

“WHAT’S A TEACHER ANYWAY?”

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ABSTRACT

This research seeks to understand what it means to be a teacher and the experiences that shape what teachers do in the context of a primary school. In asking the question, *What's a teacher anyway?* I produced data of teachers' daily practices and social realities within their lived experiences. Located within an interpretive paradigm, I documented various identities and meanings of teachers which helped me to understand how teachers negotiate the multiple forces within the setting of a primary school.

The research looked at teachers in their social context, since teachers do not work in isolation but are subject to particular social influences. Using the participatory approach, I produced data of the lives of two experienced teachers who work in a primary school in the eThekweni region of KwaZulu-Natal. The participatory methodology was most appropriate to gather the necessary data, as it allowed for the teachers' voices to be heard. Against the social, institutional, contextual and programmatic contexts, data were sourced by means of career life-history interviews and photovoice. Through narrative analysis, the teachers' stories were reconstructed and represented as identity categories through which they were able to construct their professional selves and their professional work.

The findings that were generated from the two experienced primary school teachers were analysed and represented under the key themes of professional self and professional work. The findings offer an understanding of how practising teachers manage their work and themselves against all the changes and challenges of the South African educational landscape specifically in the schooling situation. Through the reconstructed stories by the teachers, the study makes visible how teacher identity shapes teachers and their work in the school. The data reveals that teachers have multiple identities of who they are and how they respond from their position as teachers, which clash with what is expected of them in the school. The findings show that teachers are unhappy with the curriculum and political shifts, as these are imposed on them in an arbitrary manner.

The study contributes to a nuanced understanding of the relationship between teacher identity and teacher work. The study revolves around the teacher who tries to build an interesting relationship between the identities of "mother", "teacher" and "caregiver". Being a teacher, innovative ways are created to manage the administrative work and the curriculum work. The

second teacher, an Indian male, as a person and an activist, growing up in a poor community, negotiates between the forces to make sense of what it means to be a teacher in the present shift, given the diversity of pupils and the various issues that accompany it. The teachers are working in a social reality and have to manage a range of challenges, difficulties and struggles. They find creative ways to negotiate the multiple roles and responsibilities and make sense of what it means to be a teacher.

Due to excessive administrative and curricular demands being made on them, teachers are found to be experiencing tension and undue stress in their work while negotiating the multiple forces that surround them in the context of the school. To answer my research question, *What's a teacher anyway*, I considered how they moved beyond their conventional roles and responsibilities as teachers, and how they endeavoured to make meaning and sense of themselves as successful teachers within the four dimensions of Samuel's (2008) framework.

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation is my own work. It has not been submitted for degree purposes at any other university. All sources used have been indicated and acknowledged accordingly.

Student's signature

Date

Supervisor's signature

Date

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ANC	African National Congress
CAPS	Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
IQMS	Integrated Quality Management System
OBE	Outcomes-Based Education
RNCS	Revised National Curriculum Statement
SACE	South African Council for Educators
SADTU	South African Democratic Teachers' Union

DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my dearly loved and appreciated husband, Heren, for his continuous encouragement, love, support and understanding throughout my studies. You urged me on whenever I wanted to give up. You have been a tower of strength to me and you have shown me the light at the end of the tunnel.

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CHAPTER ONE

SETTING THE SCENE

1.1. INTRODUCTION

“ARE OUR TEACHERS FAILING SOCIETY OR IS SOCIETY FAILING OUR TEACHERS?”

“Every day, the fate of millions of children is put in the hands of ordinary people called teachers. These people are in turn entrusted with the enormous responsibility of teaching, guiding and cultivating these young minds into decent, mature citizens. But the job is far from easy. It is littered with numerous challenges including violent pupils, poverty and lack of learning resources.”

(The Mercury: October 5, 2010)

The *Mercury* article focuses on the job of the teacher in the present education system in South Africa. The teacher plays a major role in shaping the life of the child. Being a teacher is no easy task. Besides being tasked with imparting knowledge to young people, teachers also play many roles, often doubling up as pastors to guide and counsel pupils. Teaching does not just start at university and end in the classroom. Teachers are lifelong learners because curriculum and policies are constantly changing. Furthermore, the classrooms are faced with many challenges including poverty, language barriers, overcrowded classrooms, poor facilities and a lack of resources. The article implies that teachers need to be given more recognition. Education could become a success, I believe, when all stakeholders pull together. Parents, pupils, government and communities must support each other. It is the teacher who moulds the pupils into becoming thinkers in society.

This study centres on the teachers’ lived experiences and presents an understanding of the title **“What’s a teacher anyway?”** I focus on the fact that South African schools in general and teachers in particular are at the forefront of tremendous social transition accompanied by significant political, educational and cultural shifts. My study is therefore looking at practising teachers who are within this overarching framework of educational reformation and at the construction of teachers’ personal and professional identities that shape and are

being shaped by teacher work. Exploring teachers' past and present experiences will offer me a better understanding of how teachers make sense of themselves. Morrow (2007) argues that the professional work and life of the teacher has become complex and challenging. He maintains that it is continually changing in relation to policy, curriculum, content, assessment and school governance. Morrow (2007:18) points out that teachers in the South African classroom find it increasingly difficult to "adjust to these changes." In the process of embracing these changes, Sayed (2004:261) reminds us that "severe inequalities and contextual realities of South African schools have been overlooked."

On the same note, international studies by Day, Kington, Stobart and Sammons (2006:601) show that the wider "social environments in which teachers live and work, and the personal and professional elements of teachers' lives, experiences, beliefs and practices" are important to one another, and there are often tensions between these, which have an impact on teachers' sense of self or identity. They argue that if identity is a "key factor that influences teachers' sense of purpose, motivation, commitment and job satisfaction," (*ibid*), then further research of these factors that influence the contexts in which they occur, and the consequences for practice, is needed.

1.2. BACKGROUND OF STUDY

Since 1994 the South African schooling context has changed tremendously over the years. Teachers are faced with a single system of education in which there are no longer separate schools for separate races. The fragmented system, with its many changes, and issues of race have influenced the work of teachers. Teachers are faced with huge challenges in the schools. The differing school contexts impact on the development of teacher identities. The South African schools and their culture vary from one school to the next because of the pupils, parents, community and the governing bodies. Soudien (2000) points out that teachers are expected to affect changes that will meet the needs of all pupils enrolled at their schools, bringing about meaningful interaction among pupils, while at the same time, instilling a human rights culture. Hemson (2006) maintains that by schools becoming increasingly diverse, teachers are presented with new challenges revolving around language barriers, social issues, poverty, HIV/AIDS, diversity in the student body and cultural, ethnic and religious diversity. Many teachers have had to learn to adapt to new school and classroom scenarios, as their place of work is no longer what it used to be.

Together with the desegregation of South African schools came the curriculum and policy reform. Morrow (2007) points out that curriculum reform is not the solution to the desired transformation in education. The changes from the traditional curriculum during the apartheid era to Curriculum 2005 and the Revised National Curriculum Statement (2005) - have all resulted in a great deal of confusion and frustration amongst teachers.

Against this dynamic situation, I wished to probe how teachers are making sense of themselves and their work, and how they are negotiating the new ideas espoused in the changing policies like The National Framework for Teacher Education (2007). It is only by understanding the teachers' individual, lived stories and their personal experiences, that one can understand how they come to know themselves in relation to their work, and how this influences their work. Adendorff, Gultig and Mason (2001) maintain that meanings are given to identities, which are formed over a period of time and that these meanings manifest themselves in society. They state that teachers' experiences are shaped in particular ways by their identities and localities.

1.3. WHY I AM DOING THIS STUDY

I have two major reasons for conducting this research. The first one arises from my personal stance as a teacher. Having taught for the last thirty years, I have personally gone through vast changes in defining for myself what it means to be a teacher. These changes have accelerated after the first democratic elections in 1994 and now, sixteen years later, well into the post-apartheid era. Being an experienced teacher, I have realized that no two teachers are the same. Every teacher is different and will therefore react to change in different ways. From my experiences while teaching in various public schools in KwaZulu Natal, like Pillay (2003), I have come across very few teachers who seem satisfied and happy with the profession. This has driven my interest to explore and understand the teacher within the context of an urban South African primary school. I value the role that teachers play and wish to see how it may be enhanced. Grant and Sleeter (2007) point out that teachers matter significantly when we consider the quality of education in schools.

As a researcher, examining data on teacher identity and teacher work, I hoped to deepen my understanding of the teacher. Studies by Ramrathan (2002) show that an increasing number of teachers go on sick leave due to stress-related factors at school. Amongst my colleagues at school, I have discovered that teacher morale is at an all-time low. South African teachers

feel demoralized and pressurized because of the demands made on them. Ramrathan (2009) states that even when professional development does take place to assist the teachers, they find it to be of no help at all because such interventions are considered as being irrelevant and disconnected to the actual problems being faced in the schools.

Past and current research by researchers such as Hargreaves (1997) and Morrow (2007), suggest that teachers are simply overloaded with work. Ramrathan (2009) reports that teachers are presented with curriculum packages which they have to implement, irrespective of the context of the school. Jansen (2001) points out that the policy changes in the South African education system have placed teachers in a dilemma. He adds that no consideration is given to the personal identities of teachers or the kinds of institutions in which they work (Jansen: 2001). He also points out that demands are made on teachers which are difficult to comply with. Samuel (2008) states that it is only when we come to understand the individual teacher's meanings, practises and experiences, that we begin to understand why teachers think and act in the way that they do. My research to understand how teachers make meaning and sense of themselves and their work has been driven by these demands, changes and challenges that teachers are faced with.

1.4. KEY RESEARCH QUESTIONS

My study has addressed key research questions that have assisted me in understanding the teacher. It has hoped to probe below the surface, to ferret out new meanings and insights into teacher work and teacher identity. I have wanted to explore the lived experiences of teachers in order to understand how they are making meaning and sense of themselves and their work by providing a response to the following key research questions:

1.4.1. What construction of the professional self do teachers adopt in a South African primary school?

This question explores what it means to be a teacher in a South African classroom. Through teachers' stories of their lived experiences I explore issues of teacher identity, how teachers make meaning of themselves in a context of political and professional change. Through the career life history interviews and photo-voice, teachers offer constructions of their teacher selves. What are the stories of self that teachers take up, rework and adopt as teachers working in a South African primary school?

1.4.2. How are constructions of the professional self shaping teachers' work in a South African primary school?

This question addresses how teachers construct themselves in relation to their work, construct their work demands, and make meaning of their work experiences. What does teacher work mean? What do curriculum changes mean for teachers and the work that they do? How do teachers come to know what their work is? What makes teachers work in the way that they do? How does teacher work affect them as individuals in a South African primary school?

The above key research questions have helped me to understand how teachers make meaning and sense of themselves and their professional work amidst all the changes and challenges confronting them

1.5. POLITICAL AND PROFESSIONAL CONTEXT

1.5.1. The School

In the post-apartheid era many South African schools have also changed. With the change in the education system, came the changes in the racial composition of schools. The arrival of equal education was eagerly anticipated and for those who grappled with the past system, this was welcomed. However, with the new system, education has gone through too many major changes, especially in the South African schools. Schools are now diverse, faced with mixed pupils, language barriers, large class numbers, poverty, lack of resources and facilities, HIV/AIDS and orphans coming from child-headed homes. This has posed a huge challenge for teachers. How teachers make sense of their work and their lives are in relation to the contexts of the school.

Teachers are now working in a completely different schooling environment. Sayed (2004) notes that the whole of the South African schooling system has seen a political shift, particularly as far as the desegregation and de-racialization of schools goes. While the changes have been necessary, many practising teachers who had been living and working under apartheid conditions have not been prepared to manage and negotiate at a personal and professional level, all the challenges that come with these major democratic shifts that these changes hope to bring about. On an international level, Zembylas (2009) reveals that teachers in contexts of social and political transition experience resistance, conflict and loss of self-

image. Teachers respond to change in many ways. While some teachers are happy to support and sustain the reform efforts, others become frustrated and fearful.

In South African schools, Sayed (2004) maintains that the fragmented system and the issue of race seem to emerge as important when we consider teachers' adjustment. Teachers had to learn to adapt to teaching pupils of different races. Teachers were challenged with diversity in the student body. They had to deal with varying language abilities, social and cultural differences and health problems. Against the institutional and contextual contexts, my study looked at what is happening in a South African primary school and I therefore want to understand this through the teachers' lived experiences. Hooks (1994) points out that teachers need to take into account diversity among pupils, as every pupil is unique. She maintains that there is a paradigm shift in the way teachers think, write and speak about the pupils. She points out that this can never be fixed, but will constantly change, according to our institutional settings and our audience. Each school deals with the pupils differently from another school. It exercises its own culture within the framework of formal schooling with variations in who the pupils are and who the teachers are.

Statistically speaking, very few teachers have had to change their teaching styles to accommodate mixed races, since the majority of schools in the country are either remote/rural and/or linguistically and/or racially homogenous, and have largely remained unchanged despite all the upheaval policies have imposed on the system as a whole. In fact, for the most part, for many of these schools and their teachers and pupils, conditions are possibly worse now because of the HIV/AIDS pandemic and increasing poverty.

The South African education system is continually changing and the official discourse that is articulating the change is both political and professional. There are many policies in place that are re-defining the kind of teacher we need today. My study sought to understand how teachers are making sense of the policies, given my assumption that anticipated policy identities are clashing with the identities of teachers.

International studies in Benin by Carnoy and Samoff (2002:37) reveal that similar to the South African education system, teachers who are kept "behind the closed doors of their classrooms, find themselves at the uncomfortable crossroads of conflicting demands made by education systems". Carnoy and Samoff (2002) state that besides having to respond to these competing demands, teachers bring their own preferences and ambitions to their job. Added

to that, according to Carnoy and Samoff (2002:39), the conflict extends to the fact that teachers see themselves as being “unappreciated by the education system and society”, while the policy makers view teachers as being overpaid and underworked.

According to Jansen (2001), the 1990’s were characterised by the introduction of a host of new education policies which resulted in a conflict of teacher identities. New policies continued to be introduced, without even considering what teachers were going through. My study therefore is about teachers understanding themselves and the work that they do.

1.5.2. Policy shifts

My study has looked at how certain teachers have responded to policy shifts. There is a sea of change that is expected of teachers, and this is often unrealistic. This change impacts on teachers and their professional work. The National Framework for Teacher Education (2007) which needed to bring about change in education, have led teachers to a state of dissatisfaction and confusion. Most teachers work in extremely complex situations which were largely due to the pervasive legacies of apartheid. Teachers are battling to cope with the introduction of new curricula, which require teachers to have new knowledge and applied competencies, including using new technologies. They are now faced with great changes in the demographic, cultural and linguistic composition of our classrooms. Teachers are faced with increasing social inequalities. New policies are often not communicated properly to schools. Thus the policies are either implemented incorrectly or not at all. My study looked into how the two teachers are negotiating the changes in policies.

According to the Government Gazette (Vol 415, No.20844), The Norms and Standards for Educators and The National Framework for Teacher Education (2007) dictate to teachers what their roles should be, spelling it out clearly. Samuel (2008) explains that according to this post-apartheid policy, teachers were now required to fulfil seven roles which extend far beyond classroom practice. He adds that these roles include roles and identities related to their responsibilities in the school, such as being a learning mediator, interpreting and designing learning programmes, being learning area specialists and being assessors. This also includes a wide range of social responsibilities. Teachers are to act as guidance counsellors, caregivers, nurses, leaders, administrators, scholars, researchers, life-long learners and psychologists. My study looked into how teachers are negotiating these roles and what it means for the work that they do. International research by Carnoy and Samoff (2002:41))

point out that “any kind of reforms aiming to change or improve the outcomes of education, will bring about some kind of change in the way teachers behave.”

The Government Gazette’s Norms and Standards for Educators (2001) are based on the expectation that teachers should be prepared to go into the schools and adopt the various roles expected of them. With the seven roles and responsibilities, the policy stipulates that this is how teachers should see themselves in their position as teachers. These policies clearly have an impact on teacher work. Against these policies, I wanted to know what meanings of teacher work are being played out in real life, in the actual, lived experiences of the teacher. Whether symbolic or not, the official discourse sets down certain expectations of how the teacher should see himself/herself, and the kind of work that is expected of them, against the policy context. Sayed (2004:261) points out that “there is a clear gap between the seven roles and responsibilities and what actually happens in the classrooms”. Realistically, he notes that teachers are just not able to fulfil the requirements for all the roles sufficiently. Jansen’s (2001) article highlights the changing policy images that were placed on teachers over a length of time. These images, according to him, moved from teacher as liberator, to teacher as facilitator and then to teacher as performer. He points out that new images of teachers do not necessarily correspond with new ways of teaching and learning. Jansen (2001:242) refers to these policy demands as “policy images” and he sees them as conflicting with the “personal identities” of teachers. He sees the urgent need to understand the dilemma that face teachers today, given that the conflict is arguably the root of the problem in policy implementation. Similarly, Samuel (2008) also maintains that instead of condemning teachers who are caught in this policy implementation dilemma, researchers see the need to understand the lives of teachers, caught as they are in a web of cross-cutting social, political and educational agendas.

As pointed out already, international studies by Carnoy and Samoff (2002) in the Republic of Benin, reveal that over the years, teachers have been left out of the policy process. Together with pupils and parents, teachers have become the “chief dispensers of ambitious and idealistic state education objectives” (Carnoy and Samoff: 2002:51). The reality often falls far short of the intended policy. Therefore research suggests that instead of punishing teachers for the confusing state of education, they should include teachers to become involved in the struggle to reinstate the transforming power of schooling.

I wanted to know - against what the policies are saying about how teachers should now see themselves in terms of all these roles and responsibilities - how teachers make meaning of these expectations in their practice. My study looked at all the various issues through the lives of teachers. If this is where all the changes are supposed to be concentrated, what does it mean for the teacher and the work that he is doing? Based on this purpose, my study has asked the simple but profound question: *What's a teacher anyway?*

The continuous curriculum changes are expecting from teachers particular kinds of shifts. Since the 1990's South African teachers were faced with several curriculum changes. Morrow (2007) maintains that teachers were not sufficiently trained and they battled with implementation. He notes that with the curriculum shifts, teachers were overloaded with administrative work, designing their own learning programmes and work schedules. Teachers were given very little guidance on the designing of the curriculum. Teachers are presently pressurized with the demands made on them. Sayed (2004) points out that the new curriculum presented different expectations of teachers as compared to the apartheid era which did not expect much from teachers. Sayed (*ibid*) maintains that the new curriculum has not examined the severe extent of inequalities and contextual realities in South African schools.

