissertation/thesis addressed to

The Director: Resource Planning  
Private Bag X9137  
Pietermaritzburg  
3200

We wish you success in your research.

Kind regards



---

R. Cassius Lubisi (PhD)  
Superintendent-General



PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL  
ISIFUNDAZWE SAKWAZULU-NATALI  
PROVINSIE KWAZULU-NATAL

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
UMNYANGO WEMFUNDO  
DEPARTEMENT VAN ONDERWYS

Telephone: 031 341 6611  
Facsimile: 031 341 6612

Private Bag 79117  
Pietermaritzburg 3200  
228 Pietermaritz Street  
Pietermaritzburg 3201

RESOURCE PLANNING

**INHLOKOHHOVISI**

**HEAD OFFICE**

**PIETERMARITZBURG**

Enquiries: Sibusiso Alwar  
Inkombu:  
Izwele:

Reference: 0021/2008  
Inkomba:  
Verwysing:

Date: 31 July 2008  
Usuku:  
Datum:

Ms BC Wahlberg  
49 Buxton Gardens  
Umbilo  
Durban  
4001

PERMISSION TO INTERVIEW LEARNERS AND EDUCATORS

The above matter refers.

Permission is hereby granted to interview learners and educators in selected schools of the Province of KwaZulu-Natal subject to the following conditions:

1. You make all the arrangements concerning your interviews.
2. Educators' programmes are not interrupted.
3. Interviews are not conducted during the time of writing examinations in schools.
4. Learners, educators and schools are not identifiable in any way from the results of the interviews.
5. Your interviews are limited only to targeted schools.
6. A brief summary of the interview content, findings and recommendations is provided to my office.
7. A copy of this letter is submitted to District Managers and principals of schools where the intended interviews are to be conducted.

The KZN Department of education fully supports your commitment to research. An investigation into the Implementation of Oral History in the Further Education and Training (FET) Phase in Selected KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) Schools.

It is hoped that you will find the above in order.

Best Wishes

R Cassius Lubisi, (PhD)  
Superintendent-General

## APPENDIX C



UNIVERSITY OF  
KWAZULU-NATAL

SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES EDUCATION  
Edgewood Campus

Miss Barbara Wahlberg  
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Private Bag X03  
Ashwood  
3605  
KwaZulu-Natal  
South Africa

Student Number: 991236087

November 2007

### **RE: Consent Letter to the Department of Education (DoE)**

To the Department of Education

I am currently enrolled at the University of KwaZulu Natal for a Masters in Education Degree. My topic of study is: An investigation into the implementation of Oral History in the Further Education and Training (FET) phase in selected KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) schools.

I would like to gain access to your FET History teachers at selected schools in the Durban and Pietermaritzburg areas, to set up an opportunity to conduct semi-structured interviews with them so as to gain insight into their experiences. I also seek permission to record the interview so that I can decode the information at a later stage. I will ensure that all information is treated confidentially. Any articles published from this research will ensure that anonymity is maintained by not using any identifying information. All participants will be free to withdraw at any time if they no longer agree to be a part of the interview process any more.

Please sign the attached form to indicate whether you agree/do not agree to permission of interviews with the FET History educators at schools in the Durban and Pietermaritzburg areas.

Yours sincerely

\_\_\_\_\_  
Ms. Barbara Wahlberg  
Masters student  
(031) 260 3421  
[wahlbergb@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:wahlbergb@ukzn.ac.za)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Dr. J. Wassermann  
Supervisor  
Discipline Head History Education  
(031) 260 3484  
[wassermannj@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:wassermannj@ukzn.ac.za)

I, (please write your name in full) \_\_\_\_\_

hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and I consent to allow the History educators concerned to participate in this research study.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX D



UNIVERSITY OF  
KWAZULU-NATAL

SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES EDUCATION  
Edgewood Campus

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Ashwood  
3605  
KwaZulu-Natal  
South Africa

3<sup>rd</sup> April 2008

### **RE: Consent Letter to FET History Educators**

To the History Educator

I am currently enrolled at the University of KwaZulu Natal for a Masters in Education Degree. My topic of study is: *An investigation into the implementation of Oral History in the Further Education and Training (FET) phase in selected KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) schools.*

I would like to set up an opportunity to conduct a semi-structured interview with yourself so as to gain insight into your experiences. I also seek permission to record the interview so that I can decode the information at a later stage.

Your participation will involve:

1. An initial meeting to gain insight into this study and what will be required of you (the interview process), to explain the study and allow for any possible questions/queries that you may have.

2. You will be interviewed for one hour in length. These dates will be negotiated at a later stage (an additional follow up meeting may be included).

The interview will be strictly confidential. Any articles published from this research will ensure that anonymity is maintained by not using any identifying information. You are free to withdraw at any time if you no longer agree to be a part of the interview process any more.

Please sign the attached form to indicate whether you agree/do not agree to be interviewed.

Yours sincerely

\_\_\_\_\_  
Ms. Barbara Wahlberg  
Masters student  
(031) 260 3421  
Fax: (031) 260 3595  
[wahlbergb@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:wahlbergb@ukzn.ac.za)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Dr. J. Wassermann  
Supervisor  
Discipline Head History Education  
(031) 260 3484  
[wassermannj@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:wassermannj@ukzn.ac.za)

I, (please write your name in full) \_\_\_\_\_

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 I am aware that the data collected will be used in a research study. I know that all the information provided and used in the research project will not be connected to me personally and my name will not be used. Full confidentiality will be adhered to and a suitable pseudonym will be used to identify my contribution to the report.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Number: \_\_\_\_\_



## APPENDIX E



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Private Bag X03  
Ashwood  
3605  
KwaZulu-Natal  
South Africa

3<sup>rd</sup> June 2008

### **RE: Consent Letter to KZN History subject advisors**

I am currently enrolled at the University of KwaZulu Natal for a Masters in Education Degree. My topic of study is: *An investigation into the implementation of Oral History in the Further Education and Training (FET) phase in selected KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) schools.*

I would like to set up an opportunity to conduct an interview with so as to gain insight into your experiences. I also seek permission to record the interview so that I can decode the information at a later stage.

Your participation will involve:

1. An initial meeting to gain insight into this study and what will be required of you (the interview process), to explain the study and allow for any possible questions/queries that you may have.

2. You will be interviewed for one hour in length. These dates will be negotiated at a later stage (an additional follow up meeting may be included).

The interview will be strictly confidential. Any articles published from this research will ensure that anonymity is maintained by not using any identifying information. You are free to withdraw at any time if you no longer agree to be a part of the interview process any more.

Please sign the attached form to indicate whether you agree/do not agree to be interviewed.

Yours sincerely

---

Ms. Barbara Wahlberg  
Masters student  
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---

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Discipline Head History Education  
(031) 260 3484  
[wassermannj@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:wassermannj@ukzn.ac.za)

I, (please write your name in full) \_\_\_\_\_

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 I am aware that the data collected will be used in a research study. I know that all the information provided and used in the research project will not be connected to me personally and my name will not be used. Full confidentiality will be adhered to and a suitable pseudonym will be used to identify my contribution to the report.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Number: \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX F



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Private Bag X03  
Ashwood  
3605  
KwaZulu-Natal  
South Africa

3<sup>rd</sup> April 2008

### **RE: Consent Letter to UKZN History Education students**

I am currently enrolled at the University of KwaZulu Natal for a Masters in Education Degree. My topic of study is: *An investigation into the implementation of Oral History in the Further Education and Training (FET) phase in selected KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) schools.*

I would like to set up an opportunity to conduct a focus group interview with you and fellow history education students so as to gain insight into your experiences. I also seek permission to record the interview so that I can decode the information at a later stage.

Your participation will involve:

1. An initial meeting to gain insight into this study and what will be required of you (the interview process), to explain the study and allow for any possible questions/queries that you may have.

2. You will be interviewed for one hour in length. These dates will be negotiated at a later stage (an additional follow up meeting may be included).

The interview will be strictly confidential. Any articles published from this research will ensure that anonymity is maintained by not using any identifying information. You are free to withdraw at any time if you no longer agree to be a part of the interview process any more.

Please sign the attached form to indicate whether you agree/do not agree to be interviewed.