By listening to the teachers' stories in this study, I hoped to understand the silent feelings, wants, desires, interests, anxieties and dreams of South African teachers who have chosen to be in this profession. How are teachers managing in terms of what is expected of them? What meanings are they giving to their work? While the roles and responsibilities are articulated in policies which have brought about change in terms of who teachers are and what work they do, I wanted to understand the life of the teacher and how he is giving meaning to all of this, at this point in time. It is a very complex and nuanced understanding that I have wished to explore: How does each teacher operate in his own little world? How does he experience the whole issue of change and challenges in education? Jansen (2001) emphasizes that looking at the expected shifts in the political arena, the policies actually have very good intentions in trying to make those shifts come about. But Jansen (2001) finds that the reality is that teachers who are already in the system have been socialized in certain ways of thinking and working. There is bound to be tension between theory and practice, intention and reality. My study wished to probe that grey area.

1.6. METHODOLOGY

To understand what it means to be a teacher in a South African primary school, the interpretive paradigm presented itself as an obvious framework within which to locate my study. It enabled me to understand teachers' work through their lived experiences, to see how all of this was being understood and made sense of. Aligned to this paradigm is the qualitative methodology, more particularly the participatory approach that I drew on, to understand the working lives of teachers. Using career life-history as the main research method and photographs, I developed a nuanced understanding of each teacher participating in the research study. The career life-history interview was chosen over the semi-structured interview, because in the latter, questions are determined in advance. Important experiences may be left out. Responses may be limited, whereas a career life-history interview calls for in-depth information based on personal experiences and opinions of the teacher. According to Lather (1991), this type of interview encourages self-reflection and seeks mutual understanding. Therefore, I had chosen the participatory methodology as it was most appropriate to generate the data for the purposes of my study. It allowed for the teachers' voices to be heard. It ensured adequate dialogue between myself and the teachers to help in collaboratively constructing the meaning of "teacher".

The source of information for my study were two experienced teachers who are in the intermediate phase. The study was carried out in a local primary school in the eThekweni region of KwaZulu Natal.

1.7. OUTLINE OF CHAPTERS

The following is an outline of my study which is to explore and understand the teacher in a South African primary school. My study consists of five chapters:

As is evident, **Chapter one** introduced my study. It presented an explanation as to why I did this study. The policy shifts were clarified and the focus of the study, the rationale, the background to the study, the critical questions and the methodology were explained.

Chapter two provided a literature landscape and the framework to my study. The literature review addressed the issues of teacher identity and teacher work in a changing educational landscape. Drawing together local and international research, I examine the nature of the relationships between social structures and systems and the individuals working within these

structures and systems, and how this impacted on the teacher and their work. Section B outlined the theoretical framework of the study.

Chapter three discussed the research design and chosen methodology for the study. It provided an argument for the suitability of the design and the research methods in response to the topic: *What's a teacher anyway?* The ethical considerations were outlined in this chapter.

Chapter four detailed the findings and analysis of my study. It offered an understanding of the teacher and teacher work from their lived experiences. This formed the most significant part of my study. The data was analysed and represented under the key themes of professional self and professional work, under which vignettes of the two teachers were presented.

Chapter five concluded my study and presented my summative understanding of the entire study. Having completed the findings and analysis of my field work, I provided an interpretation to teachers and their meanings of who they are and what they do against political, professional and contextual changes. Chapter five presented and reflected my interpretations of the study. It expanded on the implications my study had for the policy, research and practice within the framework of being a teacher and working in schools.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

How do we move away from “teacher bashing” towards recognition of teachers as essential components of the transformation of the education system who need to be nurtured, supported and encouraged, rather than condemned?(Samuel 2008:104)

2.1. INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I reviewed international and national literature in the wider field of teacher identity and teacher work. The literature review thus addressed relevant studies on teachers making meaning and sense of themselves and their professional work in the midst of curriculum and policy changes. The first section of this chapter focused on research studies within the key theme of teacher identity. Within this theme, I have foregrounded the biographical and social dimensions of teacher identity. The second section described research that focused on contextual forces and teachers’ work in the context of change. The third section outlined the theoretical framework of the study.

2.2. RESEARCH ON TEACHER IDENTITY

Lawler (2008) in the United States of America points out that no one has only one identity. An example he maintains is that in being a woman, one can also identify one’s self as being a mother, a wife, a daughter and a teacher, all at the same time. Lawler (*ibid*) further argues that identity turns on both sameness and uniqueness. A group of individuals may be referred to at school as teachers, but on the same note Lawler (2008:5) points out that “nobody has exactly the same life as another person.” Thus it needs to be understood from the outset, that every teacher is unique, and this uniqueness, is what makes one teacher different from another teacher. The literature review on teacher identity throws light and assists me in understanding how teachers make meaning of themselves in the context of change in a South African primary school.

Teacher identity is influenced by many factors from individual experiences to teacher training. It is within this context that this section has discussed both local and international perspectives of teacher identity in countries such as United States of America, United Kingdom, Australia, Argentina, South Africa, Tanzania and The Republic of Benin. Spillane

(2000) claims that developing a teacher identity depends on who you are, your sense of self and your habits of mind. He refers to identity as an individual's way of understanding and being in the world. While identity includes what one knows and believes, it also involves interest, sense of efficacy and orientations towards work and change. Given that South African teachers have different identities, the next section has foreground the biological influences on teachers' meaning making in respect of their work and meaning making of their work in respect of their identities.

2.2.1. Biographical Constructions

A review of significant international studies and national studies are discussed in this section. Goodson and Hargreaves (2003) argue that teachers' life experiences and background are the main ingredients of the people that they are, of their sense of self, to the extent where they place themselves in their teaching. Experience and background therefore shape their identity and their practice. The teachers' lifestyle, according to Goodson and Hargreaves (2003), both in and out of school, their identities and cultures, have an impact on their views of teaching and on practice. Therefore, Hargreaves (1994) maintains that shaping the kind of learning that pupils receive and shaping the kind of work that teachers do, depends on what teachers think, believe and do. He also maintains that the range and quality of their work in the classroom is closely related to how they develop as people and as professionals (Hargreaves:1994). While research in Australia by White and Moss (2003) emphasizes how significant it is for teachers to map the culture of their own identities and explore the values that guide their actions and deeds, Ritchie and Wilson (2000:137) believe that teachers' identities and histories are always part of the "conscious or unconscious development of theories of teaching."

Nieto (2003:124) reminds us that when teachers enter their classrooms, they "do not leave their values at the door." They bring with them their identities, experiences, values, beliefs, attitudes, biases, wishes, dreams and hopes. It is in their classrooms that they enact their deeply held values. Nieto's (*ibid*) believes that it is only when teachers recognize their own forgotten heritages, experiences and family history, that they can then give meaning to themselves and begin to understand the pupils that they teach. It is a way for them to think about how, by means of a clearer understanding of their lives, they can become more effective with their pupils. Similarly Little (1990) is of the opinion that the meanings that

teachers give to themselves are limited to the boundaries of their own experiences, routines, habits and cultures. Adendorff, Gultig and Mason (2001) on the other hand, are of the view that the experiences of teachers are shaped by their identities, who they are, where they live, and their beliefs and values. No particular identity has an essential meaning. According to them, meanings that come from different races, genders, classes and societies are given or attached to identities. They are constructed over a certain period of our history and these meanings are linked to the way society is organized.

Local research studies done, also support the view that biography is a significant force shaping teacher identity. Pillay and Govinden (2007) suggest that teachers who are affirmed by their own histories, create particular spaces for their own unique experiences, in and through which particular meanings constitute identity. The National Framework for Teacher Education in South Africa (2007) recognizes that every teacher within the system of education has a lived experience that is deeply connected to their own personal biographies. According to this framework (2007), their personal histories which arise from socialising within a particular family, culture and community as well as the forces of one's institutional training and the forces of the institutional ethos within which one is teaching, all collectively influence how the teacher identifies who she is and what role she plays within the present education system. Local research done by Samuel (2008) also supports the view that no two teachers are alike in their experiences, personalities, training and interpretations of their role in the practice of teaching and learning. According to Samuel (*ibid*), the identity of teachers intersect with particular experiences amongst others of race, class, gender, language, age and stage of career. He also believes that teacher identities vary in relation to the quality of teacher preparation they have undergone. Therefore Samuel (*ibid*) states that it is not possible for any two teachers to have the same identity.

The next section foregrounds the social influences on teacher identity.

2.2.2. Social Constructions

International research by Avalos-Bevan and Rios (2010) refer to teacher identity as teachers' definitions of themselves in relation to professional tasks and to educational and teaching relationships. Teachers have the task of educating in social contexts, and based on this essential task, they construct and re-construct their identities over time. Avalos-Bevan and Rios (2010:4) maintain that to a large extent, identity has to do with "meanings that

individuals make, work, and re-work about themselves and with meanings that others make about them.” Teacher identity is thus a co-construction involving one teacher and other significant parties, be it teachers or the larger societies to which they belong. Romy (2006) argues that identities are socially constructed

Avalos-Bevan and Rios (2010) state that teachers’ identity formation is linked to educational tasks in the broad sense and to teaching tasks in the smaller world of the classroom. It is also linked to the interactions and relationships with parents, colleagues and school authorities. They also point out that an important part of teacher identity has to do with the teacher feeling competent in the job. Teacher identity is also linked to the trust that society places in them. Thus international literature reveals that traditions and social definitions and meanings shape teacher’s identity. Of importance to teachers here, is how they view themselves and their lives as teachers.

Sen (2006) regards identity as a sense of belonging, referring to who we are. We perform different identities. Pillay (2003) questions the fact that when you become a teacher, how do other identity categories and meanings that go with them shape what it means to be a teacher? Sen (2006) states that with identity, you need to know who you are not in a fixed, linear way. The specialised knowledge as a teacher, as claimed by Said (1988), does not make one a professional, but one who has the power to change things. He maintains that it is only by changing our own meanings, that we can change how we construct and reconstruct ourselves and what we see. It is all about us as teachers. Teachers do not work in isolation, but work in a particular social context. Within the particular social context, Sen (2006:8) points out the importance of “the need to recognize the role of reasoning and choice in identity-based thinking,” as teachers. Whatever the teacher does in the school is shaped by particular experiences and meanings that the teacher sees as most meaningful within that institutional reality. These meanings are made available to the teacher. How the teacher negotiates these meanings shape his/her teacher identity.

A study conducted in Tanzania by Barret (2007) shows that teacher identity brings about insights into how teachers contribute and respond to change in both the professional and social contexts. According to Barret (2007:2), teacher identity is not uniform, as “images of the present are layered with images of the past.” He respects how teachers construct their identity now and also have an expectation of what can be realised in the future. Franzak

(2002) maintains that the development of a teacher's identity is a continuing and dynamic process. It is continually being informed, formed and reformed as teachers develop over time and through interaction with others. White and Moss (2003) maintain that sometimes when a teacher tries to construct her identity in opposition to her colleagues, they react with suspicion and displeasure. Therefore Pillay and Govindan (2007) maintain that the teacher who enacts the practices of self, shows a refusal to be othered and thus claims selfhood and identity.

2.3. CONTEXTUAL FORCES

2.3.1. Micro Issues

Local research by Smit and Fritz (2008) point out that teachers play a critical role in educating youth. The way teachers see themselves as professionals and how they compose their identities is of great significance. Smit and Fritz (*ibid*) state that meaning is central to human behaviour. This is so because humans act towards people and things, based on the meanings that they have given to those people or things. According to them, teachers interact socially and adjust their behaviour in response to the actions of others. As teachers interpret the actions of others, so do they adjust their own actions and behaviour. Thus, meaning is created through social interaction with others. Both situational and social challenges, in and out of the classrooms shape the identity of teachers.

Smit and Fritz (*ibid*) draw our attention to the fact that teaching has become so difficult due to the circumstances that teachers face, circumstances that are often out of their control. This includes poverty, drugs, HIV/AIDS, violence, pregnancies and parental disinterest. The loss of situational control also influences teacher identity, as teachers "lose faith in the system" Smit and Fritz(2008:98). Teacher identity is forged by the problems and daily challenges that they face. Smit and Fritz (*ibid*) have found that external pressures, emanating from society also have an impact on teacher identity. They argue that as a result teachers become emotionally drained and highly stressed as they try to stay in control within a system that is seen to be chaotic and unstructured.

Jansen (2001) points to the need to understand the identity dilemma faced by many teachers. He describes teacher identity as the way teachers feel about themselves professionally, emotionally and politically, given their work conditions. Basically, he maintains that the

professional basis for teacher identity means the ways in which teachers understand their capacity to teach. Jansen (2001:242) maintains that the emotional basis for teacher identity means the way in which teachers understand their capacity to handle emotional demands and trauma in school. The political basis for teacher identity means the ways in which teachers understand and act on their value commitments, personal backgrounds and professional interests in the context of change demands. These issues are most appropriate given the conditions in which practising teachers teach. According to Romy (2006), expecting teachers to implement new policies, roles, understandings and beliefs, ignores the fact that the teachers may first need to shift their own identities, their understanding of who they are and how they relate to others.

In examining both biographical influences and social influences, Hargreaves and Fullan (1992) also refer to teacher identity as the teachers' personal experiences and the role of teachers in a particular society. However, teacher identity cannot be the same across different societies. Therefore teacher identity, according to Carnoy and Samoff (2002) is viewed as something that is dynamic and contested. They maintain that conceptualizing teacher identity in any society involves firstly defining what it means to be a teacher, focusing on teachers' experiences to understand how they fit into the system and then examining how the state aims and influences the way teachers behave and think. Carnoy and Samoff (2002) argue that different societies will have different views on what constitutes a good, successful teacher, depending on the effects and products of the historical, political, social and cultural forces that are specific to those particular societies.

Thus, the argument by both local and international researchers is that teachers draw on different meanings to make sense of who they are and their work in relation to the context in which they work. While they may be complicit in entrenching particular hegemonic meanings about being teacher, teachers also have the capacity to resist these meanings in relation to the present shifts in South African educational landscape and schools in particular.

2.3.2. Teacher work in the context of change

The professional work and life of the teacher in the classroom of a public school, according to Morrow (2007), has become complex, challenging and is continually changing in relation to changes in policy, curriculum, content, assessment and school governance. Today, teachers

in the South African classroom find it increasingly difficult to adjust to these changes. According to local research by Samuel (2008:9), “parents increasingly hand over their children into the care of teachers, expecting teachers to perform miracles to inspire and educate them.” He claims that overload and burnout seem to play a major role in the teaching profession. Teachers have become frustrated with the heavy workload, which has become a cause for concern. It is linked to the well being of the teacher. Morrow (2007) claims that teachers are unable to focus on the teaching of the pupils, as they are overburdened with administrative and care-giving tasks. In addition to this, Adler (2002) emphasizes that teachers are having to constantly address the complex needs of all their pupils and at the same time, they are held accountable for the pupils’ performance. According to Adler (*ibid*), besides coping with the heavy workload, teachers have to deal with the effects of socio-economic ills, like violence and poverty, in their classrooms.

Similarly Morrow (2007:16) claims that the teacher is “expected to share his function of teaching with care-giving as well.” The teacher is continually faced with the serious impact of HIV and AIDS, orphans, illiteracy, unemployment, poverty, violence and drugs. He therefore questions whether the school is a school as well as a welfare institution. How is a teacher expected to cope? Morrow (*ibid*) points out that there is a paradigm shift from the old curriculum to the new curriculum. The Outcomes Based Education as an approach was offered as alternative to apartheid education. This new approach to curriculum change demands certain competencies and workload from teachers. This, according to Morrow (*ibid*), shows that the change in paradigm has complexified and overburdened teachers. Swanepoel (2008) also draws our attention to the fact that previous studies have revealed that South African teachers have to cope with a workload that has increased quite significantly over the last few years.

International research by Nieto (2003) emphasizes the importance of teacher work because according to her, what teachers know and do has a direct influence on what pupils learn. White and Moss (2003) have discovered that most teachers who enter the profession are left to struggle with the complex and challenging demands of their job completely by themselves. They are generally not prepared for the heavy workload encountered in the school. Smith and Shacklock (2007) point out that the work of teaching is increasingly routinised and proletarianized. They see the need to create an organisation of work which promotes the development of teachers’ powers in ways that allows them to make critical judgements about

important developments in education, work and society and to integrate these developments in a changing practice of work. Therefore Smith and Shacklock (2007) argue that the desire to control teachers is due to economic reasons. Only when we stress the importance of teachers' work culture and of concepts like co-operation, work ethic and commitment to teaching, will management appreciate their significance as well.

Thus, both local and international literature focus on the heavy workload of teachers due to the difficult and challenging demands made on them in the context of change.

2.3.3. Teacher issues with curriculum change

Since the 1990's, the South African school curriculum has shifted continuously. Local research by Morrow (2007), Jansen (2001) and Samuel (2008) point out that teachers have been faced with the task of continuously facilitating and implementing education curriculum reform. Lombard and Grosser (2008) maintain that the demands made by educational changes, including the new curriculum, resulted in insufficient focus on the new institutional practice. Thus Jansen (2001) points out that Curriculum 2005 led to the disempowerment of South African teachers. They were no longer the dominant force in the classroom. Teaching became learner-centred, textbooks were de-emphasized, content and subject matter was left mainly to pupils generating them from the environment. Research by Jansen (*ibid*) reveals that teachers found the changes to be difficult, demanding, unreasonable and complex. Czerniewicz, Murray and Probyn (2000) argue that with the new curriculum, teachers are no longer regarded as experts in the field of teaching, or transmitting of knowledge, but instead as co-constructors of knowledge with the pupils.

As an important component of curriculum change is Continuous assessment, Morrow (2007:7) refers to "the nightmare of continuous assessments" which is now seen as a supplement to formal examinations. Pupils are faced with streams of tests, projects, assignments and exercises. The different subject teachers make demands on pupils with unending due dates. Teachers become worried about the assessments and portfolios and have little time to teach. Because of this, Morrow (*ibid*) claims that teachers' work has become increasingly intensified. He is of the belief that teachers are expected to respond to severe pressures and to comply with multiple innovations under deteriorating conditions. He continues to point out that intensification leads to lack of preparation time and reduction in

the quality of work. He states that the school has a lot to do with the heavy workload of teachers.

Blignaut (2008) found that although the new curriculum was prescriptive in terms of policy and pedagogy, it was vague as far as content was concerned. He adds that teachers are not sufficiently equipped to meet the curriculum challenges and can therefore not make sense of these complex reforms. The reforms led to dramatic changes in teachers' classroom practices. It became clear, according to Blignaut (2008) that the conditions and context for effective implementation of Curriculum 2005 were not in place. Jansen (2001:243) makes the point that under the new curriculum, the teacher "disappeared in the classroom plan," where pupils and learning became the "main focus of policy change." The teacher, according to Jansen (*ibid*), who was now referred to as a facilitator, lost ground in terms of symbolic space, physical control and textual authority. This led to the disempowerment of teachers.

Research thus reveals that the continuous curriculum change has made a negative impact on teacher work. It brought with it an overload of administrative responsibility and job intensification that was in competition with, according to Evans (2002:130), "the teachers' professionalism and professionalism."

2.3.4. Teachers and the school

International research by Goodson and Hargreaves (2003) remind us that the daily work of teachers in the context of the school is politically and socially constructed. Teachers, through their teacher work, actively construct who and what a teacher is. Thus teachers are shaped by their work at school. Smylie and Conyers (1992) claim that work-related attitudes, activities and behaviours of teachers are influenced to a great deal by the organizational contexts of the school in which they work. They highlight the importance of colleagues listening to and supporting each other in the work situation. In so doing, they help each other to grow into their roles as teachers and to develop confidence in the classroom. Although Nieto (2003) acknowledges that teaching is a gruelling challenge, teachers who take their work seriously, who re-invent themselves and their work everyday, are the ones who take up the challenge. However, Tyack and Tobin (1994) have found that the committed teachers become exhausted by the demands made on them in the school. Hargreaves (1994) notes that most teachers commonly experience feelings of guilt and frustration, which deeply troubles them. This often leads to anxiety and de-motivates the teacher, disabling his work and his life.

On the other hand Hargreaves (1994) maintains that many teachers tend to misrecognize intensification as professionalism and willingly support it. Yet, according to Hargreaves (1994), teachers are stressed, pressurized and experience a lack of time to relax and talk to their colleagues in the school. He believes that the guilt felt by teachers can be lessened by decreasing the constraints and demands on teachers. Bevan and Rios (2010) believe that when teacher work is intensified through change demands, teachers feel a growing sense of dissatisfaction and frustration with themselves as teachers. The heavy workload at school leads to most teachers having to take their work back home in order to plan, prepare material and mark their pupils' work. External pressures, according to Smit and Fritz (2008), lead to emotionally drained and highly stressed teachers, or teachers who do more in an attempt to remain in control within a schooling system that is perceived as unstructured and chaotic.

Local research by Morrow (2007) questions the moral implications of the prescribed job descriptions of teachers at school. He firmly believes that teachers are not being given sufficient opportunities in the school to do what they are supposed to do. He emphasizes that the work of the teacher is to teach. Morrow (2007) finds that the teacher is faced with a difficult but dynamic task in the classroom. He is confronted with tremendous change in the entire education system in terms of pupils, parents, curriculum, policy and the school itself. Swanepoel (2008) argues that for any person to cope in a world where the tempo of change is escalating at an alarming rate, it is important to be able to adjust to and manage change. Faced with the ongoing changes in the education policies, curriculum, assessment and context, many teachers are not competent enough to implement the changes in the school. It is vital, according to Nieto (2003), that in the midst of continuous change, a teacher endeavours to take what he has studied and learnt, and fit it meaningfully into many different contexts. Nieto (2003:87) maintains that "those teachers who re-invent themselves and their work everyday," are the ones to take up the challenge to face the changes and to teach seriously, even if it is a gruelling challenge. She sees teachers in this situation at school, as being agents of change.

To this point, local and international research has portrayed that teacher work has become more complex because of how the curriculum has changed. Teachers have too much to deal with, with issues like HIV/AIDS, poverty, drugs, sexual abuse, language barriers and overcrowded classrooms. Thus with the political shifts and curriculum change, teachers become overworked and pressurized. It is within this landscape that I take my position in this

study in wanting to understand teacher work and teacher identity in the context of the school. With this purpose in mind, the study had to select an appropriate theoretical framework which grounds the research in the literature referred to as above. This, according to Henning (2004) becomes necessary, especially if the literature is to be used in the production and interpretation of knowledge.

According to Preston (2003), teachers' beliefs, experiences, backgrounds and biographies have a great influence in the way teachers teach. It is these factors that make up identity. Both Lawler (2008) and Clandinin and Conelly (1999) maintain that every person has several identities. Lawler (2008) argues that identity is produced between people and within social relations. Thus he maintains that identity is socially produced, socially embedded and worked out in peoples' everyday lives. Similarly Britzman (1992) describes identity as being a part of how social interaction and everyday negotiations produce and reproduce the individual, all of which lie within certain contexts that already have an abundance of meanings of others. Britzman (1992) believes that teacher identity can only be discussed if it is done by exploring teacher experience and looking back at the meanings given to these experiences by teachers. Both teachers in this study continuously negotiated their professional and personal identities within a social context, being the school. Therefore I found it most appropriate to adopt the social identity theory while trying to understand the teacher participants in this study.

2.4. SECTION C: THE FORCE FIELD MODEL

Samuel's (2008) Force Field Model has offered me an appropriate framework to understand how teachers negotiate the different forces that operate within the context of schooling and the work that teachers take up in their position as teachers. The Force Field Model (1998), revolves around the question: What's a teacher anyway? My study looked at how South African practising teachers construct their professional selves in the context of a primary school and how these constructions of professional self shape teachers' work in the context of change.

Samuel (2008:9) found that teacher identity research has emerged as a tradition which looks at the possibility that there is always an explanation for "why teachers act in the way that they do and understand their experiences of doing what they do." Samuel's (2008) presentation of the Force Field Model was most appropriate to my study as it explained that teacher identity is constructed at the intersection between many forces that influence identity

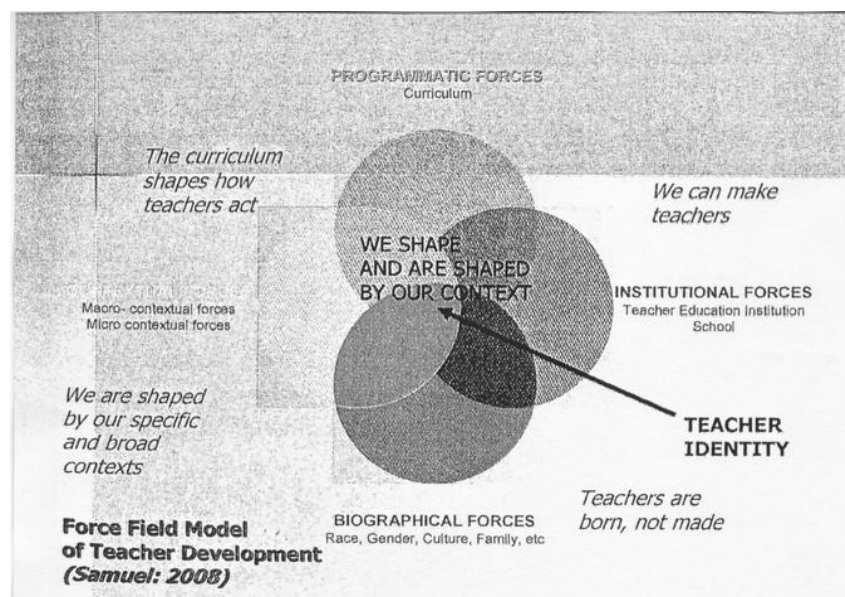
formation. His model illustrates that biographical, contextual, institutional and programmatic forces impact on the identity and role of the teacher. The Force Field Model provides one with the scope of interpreting the schooling content and professional development as a space where many different forces impinge. My study, on having explored and understood what it means to be a teacher, drew from the literature and theory as espoused by Samuel (2008).

The starting point here, according to Vithal (2007), is to understand rather than judge the teacher. According to Samuel (2008), the researcher works with the teachers to uncover their often un-articulated worldview of teaching. Both the researcher and the teacher attempt to understand why teachers act the way they do. Samuel (*ibid*) maintains that teachers can choose to mediate the power of the forces which are directed at them. While it is an accepted fact that some forces are more powerful than others, teachers have the freedom to choose how these forces come into the world. Teachers themselves are strong in and of themselves. Thus Samuel's (*ibid*) theory provides me with the lens to understand the teacher. By placing myself within the paradigm of interpretivism, I analyse the meanings of what the teachers say to me and thus try to understand them.

Samuel (*ibid*) states that teacher professional growth can flourish when it is able to understand the biographical, contextual, institutional and programmatic forces that influence teacher identity. He maintains that these forces are continuously pushing and pulling teachers' roles and identities in various directions and they are not stable. We are all products of our own history. Samuel (2008:8) stresses the contextual forces in the "macro-social, political and cultural environment" that the teacher finds himself/herself. The context plays a major role in the status of the teaching profession, how teachers interpret their role and identity, and how they think about what they should and could be doing in the classroom. Blignaut (2008) believes that the teachers' classroom practices are shaped by, amongst others, the school contexts in which they work. Every school operates in a different context, and this will impact differently on the teachers working in those diverse contexts.

The programmatic forces, according to Samuel (2008) are related to curriculum interventions. This includes the sequence, content and direction that the teaching/learning practice will follow. It occurs, as Samuel (*ibid*) claims, in everyday practices to re-enforce the quality of teaching and learning. The programmatic forces can have both negative and positive influences on the teacher. Samuel (*ibid*) refers to the forces of biography on teacher identity,

where the personal, lived experiences and history of the teacher, especially his own educational experiences, shape his identity. Biographical experiences, according to Samuel (2008:12), emanate from “personal family settings, social settings and school settings” in which teaching and learning take place. Teachers’ identities are constructed by their social, cultural, racial and religious experiences. Teachers bring in experiences via their biographical history. Samuel (2008:13) maintains that institutional forces come from the “lived biography of certain institutional settings.” It is well known that the ethos of different institutions in different historical phases influences the quality of teaching and learning in that setting. This ethos is influenced by various factors. Teachers involved within these institutional settings become infused with the particular institution’s history and its ethos and, consequently, this influences their own self identity.



However, I found that there were many instances when the decision to ascribe a particular ‘force’ to a set of experiences was complicated by the possibility that another force/s could just as easily be applied. Although Samuel (*ibid*) offers the Force Field Model as a way to better understand what ‘comes’ at teachers and hence how their identities are constantly under construction/ reconstruction/ negotiation, the four ‘forces’ he identifies are certainly useful in terms of ‘quadrants of influences’. While there are the four dimensions, at no time is it one dimension only. There are many possibilities of variation/ combination and degree of impact that are covered here, that it could be impossible to distinguish a single force at all, and yet still say one is operating within the model. If one takes each force individually, it is not difficult to see how easily one or more could merge into another such that establishing

‘boundaries’ is almost impossible. It is very difficult to sustain the ‘Four Force’ model as substantively useful as he proposes. Samuel (*ibid*) has found that the forces in the Force Field Model are not stable and they may embed a series of complementary and contradictory elements. The forces may also influence the teachers’ personal sense of identity and it is possible that s/he will discover varied sources of influence of each force with different interpretations of their impact.

My study, which was located within an interpretive paradigm, helped me to understand how teachers negotiate the different forces within the setting of the school. Thus, the four dimensions in Samuel’s (2008) work called for a certain type of methodology that would be able to give me the multidimensional understanding of the teacher. Therefore, by using the participatory methodology, it allowed me to listen to the teachers and to understand them through their lived experiences. Using the participatory approach, I was able to draw from their career life history interviews and photo-voice. This type of methodology gave me a nuanced understanding of each teacher, as it allowed for the teachers voices to be heard, and ensured adequate dialogue between myself and the teachers to help collaboratively construct the meaning of teacher.

The literature reviewed in this chapter showed the need to understand rather than condemn teachers who are placed in the centre of the force field. It drew our attention to the fact that the teachers’ epistemologies, the context of the school, together with the policies, actually constitute what it means to be a teacher. In having tried to understand how teachers make sense of educational change manifesting in South African primary schools, I drew on a participatory research approach within which I aimed to understand how teachers make sense of their professional lives and to understand the social construction of the teacher.

With the literature review as a background, my study hoped to develop a deeper understanding of the teacher in the school in a transforming South African context, an understanding that can be shared with others, whilst new demands are consistently being made on schools and on teachers in particular.

The next chapter provides a discussion of the research methodology incorporated in this study.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter has provided a description of the chosen methodology for this study. It has also provided an explanation on the suitability of the design and the research methods used to answer the title of the study: **What's a teacher anyway?** The research sought to explore and understand what it means to be a teacher in a typical South African primary school. This includes what meanings of teacher are adopted in South African public schools, how teachers make sense and meaning of themselves and their professional work, how these meanings shape teachers' work and their enacted practices, what choices teachers make in the school and why they make the choices they do? It is only by having understood the teachers' individual experiences in a particular schooling system, that I have understood how teachers describe and define themselves at work.

In my study, the theoretical framework framed the way I thought, looked at what I wanted to do and formed the core of my study. As already established, Samuel's (2008) Force Field Model formed the framework to my study and provided me with the lens to understand the teacher. In order to have that done, I chose to listen to the participants' career life histories by means of career life history interviews and photo-voice. Samuel's (2008) Force Field Model examined the biographical forces, programmatic forces, institutional forces and contextual forces that continuously push and pull the teachers' roles and identities. His framework helped me to understand how teachers make meaning of themselves and what makes them work the way they do.

The focus of my study therefore was to understand the meanings that teachers confer on themselves and their work in the classroom. My aim was to produce and make sense of the information that I received from my participants and thereafter act responsibly with that information. I then proceeded to explore the ways in which I engaged in the analysis of the data. McMillan and Schumacher (2001) maintain that methodology describes the design of the study, which includes choosing and deciding the site, the number of participants and how they are selected, the data collection and the analysis strategies. The participatory methodology used in this study enabled me to understand the teacher in a typical South

African primary school. It enabled me to find depth, meaning and insights in the life of the teacher. This provided new perspectives on teacher work and teacher identity amidst the changes and challenges in education. I proceeded in response to the following key research questions as identified in chapter one:

1.1 What constructions of the professional self do teachers adopt in a South African Primary School?

1.2 How are these constructions of the professional self shaping teachers' work in a South African primary school?

These questions shaped the responses in my study. This chapter focuses on the responses obtained from career life history interviews and photo-voice from teachers.

3.2. RESEARCH DESIGN

In order to explore and understand what it means to be a teacher in a South African primary school, my research study employed a qualitative research approach and was conducted within the interpretive paradigm. According to De Vos (1998), a research design refers to a detailed plan on how a research study is to be conducted. There must be a smooth link between the critical research questions, the methodology and the analytical framework. According to Merriam (1998), the researcher, developing an interpretive study, produces lots of information about the problem with the intention of analysing, interpreting or theorizing about the phenomena. The interpretive paradigm was based on the understandings that were most appropriate to this study, which was understanding the teacher in the context of the typical South African primary school. The research was cast as a qualitative study as it allowed for the exploration and understanding of the teacher within the school. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) believe that every element of a research study should be planned and deliberate. If the research study is to be worthwhile and effective, then rigor, thoughtful and thorough planning is necessary.

3.2.1. Interpretive Paradigm

My study which aimed at understanding the teacher in a South African primary school, lent itself to the interpretive paradigm. I looked into how the teachers make meaning in their lives as teachers. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) point out that the interpretive paradigm is

characterized by a concern for the individual. The area of concern in my research study was the teacher. The interpretive paradigm led to a view of theory which is the theory of understanding. In my study I needed to understand the complex world of lived experiences from the point of view of the teachers who live it. Trauth (2001) believes that interpretive research tries to understand actualities through the meanings that people ascribe to them. Within the interpretive paradigm, I tried to understand the meanings, explanations, rationale and intentions which the teachers use in their everyday lives in school and thereby understand how that directs their behaviour. I tried to understand how the teachers think and feel and from that, understand their actions as teachers.

The data from the career life history interviews and photo-voice helped me to better understand the details of their interaction within the context of the school. The interpretivist frame of reference assumed a participatory stance. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007:21) claim that the researcher is perceived as the “human instrument” and an individual’s world can only be understood by the researcher “sharing their frame of reference.” Henning (2004:20) maintains that in the interpretive paradigm, “knowledge and understanding is constructed by the description of peoples’ intentions, beliefs, values and reasons, meaning-making and self-understanding.” Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007:22) emphasize that it is important that the interpretive researcher goes deeply to uncover unique facts and thereafter add them on to the existing knowledge, if one wants to represent a part of reality that is found in direct experience of everyday life.

3.3. QUALITATIVE RESEARCH PARADIGM

My study comprised qualitative studies in exploring and understanding what it means to be a teacher. Henning (2004) states that in qualitative research we want to understand and explain an argument, by using evidence from the data, to throw light on the phenomena we are studying. I used the qualitative approach, to obtain more detailed, specific information by means of career life history interviews and photo-voice. This helped me to grasp the socially-constructed meanings of the teacher and teacher work. One of the main distinguishing characteristics of qualitative research is the fact that the researcher tries to understand people in terms of how they look at the world. This characteristic of qualitative research was relevant to my study because it provided the opportunity to explore and understand the teacher. The qualitative approach allowed me to capture what really goes on in the teachers’ everyday

lives within the context of the school. Babbie and Mouton (1998) claim that the main purpose of studies using this approach is defined as becoming familiar and understanding human behaviour rather than explaining human behaviour. My study depended primarily on listening to the views of my participants.

3.4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.4.1. Participatory Methodology

I chose to undertake the participatory methodology as it was most appropriate to helping me gather the data for my particular study. The participatory methodology allowed for deeper understanding in a particular context, in this case being the teacher in a primary school. This methodology ensured adequate dialogue between the researcher and the participant, to help in collaboratively constructing the meaning of teacher. My intention was to allow the participants to talk openly about their experiences.

Heron and Reason (1997) claim that by means of collaboration, the participants' views are taken as a contribution to understanding the situation. It provides an in-depth understanding of the experiences of the participants. The participatory methodology ensures that the participants' voices are heard. It emphasizes the respect for the participants' own knowledge and experience and it demands a relationship between the researcher and the participant. This respect forms a powerful foundation for the study. With this type of methodology, it is important to build on what the participants know rather than focusing on what they do not know. The participatory methodology is deeply implicated in emotions, feelings and understanding and it gives a rich description of events relevant to the study. Guba and Lincoln (1994) point out that the researcher and the participant become aware of everyday living which emphasizes their being and their knowing. The researcher can only understand the teachers' world as a whole by becoming a part of it. Hamilton, Smith and Worthington (2008) claim that the participants' world is interpreted and made personally meaningful by the researcher. Reason and Bradbury (2008) maintain that participation opens up and enriches the research. In my study, the methods, referred to as techniques and procedures, helped me gather the relevant data from the participants by means of the career life history interviews and photo-voice. By reflecting on their careers and their experiences, I was able to understand my participants in a better way.

However, it must be noted that how one uses the participatory methodology is distinguished by one's intentions. Thus, there are forms of participatory approaches that have as an explicit aim, the challenge to existing social/ economic and power relations with a view to changing the way in which participants 'live' their reality, and those (as in this study) which simply refer to engaging in-depth, and up close and personally, with participants in a study. While both construct participants as 'equal partners' in the research endeavour, the outcomes can be quite different.

3.4.2. Methods of data collection

Henning (2004:36) refers to methodology as a "coherent group of methods that complement each other and that have the goodness of fit to deliver data and findings that will reflect the research question and suit the research purpose." With the career life history interviews and photo-voice methods, I tried to gather as much information as I could from the participants. Henning (2004:15) is of the view that methodology refers to "specific ways and methods" that we can use in attempting to understand our world better.