Yours sincerely

\_\_\_\_\_  
Ms. Barbara Wahlberg  
Masters student  
(031) 260 3421  
Fax: (031) 260 3595  
[wahlbergb@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:wahlbergb@ukzn.ac.za)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Dr. J. Wassermann  
Supervisor  
Discipline Head History Education  
(031) 260 3484  
[wassermannj@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:wassermannj@ukzn.ac.za)

I, (please write your name in full) \_\_\_\_\_

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 I am aware that the data collected will be used in a research study. I know that all the information provided and used in the research project will not be connected to me personally and my name will not be used. Full confidentiality will be adhered to and a suitable pseudonym will be used to identify my contribution to the report.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Number: \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX G

Student Number: 991236087

June 2008

Barbara Wahlberg

### Semi-structured Interview Schedule for History Educators

#### Questions

1. If you had to describe Oral History, how would you describe it (working definition)?
2. Have you conducted any form of Oral History (interviewing) activity/project in your classroom?
3. If so, was the overall experience positive or negative and why?
4. Do you feel confident and prepared enough to conduct a worthwhile Oral History with your learners?
5. In your view, what impact/benefit/outcome does the Oral History have for your learners?
6. What have your overall experiences been with regards to Oral History in your classroom?
7. Do you think that Oral History is a beneficial and crucial assessment task to conduct with FET History learners, and why?
8. How is your Oral History managed, in terms of feedback that you provide to your learners?

9. Were you provided with adequate training/knowledge with regards to conducting an Oral History in your classroom?

If so, in what form was this?

- DoE workshop
- DoE documents
- Private

10. What policy documents are made available to History educators at your school?

11. In your view, what are the roles of the subject advisors?

12. Are you (your school) regularly visited by a History subject advisor?

13. Do you as a History educator feel equipped and confident (in terms of knowledge, training and their ability) to conduct the Oral History?

14. How does Oral History fit into the overall assessment (continuous /summative)?

15. Are you generally familiar with the DoE produced documents?

- (1). NCS (2003)
- (2). Assessment Guideline (2008)
- (3). Learning programme Guideline (2008)
- (4). Continuous Assessment Programme (2006)
- (5). Report of the Archeology and History Panel (2002)
- (6). Subject Assessment Guideline (2008)

## APPENDIX H

Student Number: 991236087

June 2008

Barbara Wahlberg

### **Semi-structured Interview Schedule for History Subject Advisors**

#### Questions

1. What were the initial reasons/purpose behind the implementation of oral history in the FET phase?
2. How many years has oral history been implemented in KZN schools?
3. Based on your experience, what are your views on the implementation of oral history in the FET phase?
4. What are some of the problems that both yourself and teachers are experiencing?
5. What are the overall outcomes of oral history in the FET phase?

Is this felt uniformly?

Are there differences amongst schools? And if so why?

6. What training, documents/pamphlets/guidance is made available to educators on understanding and implementing oral history?
7. How do you keep track of the progress and quality of the oral history projects being produced?

8. When are educators supposed to conduct the oral history project (when in grade12)?

How much time are they given? (or does this vary?)

9. How is the oral history project assessed?

10. What are the latest developments with the oral history project?

Are there any future changes/developments/advancements?

11. Where does the Heritage project fit in?



## APPENDIX I

Student Number: 991236087

Nov 2007

Barbara Wahlberg

### Focus Group Interview Schedule for History Education Students

#### Questions

THE INFORMATION BELOW WILL BE USED SOLEY FOR RESEARCH PURPOSES.

1. Did you conduct (experience) any form of Oral History in the FET phase when you were a learner at school?
2. If so, describe what happened.
3. What was your overall experience and opinion of the project/assignment?
4. How many years ago was this?
5. What preparation/training were you given with regards to understanding the mechanism of interviewing someone?
6. Did you feel adequately prepared/informed to conduct an interview? Give reasons.
7. How was your final Oral History assignment assessed?
8. How much time were you given to complete the assignment/project?
9. What did the project consist of?
10. Did you enjoy conducting Oral History?
11. What do you feel that you gained from the experience?
12. What is the value of Oral History?

## APPENDIX J

### Code of Ethics for Oral History Practitioners in South Africa<sup>1</sup>

#### When planning an oral history project

1. Consider any possible harm that the interview process may cause to the interviewee's feelings or reputation or to his/her community.
2. Acquire sufficient technical knowledge to conduct an interview of the best possible standard.
3. Obtain the best possible knowledge on the culture and habits of the interviewee and his/her community.