3.4.2.1. Career life history interviews

Career life history interviews as a technique was preferred by me. It was participatory in that it allowed the participants to express their opinions and views freely and discuss their interpretations of the world in which they live. In an interview, data is collected through face to face interaction between the researcher and the participant. The researcher tries to capture inside knowledge. Henning (2004:79) views interviews as "communicative events aimed at finding what the participants think, know and feel". Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007:349) regard an interview as "a powerful and flexible tool" for collecting data. They maintain that interviews enable the participants to express how they regard situations from their own point of view.

The career life history interview was most appropriate to the study of teachers' lives and work as it enabled the researcher and the participants to discuss and interpret what it meant to be a teacher. It linked to the history about one's career. The carefully planned one-to-one interviews, lasted approximately 30 – 45 minutes, and took place after school hours, during the participants' non-teaching time. The participants were informed prior to the interviews that the interviews would be audio-taped. Setting up the audio-tapes was easily done. I

ensured that a back-up tape recorder was available, in the event that something went wrong with one of the tape recorders. I transcribed the first recording before the next interview took place. In this way, I was able to go back to certain issues that I was not too clear about regarding the career life history of the teacher. I was also able to follow up from where I stopped with the previous interview. Hamilton, Smith and Worthington (2008) point out that reflection plays a vital role in the research process. By reflecting on their own career life history, the participants were able to develop their own framework for understanding what it meant to be a teacher. Photo-voice, which is explained later, ran parallel to the career life history interviews. Cole and Knowles (1995) claim that understanding past experiences can provide valuable insights into current practice and future directions of teacher education. They believe that who we are and come to be as teachers, is a reflection of a complex, ongoing process of interaction and interpretation of factors, conditions, opportunities, events and relationships. Kvale (1996) notes that in interviews, both the researcher and the participants co-create knowledge and meaning about the world around them. Considering this, I was aware of the fact that my own identity and world view would influence the responses of my participants and my interpretations of the data.

According to Lather (1991), career life history interviews encourage self reflection and seek mutual respect, understanding and lifelong learning. With the career life history interviews, the participants had the freedom to expand on what they wanted to say, and allowed the participants to expound upon thoughts and events. The researcher prompted and probed for depth and understanding, while at the same time, made the participant feel important and special. In response to my prompts during the career life history interviews, the participants were able to speak for themselves, and do so freely and openly. They will be able to create meaning as they conversed with me. While I worked co-operatively with the participants, I observed the participants' feelings and encouraged them to speak honestly, sincerely and freely. At the same time, it was important that I avoided questions that encouraged the participants to say what they thought the interviewer wanted them to say. Collecting valuable data was of utmost importance to the study. As a researcher, I needed to develop my listening skills and I needed to identify any important issues that would be touched on by the participants, even when it was done in a casual manner.

Babbie and Mouton (2001) emphasize that you, as a researcher, have to be more interested than interesting during an interview. In my role as a researcher during the course of the career

life history interviews, I continuously looked out for: What is driving the teachers? What is pulling or pushing who they are right now? How do they make sense of themselves? Why do they construct themselves as particular kinds of teachers? My role was to understand the meanings that teachers conferred on themselves. The participants have taught from the apartheid era, having trained in particular institutions. It was interesting to note how the participants coped with the National Framework for Teacher Education (2007), what problematic issues they are faced with, and what it means to them, being in a particular school and having trained in a particular institution. The career life history interviews helped me gain insight into how teachers are coping with the programmatic, institutional, contextual, and biographical challenges and forces at school. What made the career life history interviews different from other types of interviews, is that the participants, in looking back, were able to evoke certain memories, and then link those memories and actions to how they feel and to what they are doing right at present as teachers. The career life history interviews were audio-taped and later transcribed.

3.4.2.2. Photo-voice

According to Mitchell, Weber and Pithouse (2009), photo-voice offers a fascinating approach to research in education. The use of photo-voice as a method in the study was appropriate as it gave the teacher an opportunity to look at appropriate photographs and give meaning to his/her identity or teacher work. Thus, photo-voice also acted as a stimulus and gave meaning to the teachers' daily lives. Just viewing photographs immediately evoked words and memories and enabled the participants to tell a story, or share meanings that were symbolic of a particular experience. Teachers' voices were heard and photographs allowed the space for voice. Oliver, Wood and de Lang (2007) claim that photo-voice is a method that enables people to define themselves and others, to convey what is worth remembering. This method enabled teachers to address issues concerning the teacher, from a visual point of view, offering them new ways to see their own world. Researchers have found that photo-voice is a powerful tool to encourage active participation from teachers in identifying issues and ways of dealing with them. This was a different way into a research question where the participants were creatively involved and they functioned at a visual level. Photo-voice was appropriate to the study as it promoted dialogue and discussion on what it means to be a teacher. It fitted well within the participatory methodology as it allowed the participants to make themselves heard. Images were used as a way of understanding the teacher. It was participatory in nature

as both the researcher and the participant co-constructed and tried to understand the knowledge. Teacher identity is like a web of personal, professional and educational forces, all put together.

The photographs were a valuable source of information for the teachers. The photo-voice sessions were conducted together with the career life history interviews with the teachers. The sessions were approximately thirty to forty five minutes each and were held during the teachers' non-teaching time.

With the photo-voice, the participants were able to take photographs (omitting pupils) of their own teaching space, concentrating on issues that related to their work in the classroom. With the photographs, one was able to capture the essence and particular moments of the teacher's life. The images were used as a way of understanding the teacher. Together, the researcher and the participant co-constructed and understood their knowledge. They were able to make sense of what it means to be a teacher. The teachers were thus able to express themselves through the photographs, thinking back on experiences and on what meanings they had then and now. As an ethical measure, permission to use the photographs were attained from the people involved, in writing.

Mitchell, Weber and Pithouse (2009) emphasize that by using their own photographs, teachers are able to make visible their voices around certain issues that affect them directly. Photographs are usually rich in information and are very significant. Weber (2004) argues that we see and communicate through images and images create meaning, which is a dynamic process involving dialogue and interaction. A carefully considered prompt or question encouraged the participant to explore, by means of photographs, issues of concern, regarding the teacher. Mitchell, Weber and Pithouse (2009), believe that since photographs act as powerful memory prompts, photo-voice challenges the participants to recognize the significance of the photographs. They claim that using photo-voice as a visual approach literally helps us to see things differently. At the same time, using images connects us to the self. Of great importance was how I captured what was being said, and then elicited the data. Henning (2004) states that the researcher continuously reflects on impressions, relationships and connections, even while collecting data.

3.5. SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS

Selecting the appropriate, most suitable research participants was vital for my research study. Therefore Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007:100) believe that the quality of a piece of research depends not only on how appropriate the methodology or the instruments are, but also on the “suitability of the sampling strategy”. The source of information for my study was two teachers, a male and a female. They are senior primary teachers in the intermediate phase, with more than twenty years of experience. Both teachers are high school teachers, but are now teaching in a primary school, not out of choice, but because they were forced to by the Department of Education as there were no vacancies available in a high school at that time. By means of purposive sampling, I based my choice on teachers who are dedicated and committed to education and teachers who have made a tremendous shift in education. This is evident in chapter four. According to Creswell (1994), purposive sampling use convenience samples, where the researcher depends on individuals who are available and willing to participate. Henning (2004) stresses that in purposive sampling the researcher looks towards individuals who fill the criteria of being the most suitable participants. Following Cole and Knowles’ (2001) belief that it is better to work in detail, with more meaning and authentically with fewer participants than to end up with vague understandings that emanate from a large number of participants, I decided to work with only two teachers. This allowed the opportunity for greater focus and offered greater opportunities for discussion. I also believe that knowing who my participants were before the interviews, actually helped in my planning stage. As the Head of Department, both the participants are known to me and I therefore felt that I would understand them better.

The teachers qualified at the ‘then’ University of Durban-Westville and the Springfield College of Education respectively. The male teacher specialized in Physical Education, but he is teaching Mathematics and Social Science. The female teacher is a Music specialist, but she is teaching Mathematics and Technology. I purposely chose the teachers whose lives I want to portray, based on experienced teachers, as I wanted to explore and understand the challenges of their experiences as teachers over the years and how teacher meanings shape their work and their enacted practices. As far as sampling is concerned, Henning (2004) maintains that it is important to select the most suitable people who will wander with you on your research journey. I therefore valued everything that the participants had to say.

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2001), purposive sampling is done to increase the utility of information obtained from the sample.

3.6. THE RESEARCH SITE

The research study was carried out at a local intermediate primary school which caters for pupils from grade R to grade seven. It is in the eThekweni region of KwaZulu-Natal and is located in a suburb in Durban. I chose this particular school as it is a low income school. The teachers' construction of being a teacher in this type of school may be different from that of a teacher in a middle class or private school with twenty or thirty pupils per class. The classes are overpopulated with fifty pupils per class. The teachers' tables and cupboards have been removed from the classrooms to try to make more space available for the pupils' tables and chairs. The pupils do not sit at desks but sit around tables, in groups of six. The school is terribly under-resourced. The majority of the pupils come from the under-privileged surrounding areas. The focus of my study, considering these factors, was to understand how the teacher makes sense of himself/herself as a teacher in a low income primary school in South Africa. What are the forces, given the changes and challenges, that drive them as teachers? How does teacher work shape them as teachers? Gaining access to the participants was not a problem as they are both based in the same school.

3.7. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethical clarification is vital in any research participation. Denzin and Lincoln (2002) regard qualitative researchers as visitors in the private sections of the world. Their manners should be good and code of ethics strict. As the researcher, I was accountable for ethical quality and I had to take care. De Vos, Strydom, Fouche and Delport (2002) emphasize the importance of obtaining permission to join the section of study that has been decided on. In my study, the participants gave informed consent to participate by signing letters of consent. Permission was sought from the principal, the participants and the Department of Education. In obtaining permission to enter the field of study, the participants were fully informed about the research in which they were participating. I guaranteed anonymity and confidentiality and assured them that their privacy and sensitivity would be protected. I ensured that the signed consent forms were treated with the utmost discretion. The participants were informed in writing that they could withdraw from the study at any stage and that the research study would not harm them in any way. They were assured that no information would be printed without their

permission and that all data would be kept in strict confidence. The participants were not forced or threatened to participate in the study. As an ethical measure, permission to use the photographs was attained from the people involved, in writing, as well as the subjects being photographed. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007:58) maintain that ethics is a matter of “principled sensitivity to the rights of others”. Denzin and Lincoln (2002) emphasize that great care has to be taken to decrease any sort of risks to the participants.

3.8. DATA ANALYSIS

This section deals with how the data was processed. Qualitative analysis occurred throughout the data collection process. On completion of the data production, I transcribed the audio tapes of the individual discussions. At no time, in the form of the raw data, or the transcriptions, did I mention the names of the participants. According to Henning (2004:127), to analyse, means to “take words and sentences apart and then make sense of, interpret and theorize that data.” After having gathered the data, that was rich in description of what it means to be a teacher, I directly linked it to the theoretical framework of the study. Within this framework, my study attempted to connect the various aspects of how teachers make sense of themselves within the South African primary school. I carefully read and analysed the responses. I was constantly aware of my power and responsibility as a researcher to create a space and to be actively involved in the data analysis. Henning (2004:101) states that the true test of a competent qualitative researcher takes place in the analysis of the data which is a process that requires “analytical craftsmanship” and the ability to understand the data writing. Conveying an understanding and making sense of the study was of primary importance. The goal of data analysis was to look for patterns and keywords as the data did not speak for itself. I then interpreted the meaning of the data that I produced.

The Force Field Model according to Samuel (2008) assisted me to interpret the schooling context and professional developments as a strong active space that could be ignited by the many different forces. The four forces in the Force Field Model provided the analytical framework to my study. I looked out to see how these forces influenced the teachers and their actions in the classroom. This model, according to Samuel (2009:13), provides an explanation that teacher identity is constructed at the intersection between the many forces that influence identity formation. The Force Field Model, guided by the four forces, helped me analyse how the teachers make sense of themselves considering the different

environments that they found themselves in, which are not static but changing all the time. After transcribing the data, I had to make sense of it, interpret and theorize the data. Whilst analysing the data, I had to be very careful of the words, which carry many meanings and which are interpretations themselves. The data analysis from the career life history interviews and photo-voice were guided and shaped by Samuel's (2009) Force Field Model, where I read the data, reflected, referred to relevant literature and highlighted how the teacher negotiated the various challenges and forces in the primary school. By the participants looking at the photographs in photo-voice, they were able to evoke memories that were meaningful to them. The photographs were discussed as part of the interview where they were able to evoke information. I analysed the meanings which teachers conferred on their own actions and other's actions and I looked at the forces and challenges that led to teacher identity. In the analysis I looked for ways in which the participants made sense of themselves as teachers in a primary school. The data that I sourced and analysed from the career life history interviews and photo-voice helped in understanding their meaning of being a teacher. It is in understanding their meaning as evidenced from their experiences and their daily actions that I was able to understand and see how their identities as teachers emerged.

This stage of the study required me as the researcher to reflect on, organize and review the data to help me answer the title: "What's a teacher anyway?" Henning (2004) claims that the researcher makes meaning from the data, by seeing the bigger picture and by converting the transcriptions into qualitative research. I followed the study rigorously to read and analyse the data.

3.9. LIMITATIONS

Due to the fact that the career life history interviews could not be conducted with one interview only, it was time consuming, as various interviews had to be held. In many instances, the interviews which were scheduled to take place after school, sometimes had to be postponed, due to unplanned staff meetings that were held by the principal of the school. The school is geographically situated in the midst of extremely heavy traffic that surrounds the entire school. The sounds of the heavy traffic, police sirens and loud music from the taxis hampered the audibility of the interviews. The interviews were held after school hours and the interviewees sometimes showed signs of fatigue and at times wanted to rush through the interviews due to work overload. I also found that in my subsequent interviews with the

participants, the interviewees did not have the same enthusiasm as they did for the first interviews.

I have studied and researched only two teachers from one primary school. However every school has its own institutional culture and its own variations. A study which comprises only two participants disallows generalizations. Therefore the issues emerging from this study cannot be representative of all primary schools in South Africa, but the issues raised can be generative. The issues that I have brought about in general are in relation to what I have found from my study. My study can help other researchers to be used as a basis and thus look at further issues related to the teacher in a South African primary school.

3.10. TRUSTWORTHINESS

Trustworthiness referred to how believable the study was and to what extent could the findings be trusted. I addressed trustworthiness through honesty, depth and richness as I produced the data concerning the teacher. I took the transcripts back to the participants to check the accuracy of my interpretations and to seek verification from them. This ensured that the participants recognized the story. It was the shared understanding that constituted trustworthiness. In order to come up with my story, I made selections from the transcriptions, according to my own agenda. Whilst re-constructing the narratives, I was sure to leave out some of the things, whilst looking out for other concepts that would shape my decisions. This related to the rigor in my study. The participatory methodology was an empowering approach because the participants were active. It allowed for the voices of the participants to be heard. Hitchcock and Hughes (1989) believe that because interviews involve interaction between people, it is inevitable that the researcher will have some influence on the interviewee and the data. From the interpretation and the analysis of the data, the researcher needs to be convinced that the various methods used, helped to a great extent to measure that which the study was designed for. As a researcher, I had to ensure that my findings were credible and believable.

As the researcher, it was very important for me to approach my study carefully and rigorously. Both the career life history interviews and photo-voice were selected as it provided the respondents more time to express themselves reflecting the real situations of their surrounding environments in the school. By using more than one method in this study, my confidence was greater. I was able to analyse the data from different angles.

Henning (2004:153) reminds us that readers want to know “what a researcher did, why she did it and how she did it.” She emphasizes that it is important that the study be presented in a way that shows rigor. During the different sessions of the career life history interviews and photo-voice, I was able to go back to certain issues and ask the same question in different ways, thus ensuring and building up trustworthiness of the data. The different elements of the research study - the rigor of the process, setting up for the interview, transcribing the data, and producing are analysing the data – were all crucial. By being scrupulous at each stage, albeit with the clear engagement of myself at each step, the voice of the participant came through.

3.11. CONCLUSION

This chapter presented the research design and the data collection methodology that was used in my study. I found my role as a researcher carrying out this research study to be very challenging. I have justified the use of each data collection method and the ethical procedures that were followed in collecting the data.

According to Hamilton, Smith and Worthington (2008), methodology in the process must be clearly articulated and thoughtfully developed, as it may be your strongest approach to counter those who research your question. The qualitative data, the findings of my study that was analysed, are presented in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

4.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter explored how teachers make meaning and sense of themselves and their professional work in a South African primary school. In my study I examined the lived experiences of practising teachers in order to understand how they manage their work in terms of what is expected of them. My story is about “*the teacher I am, the work I do and the work I have to do,*” within a changing context. This chapter reflects how teachers negotiate their personal identities and their professional work within the political, professional and institutional contexts.

Data, which was generated from two experienced teachers, Sarah and Ben, was analysed and represented under the key themes of professional self and professional work. The key themes were presented in two sections. Section A covered the findings and analysis in response to the first critical question: **What construction of the professional self do teachers adopt in a South African primary school?** Under Section A, the findings and analysis of data from the two teachers were presented in two parts, which consisted of vignettes from each teacher. Below each vignette, I included key themes related to each teacher. Section B had data in response to the second critical question: **How are these constructions of professional self shaping teacher work in a South African primary school?** This section also consists of two parts representing each teacher.

4.2 SECTION A: PROFESSIONAL SELF

4.2.1. Part one : Sarah

Sarah draws on her personal self to make sense of her professional self. This is the story of Sarah’s professional self. Sarah sees herself as a caregiver amongst her pupils. hooks (1994) the well known African-American feminist educationist in the United States explains how caring relationships in her own educative field helped her to thrive. Those caring relationships became an inspiration and helped support learning. Ritchie (2000) describes how caring relationships that take place in the classroom actually encourage pupils to become more involved in issues that were meaningful to them. Thus hooks (1994:13) argues that

“relationships of love and care” should not be left out of the classrooms as they are important to learning. A caregiver is one who voluntarily attends to the needs of another, thus providing support, guidance and assistance. Care giving is meeting a human need and making one feel safe. Sarah explains why she sees herself as a caregiver and what it means to her.

Sarah draws on various identity categories that give meaning to her as a caregiver. Sarah is an Indian married woman. She takes on the roles of wife, mother, and daughter, besides being a teacher and a caregiver at school. According to Knowles and Nieuwenhuis (2009:338), “mother teachers” view themselves as primary caregivers of children, both at home and at school. Sarah’s memories play a role in shaping how she gives meaning to herself. Her identity formation takes place within her experiences and interaction with others. However, Gee (2000) maintains that even though identities change, each one of us has a basic identity that reflects our basic character. Sarah’s stories reflect her core identity as one of being a caregiver within the school, her family and the community.

SARAH THE CAREGIVER

My values of caring actually stem from my experience of caring relationships that occurred during my early years as a child and throughout my schooling career as a pupil.

My Music Teacher

As a learner I adored my teachers during my childhood. I have been shaped by my teachers to become the person that I am now. My mentor was my Music teacher, Mr Jay, and I wanted to be just like him. I studied Music and Music became my life, the centre of my being. I wanted to teach Music as teaching has always been close to my heart. When I teach, it comes from deep within, from my mind and from my heart. Mr Jay stands out in my memory because of the outstanding, caring qualities that he had. He certainly had an influence on who I am now. Mr Jay would stand at the classroom door every morning and welcome us into the classroom with a smile. Monday mornings were extra special as it would be the start of a new week. Those school days were happy days.

When I am faced with challenges, I think of Mr Jay and I try to rise to my challenges and do my utmost for the pupils. To me, being a teacher is a calling and I will therefore always have the pupils' best interest at heart, just like the way Mr Jay was to me. By recalling him I am able to derive teacher meanings. I was inspired by his dedication and commitment. He had made teaching dynamic, engaging and challenging. I strive to do the same for my pupils. That is how I make meaning of myself as a teacher. I care for the pupils to help them pave their way to future success. Through Mr Jay's influence, I have become a person who generally cares about humanity. I display great concern for others, about their lives and welfare. I believe that by showering my pupils with affection, they will in turn understand what emotion is. By caring for them, I show them my honest, humble and modest qualities. I hope that my pupils will want to learn to be like me in many ways as possible, as they venture through the journey of life. I care for my pupils by firstly getting to know who they are, what their needs, hopes, worries, fears and interests are. I feel and care for these pupils. I love the interaction with them. I would love to see them make something of their lives, so I strive to give of my best and help them wherever I can in whatever aspect.

Sarah's identity category of teacher as care-giver comes from her mentor, her music teacher. She reveals that her music teacher was a strong, primary influence in her identity as a teacher. She constantly draws on meanings from her music teacher and finds that she wants to pass it on to her girl learners (She is in a girls-only school). The force of her school experience is considerable on her professional self. Goodsen and Hargreaves (2003) point out that it is common amongst teachers to have had a special teacher who influenced them, one who became their mentor. They say that what we experience in life and our background, are instrumental in making us who we are, our sense of self and this in turn shapes our teaching. For Sarah, Samuel's (2008) institutional forces have made an impact on her personal and professional self when she was a pupil at school. Upon reflection, she discovers that she is this kind, caring person because of the manner in which she was influenced by her teacher as a pupil.

How I come to see myself

I have come to see myself in a particular way because this is the person, the music teacher, who really gave me confidence. He showed me so much care and concern that now, as a teacher, I see myself as a caregiver. The previous schools where I taught were in an affluent area and parents played a vibrant role in the school and in the education of their children. Sadly, now, in this school, most of the pupils are orphans and come from child-headed homes, or are suffering from HIV/AIDS, extreme hunger, severe poverty or have parents who are not interested in the education of their children. Some of them suffer sexual and child abuse. Over the years I have built a certain level of trust amongst the girls and that is why they repeatedly come to me for help. The message passes on to the other girls, even those that I do not teach. I listen attentively to what they have to say so that I can work out which is the best possible way to help them. They confide in me, so I like to motivate and morally guide them. In my role as a caregiver, I find myself taking the roles of a nurse, a psychologist and even a policewoman. I do the best that I can to help them, knowing the background that they come from.

As a teacher in this school, I find that I have to adapt myself to the situation. I try to make a difference to their lives, for the better. Although I take on these various roles dealing with pupils with socio-economic problems, I sometimes feel that I am not prepared enough to handle them. I am not trained to take on these roles, but I give it my best. Irrespective of where they come from, I am interested in teaching them, caring for them, helping them with their problems and making them realize the importance of education. Most of our pupils live in the shacks in this area. They cannot do their homework as they do not have electricity or furniture. Some do not have adults in their homes to monitor their work. Unfortunately, these are some of the problems I am faced with as a teacher. This is what drives me to want to be their caregiver, to help, guide and support them. Therefore I encourage my pupils to become winners, to persevere, to rise up from their misfortunes and be counted.

Being a teacher is integral to my identity, to who I am. I love the interaction with my pupils and it gives me a great sense of satisfaction, taking on the role as a

caregiver. Although it is not easy teaching in a disadvantaged school, my dedication and passion to teach drives me as a teacher. I am faced with the challenges of vastly improving the abilities of pupils who come from the poorer sectors of society. In spite of this, I let my enthusiasm for teaching show out in how I teach. I continuously encourage my pupils to pursue their dreams, no matter what the circumstances. As a teacher, I am sympathetic and empathetic to my pupils. It is important because a pupil with emotional difficulties cannot learn well. Although I love my job as a teacher, I find that it is not an easy one.

Sarah identifies herself as a teacher showing care and concern for others. She acknowledges that taking on various roles, difficult as it may seem, form an important component of her teaching experience. Therefore, caring, nurturing and ensuring a positive relationship with her pupils, helps her in meaning making of herself. She has become this confident teacher by drawing meaning from her childhood days and also from the institutional forces that surround her in her school. Hargreaves (1994:132) states that “the ethics of care is a powerful source of motivation and direction for teachers.” Samuel’s (2009:13) principle that biographical forces are important in the shaping of a teacher is clearly evident here. Sarah draws from her own “personal lived experience”, or her past school experience, as she constructs her identity as a teacher.

Sarah the churchgoer

Sarah firmly believes that the attitudes, values and beliefs that the church instilled in her, strongly influences the kind of caring teacher that she is today. Growing up with a strong Christian background has helped Sarah to cope with the diverse pupils and teachers. She draws meaning from her community.

My values and beliefs definitely influence my teaching in the classroom. As a Christian, I was brought up with a strong set of moral values and so care and discipline is very important to me. I want to impart those moral values to my pupils as it affects them as individuals and future citizens of this country. It was the threads of the church that helped take me to a life of respectability and achievement. My church provided me with very positive moral and social support, and it helped tremendously in the construction of my professional self as a teacher. I try to instil core values of care, compassion, honesty, respect, kindness

and peace amongst my pupils. I try to highlight values that unite people. Being in charge of first aid in school extends to my role as a caregiver. I see myself naturally wanting to play the 'mother role', always rushing to attend to the pupils. My role as a caregiver also stems from the way I was raised as a child. I bring out the values and attitudes that I was brought up with at home and also with what I was taught growing up, at the Sunday school.

Sarah draws on meanings from her church as she constructs her role as a teacher. Thus the community is an important influence in shaping Sarah's personal life and this, in turn, influences her professional self. In her story, Sarah shows how her own cultural values and beliefs shape her role as a teacher. Again, a strong biographical influence is evident in Sarah's construction of her professional self.

The family person

Being an Indian female teacher, Sarah also identifies herself as a mother, daughter and wife. Her values of being a caring person extends to her family. The biographical forces typical in a woman's life are clearly seen in Sarah's story. Her identity as "mother" shapes how she sees herself and how this shapes her work. Her identity of being "Indian" reflects her traditional morals and beliefs in the way she nurtures her pupils.

Although I am a teacher, I go all out to fulfil my roles as a daughter, mother and wife. I came from a large extended family and grew up in an environment of caring and sharing. As a daughter, I still take care of my ailing mother. As a woman, I have my obligations to my children as their mother, and to my husband as his wife. My caring for them comes naturally. I feel responsible, to an extent, to provide for my family and to ensure they are well cared for. However, when I have to take my school work home, I am not happy as it takes away my time from my family and this affects my family life.

Thus, Sarah as a family person, and as an Indian woman, sees her role as a teacher in a particular way. As an Indian girl, growing up in an extended family, the values of caring and sharing were instilled in her. These identity categories construct Sarah to be the person that she is. As a family person, she sees her main task as being one where the needs of her family are met. She continuously cares for her family and she knows that her love and compassion

are important to them. Thus motherhood, being Indian and being a teacher, are all critical to her. These identities shape how she sees herself and this shapes her work where she feels totally responsible for the care of her pupils. There is a seamless connection between her personal and professional selves. As a result, she sets high standards and expectations for herself and she continuously strives to be a successful mother, teacher and housewife. Spain and Bianchi (1996) found that women who are educated and talented and who were faced with family responsibilities, are often confronted with challenging their self esteem and their identities when trying to perform outstandingly in their professional work. Sarah finds that she places her pupils' needs before hers. She attaches great significance to her roles as 'mother' and "teacher". She associates her roles with nurturing, caring, guiding and parenting. As a mother and a teacher, Sarah tries to excel in both roles. Ironically, she is overcome with feelings of guilt when she has to take her work home. Berne (1964:2) points out that mother teachers feel "overpowered with guilt when they do not meet up with their expectations." Sarah is caught in the web of the biographical, contextual and institutional forces, and tries to make meaning of herself and her work by trying to excel in both roles. She sees herself in different ways, as a teacher, a mother and a housewife. Her professional work is shaped by the meanings that she makes from her various identities.

Conclusion

Taking into consideration Samuel's (2008) exposition on biographical forces, Sarah identifies herself as a care giver to her pupils. She draws on meanings from her music teacher as a learner and from the church as she was growing up. The two aspects influencing the personal here are the school and the community. As the care-giver to her pupils, she knows that it means a great deal to them. Besides being a teacher, Sarah is committed to her roles as a mother and a wife. Sarah's story of being a mother and a teacher helps her to make sense of herself. She sees the need to care, nurture and protect all children around her. Samuel (2008) emphasizes that the various forces influence each teacher's own sense of identity. Sarah negotiates the biographical forces which emphasize motherhood and teaching as priority in her life. Her conventional feminine role, which she assumes as a woman, pervades both the personal and professional dimensions of her life, and are closely intertwined.

4.2.2. PART TWO BEN

Ben is an Indian male teacher. This is the story of Ben's professional self. Ben has a great deal of concern for his pupils. He draws on particular meanings from his background and finds himself always offering guidance and advice to his troubled pupils. This contributes to his construction of his professional self. His identity comes from within the family, from the community and the school. Data has also been elicited through many photographs produced by Ben, relating to his family and career life history.

South Africa, given its history of apartheid, was conditioned by race. Ben, however, represents a unique example of how, within the context of our past racial injustices, one may create new meaning and a sense of identity. The political shifts which were based on the new constitution, impacted heavily on the schools in general and on teachers like Ben. For Ben, being Indian and growing up with the injustices of the past, gave him a different outlook on life. Being an Indian, living in a disadvantaged society, influenced Ben in his activism later in his life. Ben desperately tries to make sense of himself due to the shifts from apartheid, with policy changes and work changes. Ben draws meanings from his past as he identifies himself as a particular kind of teacher.

Ben the activist

Ben repeatedly refers to his upbringing, which took place in a context of severe poverty, and reflects on how that impacted on his identity as a teacher.

The sudden death of my father left my large family destitute. I give all praise to my mum (in a photograph), who, clouded in an environment of hardship and poverty, used her grant allowance to educate me and my siblings with such great humility. My humble beginnings have made me truly appreciate life and have brought me to where I am now. At an early age, my father had made me believe in my dreams and commit myself to take the steps to a better life through education and to improve the quality of life. It is with this kind of background that I am able to make meaning of myself and construct my professional work in the classroom. I continually remind the pupils that education is the key to a happier, more fulfilled life. I am passionate about nurturing their talent and I want them to realize their

potential. My work demands many additional hours and days, including holidays that I sacrifice to ensure that quality teaching takes place. Thus, I enjoy the honour of when my pupils excel in their future career so that they can contribute something back to society. Recalling how I was brought up as a child, I now strive to stick to values such as honesty, kindness and respect amongst my pupils. I thus make a conscious effort to promote fairness amongst my pupils. I set boundaries and enforce them consistently with my pupils. My growing up in a life of poverty has inspired me to strive for the best, no matter how bleak life may be sometimes. When I am confronted by pupils from poverty-stricken homes, I empathize with them as I recall my roots. My own life struggle, growing up in a severely poverty stricken family, with no father, no money, no breadwinner and seven school-going siblings, inspired me to improve my life and to make a man of myself someday. I therefore strive to improve the lives of all children. I believe that poverty is no excuse for underachieving. I am proof to that and I eventually succeeded in becoming the head prefect in my matric year. My poor upbringing changed me as a person as I was growing up. This class issue made me more determined to stand up for my rights, as a student, as a teacher and as a person in society. I became the pupil representative in high school, chairperson of the Student Representative Council at college, and I have been the site steward for South African Democratic Teachers Union for the past few years. I am the chairperson of the School Governing Body at my daughter's school. My experiences have made me a forthright activist.

Being a very strong and ardent member and supporter of the South African Democratic Teachers' Union, Ben believes that teachers need to be given the recognition that they so richly deserve. Ben identifies himself as a Black teacher who was deprived of privileges during the apartheid era. Samuel (2008) emphasizes that being involved with political resistance was actually second in nature to most Black teachers who were affected by the apartheid inequalities. Ben draws meanings from these racial inequalities in his life which shape his teacher work. He therefore does not want to see history being repeated with his pupils and fellow colleagues in the context of the school. He agrees that the recent teachers' strike action has played a huge role in the whole scenario of education. It was a tense time for everyone as there were teachers with opposing views. This was not easy.

It was unfortunate but necessary, as the withdrawal of our labour was the only bargaining tool with the Government. As a concerned teacher, I felt let down by the Government as I have compromised a lot. However, I do not agree with the unprofessional behaviour of some of the teachers during the strike which left many disappointed, dismayed and shocked. I actually had to reconcile with myself to understand the situation. It was not easy for me when I found that I was on opposing sides with my colleagues. I accepted that different people see the world differently from myself. Just as I respect the views of others, I teach my pupils to do the same.

As a strong SADTU supporter, I am of the opinion that my reasons to strike are reasonable and justifiable and that it is only as a collective that teachers can change the minds of the powers in the Education Department. I disagree with the teachers' lack of professionalism during the strike. I accept the fact that other teachers see the world differently from me. My late dad taught me to stand firm in what I believe. My experiences have taught me not to be afraid to admit to my mistakes, but rather to learn from them. In the classroom, I reflect on my strong upbringing and I positively draw meaning from that to construct my professional work in the classroom. I teach my pupils the important values of life. I feel proud at the end of each year in grade seven, watching my pupils get ready to embark for high school, having seen them grow, because I know that I was a part of that growth.

Ben's meaning making comes from his poor upbringing. Upon reflection, Ben demonstrates signs of facing the racial meanings that appear constantly in his daily life and professional work. Historically, the principle of race had shaped his life as a child as he believes that Whites were a superior race. Later, as he realised the injustices around him, he became determined to grow out of such an unjust society. His poverty shapes his experiences in life and he has developed into a determined strong activist, and this gives him great satisfaction. The issue of poverty touches Ben deep down in his heart as he draws meaning from his poverty-stricken days. While being an activist, Ben also adopts multi-dimensional roles as a teacher. He sees himself as a counsellor, community worker, networker and male nurse. Preston (2006) believes that becoming a teacher involves accepting many roles in the profession. Ben thus attaches great significance to his experiences during the apartheid days

and negotiates his own biographical forces, which all contribute to meaning making of himself and his work. He remains a strong member of the ANC and encourages his pupils to always stand up for their rights, through his teaching and his example.

The net-worker

Ben has found that his teaching in the last twenty years has changed his identity as a teacher and his construction of his professional self. His past experiences have influenced him to work astutely and face his new challenges. He finds great success in networking with others.

Due to my poor upbringing, I have a strong desire to succeed as a teacher and not ever give up in life. I believe that as a teacher, I need to keep up to date with all matters. I network with teachers from other schools. I find that this helps me tremendously in learning about things that I may not have thought about and that goes beyond the curriculum. I have picked up ideas that have worked wonderfully well at my school. Once again this makes me realize that I am not someone who knows everything. Networking helps me to construct my professional self; it grounds me as a teacher. Reflecting on my childhood, I strive to be humble about things. It does not matter what I achieve or how successful I am, I need to be humble. I instil this in my pupils as well. It makes me realize that there are people out there who make me what I am. I want to continue improving and learning as a teacher.

I want to be the best that I can in whatever I do. Not necessarily to impress, but to be successful. If I am not successful as a teacher, the feedback will come from others. I will take that as a lesson because they are being sincere. When I am told that I have done a good job with something, it means a great deal to me. This gives me a sense of accomplishment. In the same way, I like to praise my pupils' efforts and achievements in class. Coming from experience, I know what this means to an individual. Therefore, by being conscious of my values, what is important to me and what drives me as a teacher, I always feel safe to want to push myself towards success. I remind my pupils that if they truly put everything into their work, they will be recognized for their efforts and they too will be successful. By striving for excellence, success will follow.

I consult with various people as I do not feel that I know everything. I find that this helps me tremendously. I formed “buddy teaching” with two of my colleagues. When I discover that there is a section where I cannot get through to my pupils, I ask them to assist me and we swop classes. I do not regard this as a failure on my part, but rather see it as a stepping stone to success.

I have actually found this working for me and my pupils. Therefore, I try to be practical and do things that are workable for me as a teacher. I try my best to keep abreast of the new trends in order to develop academic excellence. By ensuring that my pupils understand what they are doing, helps me to construct my professional self.

As Ben networks with other schools and other teachers, he imparts knowledge to his pupils, instils discipline and inspires them. It gives deeper meaning to his identity, to who he is as a teacher and to the construction of his professional self in the classroom. Given the various programmatic forces that impinge on teaching, he makes meaning for himself. The constant changes in the curriculum push him to network with other teachers. In this way he endeavours to fulfil his ambition of being a successful teacher. He draws meaning from the workshops that he attends and from subject meetings, thus negotiating with the programmatic forces, in order to make sense of himself as a teacher.

The counsellor

Ben’s background has developed him into becoming a great listener, and is especially sensitive to the emotions of his pupils. He tries to understand their feelings. He has learnt to listen to what the pupils speak about, but is also attentive to what they do not speak about.

As a teacher in class, I always see myself as a counsellor. I suppose coming from my type of background, I have it in me now to want to guide and help my pupils. Many of them come from disadvantaged, impoverished backgrounds. There are pupils who actually tell me that they see me as a fatherly figure. I am happy with that. I think it is because I endear myself to my pupils because of my immense humility and fatherly attitude. It is my passion to change the lives of my pupils for them to become the best that they can be. I remind them constantly not to accept

where they are as their final destination. When my pupils have personal or school problems, they immediately look for me for help or advice. I end up spending a great deal of time during the breaks counselling them.

I am an active member of the HIV/AIDS movement in the Bluff area. As a result I have formed an HIV/AIDS club in school. Pupils who belong to this club increase their awareness of this disease and develop a sense of appreciation to be content with what they have. As a teacher, this gives me great satisfaction. Coming from my own pathetic background, I want to constantly guide my pupils to always do what is right. Therefore, I believe strongly in discipline, as learning can only take place in a disciplined atmosphere. I repeatedly remind myself that I have this enormous responsibility of guiding, teaching, cultivating and counselling these young minds into decent mature citizens.