#### Before the interview

4. Follow a culturally appropriate protocol when approaching the interviewee and requesting an interview.
5. Inform the interviewee of the purpose of the interview, ensuring that he/she has understood this.
6. Agree on the place, time and circumstances of the interview.
7. Agree on whether or not the interview should remain confidential and on where and how the interview material will be stored and disseminated. This should be done in writing (release form) or verbally, with a record on tape.
8. Agree on how the interviewee will benefit from the interview (e.g. receiving a copy of the tape and transcript or a community celebration). Ensure that interviewees do not have false expectations.
9. During the interviewee's style of personal interaction (language, posture, dress, eye contact, etc).
10. Be gender sensitive.
11. Deal appropriately with painful and emotional issues.

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<sup>1</sup> This Code of Ethics was taken from Denis & Ntsimane. (2008), which was adapted from the Oral History Association of South Africa (OHASA).

12. Verify that the interviewee remains comfortable with the interview process and, when necessary, grant him/her the right to withdraw.

#### When processing the interview

13. Ensure that the interview is transcribed, indexed, catalogued and made available as agreed with the interviewee.
14. Ensure that all possible measures are taken to preserve the interview material.
15. Inform the interviewee of any change regarding the storage or dissemination of the interview.
16. Verify that no part of the interview has defamatory content.

#### On completion of the project

17. Report back to the interviewee or his/her community and give them a copy of the recording, if an undertaking to do so has been given.
18. Acknowledge the contribution of the interviewee and his/her community in any form of subsequent publication.
19. Share with the interviewee or his/her community any form of financial benefit that may accrue to the interviewer (where applicable).

## APPENDIX K

FET: Oral History Project Assessment Rubric				
Category of Criteria	4	3	2	1
Historical Contextualisation/ Research	Establishes a strong historical background for understanding the interview drawing evidence from a wide variety of sources. Limited information used intelligently and provides a clear context for understanding the interview. Provides a strong sense of the interviewee's background with extended use of dates, details and anecdotes to provide historical context. Interviewee's past is clearly established in the context of the interview period.	Establishes an historical background for understanding the interview drawing some evidence from other sources. Limited information available used to provide a context for understanding the interview. Provides a sense of the interviewee's background with extended use of dates, details and anecdotes to provide context. Interviewee's past is partially established in the context of the interview period.	Establishes a weak historical background for understanding the interview drawing evidence only from one or two sources. Limited information available used only to a certain extent to provide a context for understanding the interview. Provides an unclear sense of the interviewee's background and does not include dates, details and anecdotes to provide context. Interviewee's past is not established in the context of the interview period.	No historical background for understanding the interview is established. Provides no sense of the interviewee's background and the interviewee's past is not established in the context of the interview period.
Planning	The project was guided by a detailed and effective research plan, which included a clear research focus, budget and timetable. The goals are clearly defined and used in terms of the central research questions to be answered. Human, physical and financial resources were used effectively in planning the oral project. Highly effective management through careful and on-going monitoring.	The project was guided by a research plan, which included a basic research focus, budget and timetable. The goals are defined and used in terms of the central research questions to be answered. Human, physical and financial resources were used in planning the oral project. Proper management through careful and on-going monitoring.	The project was guided by a research plan, but was not properly used to manage the project. The goals are to a certain extent defined in terms of the central research questions to be answered. Human, physical and financial resources were not properly used in planning the oral project. The project is not managed and monitored throughout the duration of the project.	No research plan was used to manage the project. No clear goals are defined in terms of the central research questions to be answered. Human, physical and financial resources were available, but not used in planning the oral project. The project is very poorly managed and monitored.