Teaching is not easy. Besides having the task of imparting knowledge, I am playing many roles such as counsellor, builder, disciplinarian, resource person and male nurse. In guiding my pupils, I make them feel that they can trust me. I try to make them feel safe. It's my compassionate and caring nature that makes them confide in me. Every time I guide and counsel my pupils, I get a sense of satisfaction, feeling happy that I am helping someone, unlike how lost I was when I lost my role model, my dad.

Ben always has the pupils' interests at heart and thus sees himself as a counsellor to them. He uses his professional training to make the pupils useful members of society and help them achieve their childhood dreams of furthering their studies. By forming an HIV/AIDS club in school, Ben's own experiences of poverty and his professional self now shapes what he does as a teacher in this school. The meanings play itself in his role as a teacher. By going beyond the classroom, he makes sense of being a teacher. He reflects on his lived experiences and draws meaning from it. By talking about his life, different meanings of identity are produced. Lawler (2008) explains that we come to be the way we are by talking about our past, thus bringing about our identities. Goodson (1992:243) points out that "teachers' previous life experiences and background help shape their view of teaching and are essential elements in their practice". Thus the biographical forces are dominant in Ben's meaning making of himself. Ben has the desire to succeed so that he can be the best that he can be. It is this

desire as a teacher that makes him work in the way that he does and gives meaning to his professional self.

The accomplisher

Ben's desire to accomplish and succeed as a teacher comes from the inspiration he received from his teachers during his schooling career. Looking at an old class photograph in grade eight, he was able to go down memory lane:

I recall my teacher always displaying a natural warmth in him. No one was ever afraid of approaching him as a teacher. Whenever I showed any interest in what he had to teach, he would welcome me. For the rest of the year, I felt safe and comfortable in his class, enveloped by his warmth and affection. In my mind, this teacher was a giant among men, who educated thousands of impressionable minds in his long career. Recalling this teacher has made me want to be the best that I can be, always excelling and accomplishing the best as a teacher.

His class one teacher (from another photograph) was strict and encouraged him to be disciplined.

I will never forget my class one teacher for her creative and interesting lessons. She encouraged me to perform at my best level. She emphasized neatness, good handwriting and punctuality, characteristics that still matter today and which I try to pass on now to my pupils. The teachers pushed me to strive for excellence and instilled core values such as truth, empathy, respect and service to others.

Ben's choices to accomplish and succeed are driven by his experiences with his class teachers and he constantly ponders on whether he is doing the right thing or not. Goodson (1992:13) stresses the importance of teachers' own experiences as pupils. As Ben looks back at the past, he is able to make meaning and sense of himself as a teacher. The biographical force is dominant in shaping how Ben sees himself as a teacher. His continuous reflections on his lived experiences with his teachers and his father have shaped his meaning making of himself as a professional teacher.

I was constantly reminded by my late father to always do what was right. At that time those words did not mean much to me, but on looking back now, the very

same values have led me to be where and what I am right now. My choices at school are backed up by whether the majority of my pupils and colleagues will benefit from them. So I make my choices as a teacher, based on my own understandings of things. These choices are shaped by my management, my peers and my pupils. I try to do what is right, not necessarily to be popular, but because I want to do it for myself. However, not everyone appreciates my choices. Especially in this school, some are reluctant to share your joys and successes. So when I make certain choices as a teacher, I understand that people go through difficult times.

His father's teachings have added meaning to him as a teacher to try to understand his pupils' feelings.

By working with the pupils, I realized that if I went down to their level, they would open up and become receptive to learning. I give them huge doses of patience, commitment, care, trust, love and respect. Many of the pupils live in poverty and come to school hungry. They are not taught discipline at home and this makes my task as a teacher so much more difficult and complicated even though I am dedicated to my job. I remember the teachers that made a difference in my life and I try to do the same to my pupils. I realize that no human being is perfect, but I will always try to accomplish being the best teacher that I can be.

Thus Ben's experiences, and events very early in his life, began to shape him into the person that he is now. He believes that he is the kind of teacher that he is due to his personal background. His family, his teachers, his peers and his friends have in a way shaped his identity as a teacher. Because of his own hard life, he has learnt to strongly believe in himself and that is what he tries to do with his pupils, to make them realize that each one of them is special in this world. They must believe in themselves. Ben draws on meanings from his teachers and his late father by negotiating with the biographical forces around him.

Ben the role model

Ben recalls the magic years of his childhood, before the death of his father. Those were happy memories with his father and his teachers who, in some way, made a positive mark on his growth. The foundation of his love for learning was certainly laid during his primary school

years and it was a firm, strong foundation which helped support who he is today. He strives to be a role model to his pupils to help them succeed in life in the way he did.

I make sense of myself by leading by example and by being a role model to my pupils. This is what drives me forward as a teacher. I feel that if I am not making a positive difference to my pupils, then I am taking up valuable space in the education system.

I see myself as a custodian of the pupils during school hours. I see myself as an honest and hardworking teacher and I want these virtues to be admired and followed by my pupils. I want them to feel proud of me as their teacher, and remember me as I remember some of my teachers who helped me make a difference in my life. I genuinely believe very strongly in improving children's lives. Each year, when I have these pupils coming into my class at the beginning of the year, I have a certain vision of what I think they should be like at the end of the year. Tying up with that is also to develop a well-rounded South African citizen. I believe that it is that foundation that pushes me as a teacher to want to nurture the young minds of my pupils towards a strong education. My teachers had inspired me to work hard as a pupil and to dream big. Due to their encouragement, support and inspiration, I was able to further my studies.

I strive to be a role model to my family and my pupils and to have a caring attitude to them. I have realized that when a teacher is caring, well-prepared for lessons and creates an exciting learning environment, the pupils enjoy going to school. I admire my past teachers and I try to emulate them. I was brought up strictly and was punished for any wrong doing. I therefore like to teach my pupils the right from wrong. Whatever I was taught as a child, influences how I teach in the classroom. I am a huge believer of respect. I respect my pupils, family, colleagues and friends and I expect the same from them. I believe that it is important for the pupils to respect each other as well. It is a fundamental aspect in their lives to grow up with. My moral values of being honest, caring, sharing and understanding are instilled in my pupils. I hope that these values will become their lifelong values for the future generation to become good citizens of this

beautiful country. To me, quality teaching is more than simply sharing knowledge and skills. The pupils sense when I care for their welfare.

Ben now sees his role as a teacher as being one to inspire his pupils and touches their lives in a positive way. He draws meanings from his experiences with his teachers and father to make sense of himself as a teacher. Ben continuously draws on the biographical forces and sees himself as being a role model to his pupils.

The lifelong learner

Ben realizes that as a teacher, he is a lifelong learner. He acknowledges that the last two decades have ushered in tremendous changes to the South African educational landscape. The single system of education brought along massive changes to the racial compositions of schools. Ben tries to make meaning of himself, whilst confronted by the changes in the institutional, contextual and programmatic contexts. Each day at school has become a new learning experience for him, and this in turn shapes him as a teacher. Samuel (2009:13) emphasizes that a teacher's identity is "constructed at the intersection between several forces that mitigate to influence his or her identity formation.

The curriculum is constantly changing. I am faced with many challenges in the classroom like poverty, ill health, orphans, child abuse and sexual abuse. I often talk to my pupils about my own family, experiences and background and I make them realize that this is the real world that we live in. This is what learning is all about. It is continuous, no matter what age you are. I draw from these challenges to make meaning of myself I regard the IQMS as a good exercise that drives me and keeps me on his toes.

The current form and structure of the IQMS is open to abuse and manipulation. I know of many schools that are doing it just as a process that has to be done. I do not see any benefits coming out of it. It does not ensure fairness and leads to dissatisfaction amongst teachers themselves. However, I do not allow it to take over my life at school. In school I am innovative and always well-prepared. So I look at the IQMS as just another system by the Department which has not been successful. I take it as a challenge anyway and leave myself to learning from the outcomes. I create a classroom atmosphere in which respect for each other is the

guiding principle. In my own teaching, the one principle I learnt as a child from my teachers, which I now instil in my pupils, is that every time I make a mistake, I must look at it as an opportunity to learn, instead of regarding it as failure. I must face up to their challenge in life, learn from it and never give up.

The programmatic and contextual forces are dominant in Ben's meaning making of himself. He negotiates these forces and constructs his professional self in a meaningful way. He confronts his challenges directly and accepts being a lifelong learner with his pupils. Ben himself is able to construct his professional self in a much more meaningful way when he adopts this attitude.

The community worker

Ben's identity and his meaning-making as a teacher comes from the influences that his father had on him as a growing child. That, in turn, influenced him to become an active community worker, just like his late father. Looking at a photograph of his dad, he explained how the passing away of his dad at a very young age in his life had a huge impact on him personally:

My dad's death affected me badly. I feel that I would have been a better person if he were still alive. He was truly my role model in life. I used to literally and physically follow him everywhere. I idolised him. He was a leader in the extended family and the community. After my father's death, I went through a very severe identity crisis. I closed myself up into a shell. I began to keep away from people. I could not explain my poverty, pain and suffering to anyone. I could not accept the plight that we were in. But one day reality hit me. I decided to prove to myself that I could be somebody in spite of my sad, poor upbringing. I felt that I needed to do it for my dad, to carry his good name. I wanted him to have been proud of me. That is how I worked myself to finally becoming the head prefect of my school. All this was through sheer perseverance and determination. I began to believe in myself. My hard life in my past inspired me to overcome my plight of poverty.

I grew up in a community that was riddled with social injustices. I therefore choose to inspire hope and enthusiasm in others. I have a wonderful sister who is always encouraging me, and a wife who has continually supported me to face some of the biggest challenges in my life. Without their support I would not be the

person that I am today. My social surroundings also contribute in my making meaning of myself as a teacher. I tend to pass my own personal traits onto my pupils and the community. I keep myself involved with the community all the time. I believe that as a teacher I need to know what is happening in the community and how the community feels about education. I see myself as a community person. I am actively involved in the HIV/AIDS organisation in the surrounding area. I am the chairperson of the school governing body of the school in the area where I live. This reinforces my involvement in education at all levels. My fathers' teachings have added meaning to me as a teacher to try to understand the community and my pupils' feelings. My own social surroundings have contributed to making me the kind of teacher I am today.

My father was big on education and even though we were so poor, he wanted his seven children to be educated. Being a leader in the community, everyone looked up to him. I keep myself actively involved in the community as I identify so closely with my father. I try to be like him in every way possible and I know he would have been proud of me today. My humble upbringing has impacted on me as an individual. I draw meaning from that. My late father and his community work will always remain an eternal inspiration to me. He was pro-active and I appreciate the sacrifices he made to nurture and teach me good values which I now pass on to the community and to my pupils.

As Samuel (2008) has argued, biographical forces play a significant role in teacher identity. Ben draws meaning from his past, his family and the community. As an Indian male teacher, his father's influences have made him the kind of person he is today. Clandinin and Connelly (1986:415) point out that "people understand and construct meaning using their experiences, and stories have a sense of coming out of a personal and social history."

Conclusion

It is clear from the above data that Samuel's Force Field Model can help to explain Ben and Sarah's teacher lives in interesting ways. Both Ben and Sarah have a strong passion for teaching. They have drawn meanings from their background, past experiences, community and their school to construct themselves as professional teachers. According to Samuel (2008:11), these forces are continually pushing and pulling teachers' roles and identities in

various directions. He maintains that teachers can choose to control the power of the forces confronting them. While some forces are stronger than others, Samuel (2008) claims that teachers can choose how these forces influence them. The two aspects influencing Sarah are the school (her mentor teacher) and the community (her church). She draws on meanings from these two aspects to construct her identity of her professional self and she now sees herself as a caregiver. Her cultural values and beliefs shape her role as a “mother teacher”. She sometimes finds herself at the crossroad of wanting to satisfy her role and duty as a teacher and wanting to satisfy her family, but she tries to negotiate this.

Ben’s meaning-making comes from the influences of his father and the community while he was a child. He also draws meanings from his severe poverty. The identity of being poor, and his working class experiences, shapes his life and values. By forming the HIV/AIDS club Ben shows that how, being a teacher in a primary school and working within all the challenges and institutional constraints in a personal and meaningful way, does come across here through the different practices that he adopts and enacts. The forces of poverty, family and the community makes him take on the role of teacher activist. After growing up and teaching in the apartheid era, Ben tries to negotiate the many changes of the political transitions in South Africa. The programmatic, contextual, institutional and biographical forces influence Ben’s meaning making. In his role and responsibility as a teacher, Ben foregrounds his position as a counsellor, to help, support and guide his pupils. He draws meaning from this, as he negotiates the forces around him. On reflection, Ben feels cheated about the discrimination and injustices of the past. His political awareness of being Indian and being a part of a large disadvantaged Black group, influences him in his activism and commitment as a teacher.

Thus Ben and Sarah, through the telling of their life stories, show how they make meaning and sense of themselves as teachers in the context of the school within the four dimensions of Samuel’s (2008) framework.

4.3. SECTION B: PROFESSIONAL WORK

This section looks into how the identity categories offer meanings that shape the professional work of Ben and Sarah. In terms of the policies, curriculum and the school, what actually happens to teachers at school, teachers such as Sarah and Ben are faced with various constraints and challenges at an institutional level and this also gives meaning to their

professional work. This section consists of two parts. Sarah's professional work is presented in Part One and Ben's professional work is presented in Part Two.

4.3.1. Part One: Sarah

Work with confidence – My pupils and I

Sarah prefers entering the classroom each morning with total self-confidence. At the same time she tries to win over the confidence of her pupils. However, certain curriculum issues confront in her way which affects her professional work. Sarah, by negotiating with the programmatic forces, makes meaning of her professional self.

My ultimate goal is to make an impact on teaching and learning and thus win my pupils over. I continually try innovative methods to improve education. This comes from my love for children and my love to impart knowledge in different ways. I find that there are pupils who are motivated by me and want to learn. That little bit is enough to push me and tell me that I am doing some good. The constant curriculum changes in South Africa since 1994 have placed huge responsibilities on the shoulders of teachers. I have not settled with these changes and I feel insecure as a teacher. It is not easy breaking away from what we were trained and taught to do with our pupils. There is also a lot of uncertainty. I feel that the curriculum changes, is something that needs to settle in our education system. Teachers need confidence to deliver in front of the pupils, but with so many changes, teachers lack this confidence. Personally, I am not offered the necessary curriculum support. Instead, I am faced with piles of paper work. I experience curriculum and administrative overload. Assessments have become an administrative burden. The curriculum has changed so many times.

In this educative journey of mine, it is not easy making sense of my work due to the continuous changes. However, my background and my experiences both as a child and a teacher, help to mould and shape me and construct my professional work as a teacher in this school. What keeps me going as a teacher in this school is acceptance. As difficult as things may seem, I make do with what I have. This is very important because through acceptance, I try to overcome the problems that come my way. This is how my parents raised me as a kid. It's a trait that shines

through me. Even though I complain sometimes, I adapt to the situation and work towards winning my pupils over.

I very often use my own initiatives to produce work of a high standard. I am open to new and better ways of doing things, but in this case, it is the curriculum implementation process that I feel is gone wrong. Instead of complicating both teachers and pupils with the curriculum, it should in fact be made easier and more accessible. Therefore, I go all out to bring out the best in my pupils by stimulating interactive lessons, generally creating an interest and winning my pupils over. As much as the different forces place pressure on me, I never give up on my aims to boost the quality of education in the classroom by always trying to enhance the learning and teaching experience. If pupils are provoked, they will work in increasingly sophisticated ways. I see myself as having a critical role to play to ensure that my pupils do just that. By winning my pupils over, I am able to shape my teacher work in a way that brings meaning to myself as a teacher and to the pupils.

Sarah finds that the ongoing curriculum changes are not really helping the pupils of South Africa and this affects the shaping of her professional work in the classroom. Since the 1990's the education scene has continued to be racked with controversy. Carrim (2003) notes that the breakdown between policy and practice is evident, and therefore the challenge is to carry out the policies so that they become more realistic and efficient. Being the dedicated and committed teacher that she is, Sarah does not allow the frustrations of the changing curriculum to get the better of her. She tries her best to shape her work in the most positive way possible, for the benefit of her pupils. She recalls the love and care she received from her mentor and draws meaning from the biographical forces to shape her professional work in spite of being confronted by the programmatic forces that are having an adverse effect on her.

Teacher and parents work hand in hand

Although Sarah loves her job, she finds it disappointing when the parents are not involved in their children's schooling. This affects her work as a teacher. She believes that it is important for the maintenance of a healthy relationship between the teacher and the parents, as both stakeholders are important in the education of the child.

I believe that the parents' involvement in their children's work is of utmost importance. Sadly, the culture in my school is one in which the parents pay very little or no interest in their children's work. No matter how many attempts I make to contact them, they do not respond. Most parents are illiterate and they do not seem to value their children's education as much as I would like them to. Many pupils do not care about their work because their parents do not care. This gets me down as a teacher, because I feel that I can achieve so much more if I have the parents' full support and co-operation. I still remain positive about my career as a teacher and to my pupils that I take care of. Besides being dedicated to my job, I realize that my pupils need me. I therefore remain in the profession and make meaning of my work as a teacher. I do understand though that many pupils are orphans and come from child-headed homes. I draw on my identity as a caregiver to my pupils and I shape my work to help them as best as I can.

Sarah's past experiences which influenced her into adopting the role of a caregiver to her pupils, have helped her to make meaning and sense of her professional work. By becoming aware of the pupils' backgrounds, she finds innovative ways to help them in a positive way and make meaning of her professional work. Her strong biographical force influences her practice. According to Knowles (1992, cited in Preston, 2006), the biography of a teacher, how he lived and his background, is significant when looking at the classroom behaviours and enacted practices of teachers.

My choices, my work

Sarah strongly believes that the choices that she has made in her career as a teacher thus far, has made her the kind of person that she is right now. These choices influence her construction of teacher work.

I choose to spend my breaks at school socializing with other teachers. I find that I can work better when I do not belong to any particular group or clan, thus avoiding conflict. This makes me feel better as an individual. In the staffroom, over a cup of tea and maybe a shared muffin or scone, we share ideas about teaching, what works and what does not. We learn more about the pupils, share a joke or two and even let off some steam about anything that is troubling us. There is a hub of activity. Being out of the classroom for half an hour daily, is good for

my own sanity. It clears my mind and prepares me for the next half of the day. It is important for me to be happy at my work place as this reflects on my teacher work. To perform at the optimum level, I need to be happy as a teacher. I need complete job satisfaction. It is important to me. Sometimes things around me do not give me that satisfaction, but it is what I make of the situation. Therefore I prefer to maintain a cordial relationship with the teachers. Differences of opinions are healthy, but I try not to get into conflict situations. In that way I am able to give more meaning to my professional work.

Sarah gives attention to positively shaping her professional work in the school. She also enjoys collegial relations, which helps in her reflections on her teaching. Sarah transfers her deep, moral upbringing into her classroom practice and her professional work. The passion that she shares for teaching shapes her experiences in the classroom. The biographical force influences Sarah's meaning making of her work in the context of the school.