Interview	<p>The interview and interviewee were properly contextualised on tape before the interview started. Open-ended questions were asked that reflect thoroughness of research and an ordered plan for conducting the interview. Follow-up questions are utilised to clarify points put forth by the interviewee's responses. The content and manner in which interview questions were asked helped the interviewee to feel at ease and were based on mutual trust. This helped the interviewee to gradually reveal meaningful and useful information.</p>	<p>The interview and interviewee were contextualised on tape before the interview started. Questions some of which were open-ended that reflects thoroughness of research and an ordered plan for conducting the interview was asked. Limited use of follow-up questions to clarify points put forth by the interviewee's responses. The content and manner in which interview questions were asked helped the interviewee to a certain extent to feel at ease. This helped the interviewee to trust the interviewer gradually.</p>	<p>The interview and interviewee were not properly contextualised on tape before the interview started. The questions asked lacked open-endedness and did not reflect thorough research. Questions are unorganised and at times do not remain focused on the period or event in question. Follow-up questions to clarify points put forth by the interviewee's responses are missing. The way in which the interview was conducted was not very conducive to help the interviewee feel at ease.</p>	<p>The interview and interviewee were not properly contextualised on tape before the interview started. Only a few questions were extended to the interviewee. Questions are not open-ended and not developed to qualify interviewee's response. Questions are posed in an unorganised manner and do not always relate to the period or event being examined.</p>
Transcribing & Editing	<p>Transcription reflects very clearly the tone of responses, sounds, expression and includes information footnotes that clarify ambiguous statements or references.</p>	<p>Transcription reflects to a great extent the tone of response, sounds, expressions and includes some footnotes that clarify statements or references.</p>	<p>Transcription reflects to a certain extent the tone of response, but does not include any further informational footnotes that clarify ambiguous statements or references.</p>	<p>Transcription does not reflect the nature of the response and contains no informational footnotes that clarify ambiguous statements or references.</p>

Analysing & Summarising	Sophisticated thesis that clearly establishes historical value. Application of historical contextualisation in order to assess where the interview fits into the historiography of the particular period or event. Use of the interview, through quotations, to support interviewer's interpretations. The analysis considers both sides of the historical event or period that the interview covers intensively. The project is excellently and clearly structured and organised. It is also well written	Contains a thesis that establishes historical value. To various degrees historical contextualisation is used in order to assess where the interview fits into the historiography of the particular period or event. Limited use of the interview, through quotations, to support interviewer's interpretations. The analysis mostly considers both sides of the historical event or period that the interview covers. The project is well structured, organised and written.	Presents a limited, confused and/or poorly developed thesis assessing historical value. Ineffective application of historical contextualisation in order to assess where the interview fits into the historiography of the particular period or event. Interview, through quotations, is not effectively used to support interviewer's interpretations. Applied analysis and historical explanation of the historical event or period that the interview covers to a certain extent. Attempted a structure.	Contains no thesis or a thesis that does not address historical value. No or ineffective use of historical contextualisation in order to assess where the interview fits into the historiography of the particular period or event. No or ineffective use of the interview, through quotations, to support interviewer's interpretations. Applied analysis and historical explanation occasionally or not at all. No structure.		
Presentation/ Disseminating oral testimonies	The purpose behind the oral history project was extremely well used to present the material. The medium chosen compliments the goals of the project excellently. It also ensures that it builds on the comparative advantage of oral evidence.	The purpose behind the oral history project determined the way the material is used and presented. The medium chosen compliments the goals of the project to a great extent and helps to build on the comparative advantage of oral evidence.	The purpose behind the oral history project was not effectively used in the presentation. The medium chosen reflects to a certain extent the goals of the project. It did not use the comparative advantage of oral evidence effectively.	The purpose and goal behind the oral history project were not properly reflected in the presentation. The comparative advantage of oral evidence was not used at all.		
Encircle the predominant code			4	3	2	1

## APPENDIX L<sup>1</sup>

Holistic rubric for assessing oral history projects	
Level	If the candidate has demonstrated all or most of the skills listed in a particular level, she/he will be awarded a mark within this category. The key criteria are presented in bold type and should take precedence when you are assessing the learners' work
7 Outstanding 80 – 100% 60 - 75	<p><u>Evidence of Research (field notes, transcripts, notes etc)</u>  <b>Excellent background research leading to the selection of a clearly focussed topic</b>  <b>Excellent, searching open-ended questions clearly focussed on the topic</b>            Interviewees chosen are highly suitable for the topic            Evidence of very careful planning for interviews  <b>If notes are kept – evidence of high quality, comprehensive, accurate notes</b>  <b>If electronic media are used – evidence of high quality, accurate and comprehensive transcription</b>            All research material extremely well archived (e.g. all recording tapes properly labelled)</p> <p><u>Written Report</u>  <b>Report extremely well-structured and very clearly focused on the topic</b>            Excellent expression            Excellent historical contextualisation of the material  <b>Excellent synthesis of the interview material into the written report</b>            Report neatly and attractively presented            Excellent use of illustrative material (e.g. copies of original documents, photographs etc) (optional)</p>
6 Meritorious 70-79% 52-59	<p><u>Evidence of Research (field notes, transcripts, notes, etc)</u>  <b>Very good background research leading to the selection of a clearly focussed topic</b>  <b>Very good open-ended questions focussed on the topic</b>            Interviewees chosen are suitable for the topic            Evidence of good planning for the interviews  <b>If notes are kept – evidence of high quality note-making</b>  <b>If electronic media are used – evidence of high quality, accurate transcription</b>            All research material well archived (e.g. all recording tapes properly labelled)</p> <p><u>Written Report</u>  <b>Report structured and clearly focussed on the topic</b>            Very good expression            Very good historical contextualisation of the material  <b>Very good synthesis of the interview material into the written report</b>            Report neatly and attractively presented            Good use of illustrative material (e.g. copies of original documents, photographs etc) (optional)</p>
5 Substantial 60-69% 45-51	<p><u>Evidence of Research (field notes, transcripts, notes, etc)</u>  <b>Good background research leading to the selection of a focussed topic</b>  <b>Good open-ended questions generally focussed on the topic</b>            Interviewees chosen are mostly suitable for the topic            Evidence of planning for the interviews  <b>If notes are kept – evidence of notes that are clear and of a good quality</b>  <b>If electronic media are used – evidence of transcription that is mostly of a high quality</b>            Research material is mostly well archived (e.g. all recording tapes properly labelled)</p> <p><u>Written Report</u>  <b>Report well- structured and generally focussed on the topic</b>            Good expression            Good historical contextualisation of the material  <b>Good synthesis of the interview material into the written report</b>            Report is generally neat and attractive in its presentation            Some use of illustrative material mostly appropriate to the topic (e.g. copies of original documents, photographs etc) (optional)</p>

<sup>1</sup> SAG, 2007, grade 11, p.22 & 23

<p>4 Moderate 50-59% 37-44</p>	<p><u>Evidence of Research (field notes, transcripts, notes, etc)</u>  <b>Evidence of adequate background research leading to the selection of a mostly focussed topic</b>  <b>Questions more mixed but some good open-ended questions focussed on the topic to a reasonable degree</b>  Interviewees chosen are mostly suitable for the topic but motivation for some choices not always clear  evidence of planning for interviews but some deficits apparent  Evidence of planning for the interviews  <b>If notes are kept – evidence of adequate notes – tend to be more superficial</b>  <b>If electronic media are used – evidence of transcription that is mostly of an acceptable quality</b>  Evidence of archiving of material but some deficits (e.g. all recording tapes properly labelled)  <u>Written Report</u>  <b>Report shows structure but the focus on the topic is less clear than in the higher categories</b>  Expression is generally acceptable  Some evidence of historical contextualisation of the material  <b>Some evidence of synthesis of the interview material into the written report but not to a great extent</b>  Report is generally neat and orderly in its presentation  There may be some use of illustrative material but much of it will not be appropriate to the topic (e.g. copies of original documents, photographs etc) (optional)</p>
<p>3 Adequate 40-49% 30-36</p>	<p><u>Evidence of Research (field notes, transcripts, notes, etc)</u>  <b>Evidence of a limited amount of background research leading to the selection of a topic focussed to a limited degree</b>  <b>Questions mostly superficial and close-ended</b>  Motivation for some choices of interview subjects mostly not clear  Limited evidence of planning for the interviews but several deficits apparent  <b>If notes are kept – they tend to be brief and disjointed</b>  <b>If electronic media are used – evidence of sketchy and/or inaccurate transcription</b>  Some archiving of material but several deficits (e.g. some evidence missing)  <u>Written Report</u>  <b>Report shows limited structure and the focus on the topic is intermittent</b>  Expression is mostly poor  Very little or no evidence of historical contextualisation of the material  <b>Very little evidence of synthesis of the interview material into the written report (report is little more than a rehashing of the interviews)</b>  Report may be scrappy and untidy in its presentation  There may be some use of illustrative material but it will not be appropriate to the topic (e.g. cut out pictures of film stars etc) (optional)</p>
<p>2 Elementary 30-39% 22-29</p>	<p><u>Evidence of Research (field notes, transcripts, notes, etc)</u>  <b>Evidence of a very limited amount of background research leading to the selection of a topic focussed to a very limited degree</b>  <b>Almost all questions superficial, close-ended and lacking focus</b>  Motivation for choices of interview subjects mostly random  Some very limited evidence of planning for the interviews but major deficits apparent  <b>If notes are kept – they tend to be brief and disjointed</b>  <b>If electronic media are used – very sketchy and inaccurate transcription</b>  Very limited archiving of material but major deficits (e.g. much evidence missing)  <u>Written Report</u>  <b>Report shows almost no structure and focus</b>  Expression is mostly very poor  No evidence of historical contextualisation of the material  <b>No synthesis of the interview material into the written report (report is nothing more than a rehashing of the interviews)</b>  Report may be scrappy and untidy in its presentation  There may be some use of illustrative material but none of it is appropriate to the topic (e.g. cut out pictures of film stars etc) (optional)</p>
<p>1 Not Achieved 0-29% 1-21</p>	<p><b>Very inadequate or no evidence of planning and research</b>  <b>Very inadequate report or no report written at all</b></p>