Working with multiple roles

Sarah makes reference to the National Framework for Teacher Education (2007), referring to the Norms and Standards for Educators. She finds it difficult coping with the demands made on her as a teacher.

Being the dedicated teacher that I am, in my role as a teacher, I try to understand my pupils better by bringing out the best in them. I inspire them to embrace the world with a sound education. However, the demands made by the Norms and Standards for Educators, has a negative effect on my work as a teacher. This policy dictates to me what my roles as a teacher should be. I am unhappy with that as I feel that the demands are impossible. As it is, I take on several roles in my school voluntarily, because I see the need for those roles. Now, trying to fulfil the seven roles and responsibilities goes far beyond my job as a teacher. How am I expected to be a learning mediator, interpreter of learning programmes, subject specialist, assessor, administrator, lifelong learner, psychologist, amongst other social responsibilities? If we do not fulfil these roles, then we are looked at as unfit teachers. If I had to seriously take on all these roles, then I don't think that I will be doing any teaching at all. The focus is now being shifted from what I'm supposed to be doing, and that is imparting knowledge to my pupils. Trying to

fulfil these roles is affecting my work as a teacher. I cannot give it my full attention and concentration. For education to be successful, we need to be more focused instead of introducing new curriculum, policies and concepts all the time. Teaching is close to my heart. I believe I have a calling to inspire my pupils, to assist and uplift them to one day becoming independent, active members of society.

Sarah admits that since 1994 we have gone through phases of blaming teachers, principals, apartheid, the education department and parents for the state of confusion amongst teachers and schools. Sarah's spiritual values, and love and care when she was a child, now make her want to be the kind of teacher that values the pupils. She wants to give them the best kind of education. Samuel (2008) argues that introducing new roles is insufficient to bring about real change. It will not work. Morrow (2007) argues that this demand detracts from the role that the teacher is meant to have, and that is to teach. Instead, he argues that the material aspects of teaching methods are brought to the fore instead of the actual teaching taking place. He is of the opinion that there is a need to get back to the focus on teaching. Sarah is affected by the programmatic forces in her school. However, her morals and beliefs, her personal experiences influence her and shape her teacher work in spite of the demands made on her at school. She performs her roles and responsibilities to the best of her ability, acknowledging that her pupils are of her greatest concern.

Curriculum shifts

Sarah emphasises that teachers are confused with the curriculum shifts. She feels that the education system needs more stability. She tries to overcome the programmatic forces that push and pull her by improvising and networking with others in the educative field.

Teachers have a long way to go before they reach any stability in the present public system of education. The implementation of the curriculum is filled with constraints due to the overload on teachers, brought about by the assessment requirements. I make every effort to conform to the prescribed doctrines of the present curriculum but I feel that my teacher work is affected too much by the changes.

Because of the changes and challenges, Sarah holds on to certain practices that sustain her. While struggling with the changes she has been socialised into understanding herself as a receiver all the time. At the same time it is important for teachers to have the knowledge, facts and skills. Each teacher would put this across differently. Teachers use the classroom as a laboratory to understanding the pupils. Thus hooks (1994) maintains that the classroom should be an exciting place. From her own experiences she found that excitement and serious intellectual teaching could go together. Samuel (2008) points out that the 1990's changing context brought about many challenges for teachers, most especially the reformulation of the school curriculum.

Institutional constraints

The institutional forces in a school, according to Samuel's (2008) Force Field Model, that push and pull the teachers' role, identity and work, refer to the actual settings in a school. Samuel (2008) maintains that no two schools are alike, and therefore one school's setting will differ from that of another school. These forces affect Sarah's identity and role and mould her to be a particular kind of person. Sarah explains how she copes with the constraints at her school to construct her professional work.

It is thirteen years that I am here at this largely disadvantaged school. As you see in this photograph below, I have fifty one pupils in my class. They are cramped as space is a big problem. I cannot walk in between them to monitor their work or give them individual attention. The pupils are uncomfortable. Most windows do not open. Their schoolbags are left outside as there is no space for them. Even my cupboard with all my personal stuff has been placed out in the corridor. I try bringing the shorter pupils to the front but it has not helped much. It is difficult teaching under these circumstances. I feel that the previous system was better. At that time I had a maximum of thirty five learners in my class and that was manageable. Something needs to be done to our present system if we want to improve the quality of education. The overcrowded classroom has added pressure on me as a teacher. It affects my whole life. My workload has increased tremendously. This affects my family life as well, as I take work home every day. My identity has changed due to the extra pressures placed on my work at school."

“There is a severe lack of resources in this school. There are approximately seven hundred and ten pupils and we do not have a proper ground for them. When I look at this photograph of my school days, I realize how lucky I was with sport, physical training, music, art and concerts. This gives meaning to myself as a teacher as I would so much like my pupils to have the same kind of facilities. The situation right now is pathetic as I feel that these pupils are being denied a proper all-round education. There are no sporting facilities whatsoever. Most pupils cannot afford to pay the school fees and the school has a severe lack of funds. Besides being overloaded and pressurized with work, it becomes my task as a teacher to go around looking for sponsors and donations to assist the school with funds.



The above photograph illustrates Sarah’s overcrowded classroom within which she perseveres to provide quality work.

Sarah finds that her work is affected due to the constraints in her school. The overcrowded class (as seen in the photograph) hampers her work as she struggles with marking and giving her pupils the individual attention, as she would like to. She works beyond the school to make sense of her work and to overcome the programmatic and institutional forces that challenge her. She feels that if the conditions were better, her pupils would benefit tremendously. She tries her best to produce work that will help her pupils in all walks of life. Sarah's work becomes affected as she gets to know more about her pupils' background. She tries to look at various ways to help them to cope at school. She makes sense of herself from the surroundings in the school.

Most of my pupils come from poor backgrounds, from the shacks and from the townships. They are not exposed to any kinds of reading material. The language barrier is a big problem at this school. Pupils that come on transfer from the rural schools have been taught in their mother tongue. This poses a huge problem, as English is our medium of instruction. This impacts on the pupils' all-round learning and they perform poorly. There are also no adults to monitor their homework. They go home to cook and do household chores. There is no water, electricity or space to do their homework. They have to care for their younger siblings. As a teacher, this depresses me. I wish I could do more for my pupils. It gives me pleasure to see them progressing at school. I want my pupils to have a better life, a better future. There is a great lack of interest from the guardians. I therefore continually encourage them to study, learn and educate themselves.

Sarah is sad that the curriculum does not leave much scope to develop reading, like the way it was in her school days.

My school had a fully-equipped library and a special teacher librarian who was always available to assist us with projects, assignments and research. As a little girl, I developed a deep love for reading and every visit to the library was a fascination. Sadly, this is not the case in my school. There is no proper library. We have a small, stuffy, poorly-equipped room with no furniture. It is insufficiently stocked. There are no funds to upgrade the library. These settings shape my professional work in the classroom and make me want to go that extra mile. To encourage my pupils, I have a section in my classroom where I display

their outstanding work, as seen in a photograph. This motivates them to improve their work. The display is rotated throughout the year. They regard that part of the classroom as their space. At the same time, I identify my classroom as my own space where I have the freedom to add my personal touch. I enjoy this and love going to my classroom.

The pupils love to hear her positive comments on their displays. It makes them feel good. They want to be recognized and feel a sense of pride and belonging. This institutional setting pushes her as a teacher to do the best for her pupils. Looking back at where her pupils came from, shapes her work as a teacher. She wants to do what is best for them, to help them out of their plight. In doing this, Sarah derives more meaning of herself as a teacher. She overcomes the institutional forces that confront her by finding innovative methods to shape her professional work.



The above is an illustration of the pupils' work. Such display lead to meaning making and a sense of pride for Sarah and her pupils.

Job intensification VS professionalism

In spite of the many institutional constraints facing her daily, Sarah tries to overcome them in her own special way, trying not to allow her professional work to deteriorate.

I have fifty-one pupils in my class and I find my workload to be unbearable. Marking the books is an absolute heartache. I do not have sufficient time for work preparation or for marking at school and as a result I carry over lots of work home. I do not feel good about this because I feel that by taking work home, I am neglecting my family life. Being a caregiver as my main identity, I also do care tremendously about my family, ensuring that they are always well provided for with meals and housekeeping. I find myself working beyond school hours, during weekends and holidays.

Having taught in various schools, Sarah has found that every school is unique in terms of the pupils, their backgrounds, their communities, and the kinds of facilities available there.

My present school is faced with a diverse body of pupils, language barriers, poverty, HIV/AIDS, poor facilities and no resources. My role as a caregiver helps me to face these issues that were not there when I began teaching twenty years ago. I adapt myself and my work according to these constraints. My enthusiasm to teach has not faded and I construct my professional work from whatever comes my way.

By negotiating with the biographical forces, Sarah makes meaning of her professional work. Sarah's identity as a caregiver provides her with a better understanding of her pupils. Her pupils are her priority and she goes beyond her call of duty to ensure that they receive quality education.

Conclusion

Sarah's professional work is affected by the institutional, programmatic and contextual forces around her. She would certainly prefer teaching under better conditions, smaller classes, proper resources, better facilities and most of all, having some kind of stability in the education system. It is any teacher's dream to want to have a perfect school setting, for the benefit of the pupils. Sarah believes that her dreams can become a reality someday. Sarah

teaches with such zest responding conscientiously to the institutional forces that confront her. hooks (1994) emphasizes that teacher work calls for everyone to become more involved, more engaged and become active in the learning process.

4.3.2. Part two: Ben

My work VS the curriculum

The programmatic forces brought about by C2005, the RNCS and the IQMS affect Ben's professional work. Ben sometimes finds the heavy workload due to the curriculum changes difficult to cope with and to make sense of. This affects his construction of professional work in the classroom. There are times when he finds that he is going in the right direction. It is the workload that sometimes troubles him.

The administrative work interrupts my teaching and I feel it is unfair to my pupils. It affects me when I feel that I have not delivered. Teacher work, on the whole, develops me as a teacher and shapes my work as I am also in the process of learning. It broadens my thinking and liberates me from the stereotypes I grew up with.

Ben feels that he was not trained enough to implement the changing curriculum.

I felt intimidated. After all these years I had to learn something so unfamiliar. I was not sure that I was going to be able to cope. To be honest, I was lost at the beginning. I had to read up the manuals on my own. I had to become familiar with new terms, new learning areas. The big problem for me was drawing up the work schedules and learning programmes, not knowing whether we were doing it the correct way or not. I felt very insecure. I found that talking to others at workshops made me realize that I was not alone. The workshop on the formation of "cluster schools for Mathematics" has been most helpful to me. Networking with the other teachers within the cluster group of schools opens up new ideas and methods for my professional work. In order to understand better, I try to cope by reading widely and consulting with people involved with education. I like being innovative, working smart and liaising with neighbouring schools. I try to find inspiration in everything around me, especially coming from the kind of

background that I came from. As a teacher, this means a lot to me in shaping my work.

Ben is sometimes frustrated with the excessive demands of the curriculum.

As a teacher, I give everything that I have into the profession, including time and dedication. The implementation of the curriculum, each time, was too rushed. The training that I received was superficial and the materials were inadequate. With the many workshops that I attended, in many situations, the people appointed to provide support are not the experts in the subjects. As such, they do not provide the support to the teachers. I find that my time is wasted attending support meetings as no support is given to me. I found it difficult coping with the curriculum changes. Although I follow the requirements, I feel unsure as to whether I am doing the right thing or not. The Department is unfair in the manner in which teachers are just expected to carry out instructions with such poor training and guidelines. To me, the constant changes indicate confusion in the Education Department. If there was stability, it would mean that education was on the right track. I believe that something new does not necessarily mean something better.

Ben feels that South Africa's transformed school system has had a devastating effect on the ability of teachers to make sense of it and to implement the reforms to the curriculum since 1994. The programmatic forces at the school impact heavily on his making meaning of himself and his work. In order to make meaning of his work, he networks with neighbouring schools, reads widely and engages in innovative methods.

My work VS policies

The National Framework for Teacher Education (2007) has been a source of tension for Ben who is grappling with its implementation. Samuel (2008) rightly argues that the expanding roles and responsibilities of teachers are unrealistic and unattainable. Ben experiences an administrative workload that prevents him from spending enough time on preparation and quality teaching in the classroom. Teacher morale is low as he struggles to cope with impossible demands of fulfilling the seven roles and responsibilities as required by the policy.

I am becoming tired of the increasing demands being made on me as a teacher. I have a passion for teaching, which is something natural within me. It was not something that was created or developed along the way. My family and friends have seen it in me and have affirmed it. This motivates me and drives me as a teacher to move confidently forward and work to be the best that I can be. I have always been dedicated to my job as a teacher and I do not like being dictated to. The Department is ridiculous to expect any teacher to take on such a wide range of roles and responsibilities. The education system now is no longer how it used to be twenty years ago. I am expected to carry out all these roles and still provide quality teaching. What keeps me going as a teacher is my sheer love, passion and dedication for teaching. I was inspired by my own teachers and my father, who always warned me never to give up. Although I cannot live up to all the demands of the Norms and Standards, I continue to teach to the best of my ability. When I trained and studied to become a teacher twenty years ago, I was not trained to take on these roles as a teacher. As an activist, I stand for what I believe is right. At the same time I will not defy the policy. I take on the challenges that confront me and I face it with determination to move forward as a teacher. I know that I cannot fulfil all the demands of the policy as it pressurizes me when I attempt to.

Within the demands of the National Framework for Teacher Education (2007), Ben stands firm in his role as a teacher being well prepared to impart knowledge to pupils in a meaningful way so that they can make sense of the world. Therefore Kroll (2004) argues that teachers must be well prepared for each lesson so that all subject matter can be transformed into meaningful learning opportunities for the pupils. In spite of the programmatic forces around him, Ben is serious about his job as a teacher. He tries as far as possible not to allow his frustrations and dissatisfaction over the Norms and Standards for Educators to affect his professional work in the classroom. He negotiates with the biographical forces and draws meaning from his experiences to improve the lives of his pupils and to shape his professional work.

Institutional constraints

Ben is continuously faced with challenges and constraints in his school. He faces the institutional forces upfront. These challenges and constraints give meaning to him and they shape his professional teacher work.

The lack of facilities at my school makes my role as a teacher so much more difficult but challenging. Being the dedicated person that I am to my calling as a teacher, I try to make the best of my situation. It actually makes me work harder. I am confronted with all these shortcomings and challenges and I try to find a way. As a teacher in this situation, I have become a very innovative person. I do not throw away anything and I have become a resourceful person. I work around my challenges. The overcrowding in the classroom frustrates me at times. Marking the large number of books daily is a nightmare. I try to deliver in spite of the lack of resources and difficult circumstances. I would like to spend less time on paper work and more time actually teaching.

The greatest disservice at this school is the library. It is not functioning properly and I feel strongly about the pupils losing out on this. Most of the pupils that come from deprived backgrounds have no idea of what a proper library looks like. I believe that every pupil should be encouraged to read. When I look back at my own primary school experiences, I recall how my teachers fostered an enjoyment for reading in me. At a very young age, I was moulded to read for meaning and understanding. These qualities have shaped me as a teacher, where I find innovative ways to empower my pupils to discover the wonder of reading. I remind them that they can travel around the world just by reading. There is a severe scarcity of reading material at the homes of these pupils and they are not immersed in a culture of reading. The responsibility to promote this culture of reading lies in the school.

Although Ben is continually faced with various institutional forces, he has a genuine desire to make a difference in the lives of his pupils. He finds it difficult to cope with the overcrowded classes. Although he believes that the teacher must have enough resources to ensure effective teaching and learning, he does not allow that to deter him from facing the various challenges that confront him. Whatever the force that is working against him in the school, Ben tries to

find a solution. It may not be the perfect solution that he hopes for, but he stands firm in his belief that there is always a way to meet up with the challenges that face him as a teacher. His grounding principle as a teacher is to know his pupils well and to always listen to them. He negotiates with the institutional forces by improvising in the classroom and “making do” with available resources in order to make meaning of his work.

Ben sometimes finds it difficult to cope with the constraints and challenges coming from the curriculum shifts, new policies and the institutional forces.

I become overwhelmed with the many duties and responsibilities that I have to fulfil. In my role as a counsellor, I try not to make promises which may not be fulfilled. However, I extend hope and confidence. I make my classroom a safe place for them to be in and I build up their trust in me. I display their outstanding work on a rotational basis to encourage them (refer to photograph). This means a lot to me and to my pupils. I show them that as much as they are proud of their work, I am proud of them too. I try to do the best that I can for them because I have the interest of the child at heart.

I am continuously faced with difficult pupils, hunger, poor nutrition, poverty, ill health, violent behaviour sexual abuse, and pupils coming from child-headed households. This is where my role as a counsellor comes in to guide, advise, support and help my pupils. By emulating my mentors, I seek to understand and help my pupils and I make myself understood as well as I possibly can. My love for the actual teaching and interacting with the pupils is what drives me forward as a teacher. I have discovered that when pupils enjoy what they do, they learn easier and faster.



Picture of Ben's classroom display of the pupils' work.

Ben makes sense of his professional self by staying focussed on his professional work. He draws meaning from the biographical forces as a counsellor. The heavy work overload due to an overcrowded classroom impacts heavily on Ben's professional work. In order to cope with this overload, Ben works during his lunch breaks and late into the afternoons, after the pupils and teachers have gone home.

This is the only way I can catch up and be prepared for the following days' work. I work beyond my hours of duty. This is how I make sense of my work. I also spend my lunch breaks counselling my pupils. They come to me voluntarily seeking advice, guidance, help, support and comfort.

As outlined in Samuel's (2008) framework, there are different forces that push and pull Ben to behave in the way that he does. He works beyond the school hours in order to make sense of his professional work. He does not allow the injustices of the past to affect his professional work. He draws meaning from it to shape his work.

4.4. CONCLUSION

Ben and Sarah were teachers in the system for many years during the apartheid era. They are confronted with contextual, institutional, programmatic and biographical forces and they are now trying to negotiate this change. With the complexity and nature of the change, schools are managing in different ways. Ben and Sarah negotiate their roles and responsibilities in different ways to make meaning of their professional work. In terms of the policies and the curriculum, a great deal of what happens to Ben and Sarah, reflects the biographical, contextual, programmatic and institutional forces that, Samuel suggests, make up the Force Field Model. Samuel (2008) recognizes the competing and multiple levels of forces that impact on practising teachers.

Sarah and Ben have shown how their memories and experiences from the past have helped construct their professional selves and work in the classroom. They regard teaching as offering an opportunity to develop the next generation of leaders. It is only through their teaching that they feel that they can contribute to the development of citizens who can create a better society for all. Ben's childhood and teaching experiences have made him become confident of himself as a teacher, of who he is and where he wants to go. By reflecting on his lived experiences, he motivates his colleagues and pupils to become conscious of their values of what is important to them and what drives them. In this way he knows that they will always have the security they need to push themselves towards success, the way he did.