## APPENDIX M<sup>1</sup>

### Monitoring sheet for oral history project

Name of Learner ..... Grade (HG or SG) .....

Title of Project .....

Names and Contact Details of People to be interviewed

No.	Name	Address	Telephone Number

### Monitoring Log

Date	Activity	Comment
	Commencement <sup>2</sup>	
	Preparatory research <sup>3</sup>	
	Vetting of questions <sup>4</sup>	
	Progress check <sup>5</sup>	
	Progress check	
	Inspection of draft <sup>6</sup>	
	Final copy handed in	
	Feedback <sup>7</sup>	

Educator's Name .....

Educator's Signature .....

Learner's Signature .....

<sup>1</sup> GDCAP 2008, grade 11, p.56

<sup>2</sup> This is the date on which training of the learners came to an end and learners were told to proceed with the project.

<sup>3</sup> This preparatory phase includes research, the finalisation of a topic and the identification of persons to be interviewed. It should be completed about 2 to 4 weeks after commencement.

<sup>4</sup> This refers to the questions that are going to be asked of the interviewees. Are they open-ended enough? Do they cover all aspects of the topic? This is a chance for teachers to guide learners on this important aspect.

<sup>5</sup> At least two progress checks should take place during the researching and writing of the project.

<sup>6</sup> Learners should hand in a draft copy of their project so that teachers can make inputs relating to improving the final project.

<sup>7</sup> It is important for teachers to check to see whether there has been feedback to the interviewees. Have they been thanked in some way for the part they played in the successful completion of the project?

## APPENDIX N<sup>1</sup>

Release Form
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I.....of.....(address),  
having been interviewed by....., a learner at  
.....(name of school) on ..... (date) as part of his/her  
research for the Grade 12 Oral History Project do hereby agree to the following (Please  
indicate whether you are agreeing to a full release, conditional release or withholding of  
release by crossing out the sections which do not apply.)

FULL RELEASE – I agree that the facts and opinions expressed during the interview  
may be used freely by the learner in the compilation of his project. I further give  
permission for my name to appear in the report.

CONDITIONAL RELEASE – I agree that the learner may use the material gathered from  
me in an interview under the following conditions:

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

WITHHOLDING OF RELEASE – I do not give permission for the material given during  
the interview to be used by the learner in any published material. I further do not wish my  
name to be published in connection with this project.

Name of Interviewee .....

Signature of Interviewee .....

Name of Interviewer .....

Signature of Interviewer .....

Date: .....

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<sup>1</sup> GDCAP, Grade 11, 2008, p.57

## APPENDIX O<sup>1</sup>

CASS Contract
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I.....(Name), being a Grade 11 learner, at  
.....(School Name) acknowledge that I am  
required, as part of the Continuous Assessment (CASS) Programme, to produce work for  
a portfolio. The following items must appear in my portfolio:

### Programme of Assessment (Examinations and standardised tests)

At least one informal source-based and extended writing exercise.

2 Control Tests (March and September).

Oral History Project or equivalent research project.

Heritage Assignment.

November Examination.

Further exercises as directed by my teacher.

I acknowledge that if I fail to comply with the minimum requirements laid down for  
CASS, my CASS mark, which forms part of my final promotion mark will be negatively  
affected to a greater or lesser degree.

Signature of learner: .....

Date:.....

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<sup>1</sup> GDCAP. Grade 11, 2008, p.60

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