Considering the fact that no two teachers are alike, my study looks into how teachers make meaning of themselves and their work in various ways, yet they may have certain things in common. One commonality between Ben and Sarah is that both teach in the same school. Thus they are faced with similar challenges. Programmatically, they attend similar workshops on curriculum implementation. The introduction of Outcomes Based Education through C2005, the RNCS and the IQMS brought about great changes and difficulties for teachers like Ben and Sarah. However, Ramrathan (2007:4) regards this change as a "political strategy for showing change and transformation". They found themselves in a new world of programmatic forces. The National Framework for Teacher Education and the IQMS calls in Sarah's and Ben's opinions, for unrealistic demands from teachers. Ben's attendance at the workshop on the formation of "cluster schools for Mathematics" has been most beneficial to him as this offers him greater opportunities for networking with the schools on a more formal

basis. This impacts positively on his professional work and his teaching. However, what draws Sarah to be different from Ben, is her personal biography. They are unique from each other in the sense of how they are being influenced and where their knowledge and ideas come from. Ben and Sarah, through telling their career life history stories, show how they make sense of their professional lives and professional work in various ways in the context of the school, thus bringing me to the two critical questions in my study.

Ben and Sarah illustrate how they work beyond school hours and beyond the demands of teaching to make meaning of their work. They are committed to improving the quality of life of the pupils. Ben works throughout his lunch breaks at school, remaining in his classroom, trying to reduce his work overload. He also counsels his pupils voluntarily in that time. Of the seven roles as required by the Norms and Standards for Educators (National Framework for Teacher Education 2007), Ben foregrounds his position as a counsellor at his school. He uses his teacher position to effect his counselling. This inspires him and makes meaning to him in his practical teaching. He achieves satisfaction in his professional work from the great respect that he receives from his pupils. He remains in school into the late hours of the afternoon, completing his marking and preparing for the next day. Sarah on the other hand, adopts the role of “mother teacher” and she prefers taking her heavy workload home. She works late into the evenings, during the weekends and during her holidays, trying to balance her professional work with her commitments as a mother.

By the teachers making meaning of themselves, they find that their professional selves are manifested in the subjects that they teach. Sarah, the caregiver, is able to teach Arts and Culture with more meaning as she sees the importance of knowing her pupils backgrounds, culture and beliefs. As a counsellor, Ben is successful in his teaching of Life Orientation. He finds that his pupils are genuine and honest in their class participation when teaching Life Orientation. This subject is significant in their lives, in preparing them to face the challenges of the outside world.

Through their career life history stories and photo-voice, the teachers presented the many different identities that they negotiate as practising teachers. These identities give us a better understanding of who they are and how they make meaning of themselves and their professional work in the context of the school. They face their institutional challenges of poor facilities, lack of resources, overcrowded classrooms and language barriers forthrightly and

improvise to overcome the challenges. They reach out far beyond their calling as teachers by networking on their own, exchanging learning programmes, trying out their own new teaching methods, researching learning content via the internet and updating themselves with current ideas and methods, to make meaning and sense of themselves and their work.

Sarah, who admired her teachers as a child, tries to emulate them. By drawing from the different spheres in her life, she strikes a healthy balance. As a teacher, she enjoys keeping a journal. In this way, she is able to reflect on her role as a teacher and plan for the journey ahead. Sarah, who is passionate about her calling as a teacher, enjoys her role as a care giver and believes in imbuing her pupils with values, and imparting knowledge, skills and competencies, for a lifetime of learning and success.

Ben believes that education is a life-long process. As a teacher, he shares the belief with Nelson Mandela that education is the most powerful weapon you can use to change the world. Ben stands firm that it is his passion and commitment to teach that drives him as a teacher, irrespective of what the obstacles are that come along his way and inevitably shape his work in the classroom.

For both Sarah and Ben, the forces as stipulated in Samuel's (2008) Force Field Model play a major role in shaping their work and lives as teachers. Both the home and the school are seen as social spaces within which they shape their lives and their work. It is clear, that no matter what, they are committed to teaching. They see themselves at the heart of South Africa's future. They do become frustrated at times and find it difficult to cope. Yet they succeed in overcoming these adversities. They inspire their pupils to embrace this huge, wide world with a sound education, as they construct and reconstruct their own professional selves and shape their own professional work.

This chapter is an attempt to flesh out the statement, *the teacher I know myself to be*, from a variety of vantage points. It is my understanding of how Ben and Sarah come to know themselves and their professional work. Romy (2006) is of the view that alongside policy changes, there should be consideration for teachers' values and their own understandings of their professional and personal identities.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

5. CONCLUSION

This chapter offers an interpretation of how teachers make sense of themselves and their work in a South African primary school, given all the changes and challenges. Jansen (2001) points out that in the 1990's, the new democratic government brought about enormous changes to the education system. Teachers were faced with many changes and challenges with the curriculum, policies, assessments and school governance.

In trying to understand teachers, my study addressed the two key research questions: What construction of the professional self do teachers adopt in a South African primary school? How are these constructions of professional self shaping teachers' work in a South African primary school?

In my study, key policies (governance and curriculum) are used as the backdrop against which to ask the question, *What's a teacher anyway?* They are the National Framework for Teacher Education (2007), the curriculum shifts in Curriculum 2005 and the Revised National Curriculum Statement which have led to dissatisfaction and confusion amongst teachers. Against these challenges and institutional constraints, the two teachers working in public primary schools are able to draw on particular biographical meanings and contextual experiences to enact different responsibilities and roles within the position of teacher.

Understanding the two teachers daily, lived experiences in the school, through the biographical, programmatic, institutional and contextual forces, offered a nuanced perspective of how teachers make meaning of their teacher self and the work they do. Through the employment of a participatory approach, teacher participants were actively engaged in constructing their teacher self in relation to the contextual realities of public primary schooling in the province of KwaZulu-Natal.

5.1. Teacher identity

The two teachers in this study have constructed their own teacher identities of woman and caregiver for the female teacher and teacher activist and counsellor for the male teacher, thus drawing from their experiences, their background, their institutional settings and their

personal lives. Issues of class, race and gender shape and continue to shape how these two primary school teachers' identities are constructed.

The images and identity that the policy shifts espouse, show how the two primary school teachers in this study, negotiate the tensions they face managing their different roles and responsibilities. The forces of biography and institution are powerful forces shaping these teachers' lives. Samuel (2008:4) points out that the "conception of the role and identity of teachers in South Africa has evolved in close relationship to changing social, historical and political settings." Every teacher is unique and has his/her own identity. It is significant to note that the two teachers have multiple identities which do not remain static, but change continuously, depending on the challenges and circumstances that face them daily, especially in the context of the school. Avalos-Bevan and Rios (2010) remind us that identity has to do with meanings that people make, work and rework about themselves and with meanings that others make about them. Meaning making for the two primary school teachers and how they see themselves and how others see them may be enabling and disabling within the institutional environments they work in.

Samuel's (2008) Force Field Model, which forms the framework to my study, helped me with the analysis of my data to understand the different forces that constitute the two teachers' lives. My study showed how these two teachers have been able to construct their identities and make sense of themselves based on the biographical and institutional categories. By recalling their past experiences from their childhood, they were able to negotiate meanings for themselves. The biographical forces of being Indian female and Indian male come out clearly. It is also evident that the forces influencing the personal come from the family, the school and the community. These are the identity categories with which the two teachers construct who they are. It is evident that meaning-making emanates from their school, but also from outside, that there are different forces shaping teacher identity.

With the biographical force, there is a tension between the roles of a family person and the role of a teacher. This tension impacts on their teacher work in positive and negative ways. The institutional forces of overcrowded classrooms and overload of work results in the two teachers working beyond their classroom and schooling hours to manage their work with some struggle.

The constraints of the institutional forces like poor facilities, poor resources, overcrowded classes, language barriers and poor management directly affected their teacher work. They work during their lunch breaks and extra hours after school, to complete administration work and marking of books. They utilize their own time to cope with the institutional constraints.

In my understanding, the issue of class, race and poverty leads one to identify the self as a particular kind of teacher. Being heavily influenced through biographical forces, and standing up for one's rights allows for the identity of teacher activist to be formed. This reflects on the male teacher's professional work in the classroom and in his teaching. The professional work is reflected in the teacher being forthright and fighting for social justice. The key issues of being a woman, a family person, the role of the church and the role as a learner in school, results in the identity of caregiver being formed. Institutional, programmatic and biographical forces come to the fore. The roles around the family, mentorship at school, and the spiritual role in the church induce a loving and caring disposition in the female teacher, which influences the kind of work she embraces.

The National Framework for Teacher Education (2007), signals different roles and responsibilities among the two teachers, who try to move beyond their teaching to manage more effectively the unexpected challenges that surround their work.

5.2. Methodological reflections

To answer the two key research questions, I adopted the participatory approach as it was most appropriate to my study in collecting the data. Using this approach for understanding teachers, showed me what other researchers like Clandinin and Connelly (1986) emphasize – that there is an interaction between the personal and the professional in teachers' professional experiences and work.. The participants expressed their individual experiences of schooling, their personal biographies and family histories. My study found, that the participants' stories, that teachers possess multiple identities which are negotiated on a daily basis, and these make meaning and shape their professional work. Photo-voice was most appropriate as the participants were able to relive critical moments and incidents from the photographs that they offered as part of their daily lived experiences. Participants were able to remember and share meanings reworked and worked through particular experiences. The data elicited through the career life history interviews and the photo-voice offered rich information significant to my study.

5.3. Speaking back: “Being a teacher in a South African primary school”

In my study I have tried to understand what meanings of teacher work are evident in the real, lived experiences of two teachers, against the seven roles and responsibilities that tell them how they should see themselves as teachers. Both teachers have emerged from the apartheid era, the days of racial segregation, injustices and inequality. The shifts from apartheid ushered policy changes and work changes. The intention was to change from a particular system that perpetuated the issues of class and inequality. However, the two teachers were challenged with tremendous changes and conditions within the particular schooling context.

From my encounters in the schools, the two teachers are finding this to be an impossible task. The programmatic forces are leading them to become pressurised and stressed at school as they are being looked upon as being unfit for the job as teachers. They struggle to comply with the policy demands. I agree with Samuels (2008), who argues that these expanding roles and responsibilities on teachers are unrealistic and unattainable. This is leading the two teachers to reach high levels of frustration.

My study has found that the participants being dedicated and committed, have not given up. They are trying to fulfil the unrealistic demands of the National Framework for Teacher Education (2007) and this has affected their delivery of professional work in the classroom. Although they give off their best, the demands impact heavily on their making meaning of themselves and their work. Their teacher identities change as they try to address different challenges. This affects their professional work negatively, as well as their personal lives. They experience heavy curriculum and administrative workloads, which prevents them from spending enough time on class preparation and quality teaching in the classroom. This affects their personal lives. Their teacher morale is low as they struggle to cope. They are becoming tired of the constant changes in the curriculum. They are seeking more stability in the system.

In my study of the two teachers, I have found that within the many changes in the policies, including the demands by the National Framework for Teacher Education (2007), they stand firm in their roles as teachers. Their primary objective is to impart knowledge to pupils in a meaningful way so that they can make sense of the world. Thus, being committed teachers, they are able to enact particular practices, both within and beyond school hours in order to make sense of themselves and their professional work.

The two teachers are unhappy with the curriculum changes. They are now being moved from how and what they used to be to what the education system wants them to be. These policies expect particular kinds of shifts from the teachers. Due to these changes, they are faced with huge administrative responsibilities and this affects their work. Sixteen years later, since the first democratic elections, they are still not comfortable with the changes. There is still uncertainty regarding curriculum issues, and they are desperately calling for stability in education. Since the 1990's the curriculum has been racked with controversy. The two teachers are unhappy with the de-emphasizing of textbooks which are crucial to quality teaching and learning. They feel that sixteen years after the first democratic elections, changes have taken place, but in the wrong direction. According to South African Council for Educators (2005), teachers are battling with the implementation process as they were not groomed to do so.

From my study, I find that while the intentions of the policies are good, it is mis-aligning the identities of the teacher. Samuel (2008) points out that teachers are experiencing a strong sense of de-professionalization. According to him, the new system of education tends to demand change from the teachers without giving them sufficient recognition of where they were. Thus Samuel (2008) claims that teachers are caught in a web of searching for professionalization, while the employer at the same time is searching for strong control. Therefore Hargreaves (1994:253) insists that the post apartheid policies and curriculum omitted the "purposes and personalities" of teachers and the context in which they work.

5.4. School: a contextual reality

The two teachers' place of work has changed tremendously due to the fragmented system and issues of race. Teachers were now faced with adversity in the student body. In understanding the two teachers, I found that being challenged with language barriers, poverty, HIV/AIDS, poor facilities, overcrowded classrooms, lack of resources, orphans, child-headed homes, sexual abuse, bullying and violence, they are forced to assume roles as caregiver, counsellor and teacher activist, to try to overcome their problems. Although these teachers are finding it difficult to cope, they try to face these challenges upfront. Their own personal, childhood experiences - biographical forces – are helping them to understand the present situation with the pupils. They find that these challenges give meaning to them and shape their professional

work. They are dedicated to their calling as teachers and therefore try to make the best of the situation that they are in. Faced with the various constraints in the school, they have learnt to become innovative, and to make do with what they have. Working during their lunch breaks, after school hours and during the weekends and holidays, enables them to face their challenges. No doubt, there are times when these constraints hamper their professional work, and that leads to frustration. Fortunately, both the teachers have a passion for teaching which motivates and drives them as teachers to move confidently forward and work in the best way possible. My understanding from this study is that teaching in these circumstances is certainly not an easy one.

The two teachers have learnt to reconstruct themselves and their work based on the available facilities and resources around them. They believe that when changes in the education system are made, it should be to strengthen education, rather than push it into further crisis. They are driven by a desire to make a positive difference in the lives of the pupils. Therefore, whatever the forces are that work against them in the school, they try to find a ways to manage them in the best possible way.

5.5. Conclusion

I have realised, from my study, that being a teacher today, is definitely not an easy task. Drastic changes have taken place in the education system regarding the political, professional, and institutional contexts. The two teachers struggle to negotiate the above contexts within the Force Field of their teacher context. Every school, being the place of work for the teacher, has its own dynamics and constraints. The challenges of poor resources, a lack of facilities, overcrowded classrooms, ill health and language barriers are obvious. These two teachers do not escape these conditions, and constantly face them. I have found that they negotiate their work in line with what the policies are demanding of them, given the contextual forces that are shaping the schools.

Therefore, teachers need to be understood and given the help and support, in order to successfully cope in their challenging institutional settings. Samuel (2008) emphasizes that teachers are the essential members of the transformation of the education system and it is therefore important that they are nurtured, helped and encouraged, instead of being condemned.

It is hoped that my study opens up the prospect of further scrutiny by future researchers, to throw new light on teacher work in the present teaching context of policy, curriculum and institutional change. My study has been carried out with two teachers. It would be interesting and helpful to study more teachers in different institutional settings, using other methodologies to understand how they are making meaning and sense of their professional selves and work, whilst being confronted with the various forces, challenges, changes and constraints.

Having studied only two teachers in one school, it is difficult to generalize about all primary schools in South Africa. Based on this study, more studies about teachers can be done on a broader aspect in KwaZulu-Natal as a province, researching how teachers are struggling with what the policies are expecting of them. It is evident that more studies regarding the 'lived' realities of teachers' lives are necessary (nationally and globally) if the enigma of change (or lack of it) is to be better understood in the context of teacher education, and teaching and learning in schools. Furthermore, it is recommended that teachers from different schools such as ex Model C schools and independent/ private schools be studied.

The study has helped to shape, reshape and open up a multifaceted understanding of what it means to be a teacher within the context of the school.

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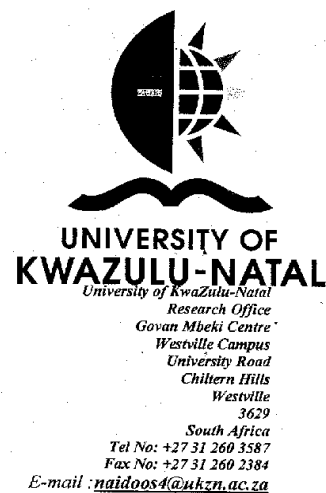
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APPENDIX A



09 July 2010

Mrs M Ramawtar
6 Elvira Road
WESTVILLE
3630

Dear Mrs Ramawtar

PROTOCOL: What's a teacher anyway?: A construction of teacher self and teacher work in a South African primary school

ETHICAL APPROVAL NUMBER: HSS/0467/2010 M: Faculty of Education and Development

In response to your application dated 30 June 2010, Student Number: **7608591** the Humanities & Social Sciences Ethics Committee has considered the abovementioned application and the protocol has been given **FULL APPROVAL**.

PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the school/department for a period of 5 years.

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

Yours faithfully

Professor Steve Collings (Chair)
HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES ETHICS COMMITTEE

SC/sn

cc: Dr D Pillay (Supervisor)
cc: Ms T Khumalo

Postal Address:
Telephone:
Facsimile:
Email:
Website: www.ukzn.ac.za
Founding Campuses: Edgewood Howard College Medical School Pietermaritzburg Westville

APPENDIX B

PERMISSION BY PRINCIPAL

I (full name) , Principal of Durban South Primary School, hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of this research project, and I grant permission for the research study to be conducted by Mrs M.Ramawtar at my school during non teaching time.

.....

SIGNATURE OF PRINCIPAL

DATE

.....

WITNESS

DATE

APPENDIX C

Date: 18 June 2010
From: M.Ramawtar
6 Elvira Road
Westville

To: The Research Participant
Durban South Primary School
10 Blamey Road
Clairwood

Dear Sir / Madam

RE: Requesting permission to participate in a research study

I am a part time student of UKZN, studying for a degree in Masters' in Education. My field of study is Teacher Education. The aim of this study is to explore and understand what it means to be a teacher in a typical South African primary school. This includes what meanings of teacher are adopted in South African public schools and how these meanings shape the teachers' work and their enacted practices.

I would like to conduct interviews with you for my research study, which should take approximately 30 – 45 minutes each. The interviews will be conducted during your non teaching time. I will record your views in writing and I will also audio tape the interviews. The data will be anonymous i.e. it will not be possible for it to be linked to your name. The data will be used in my research report. You will not be disadvantaged if you choose not to participate or if you choose to withdraw from the study at any stage.

You are assured that no information will be printed without your permission and that all data will be kept in strict confidence. At no stage during the research study will you be forced or threatened to participate in the research study. Please feel free to approach me at any time with any concerns that you may have.

I need your written permission to participate in this research study. With this in mind, I request that you give me your permission to participate by indicating with a tick in the appropriate boxes, signing and returning the attached form to me as soon as possible. I look forward to your co-operation.

Yours sincerely

M. Ramawtar
M.Ramawtar.

APPENDIX D

PERMISSION BY PARTICIPANT

I (full name of participant)
hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research study. I consent to my participating in the research study.

I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the research study at any time, should I so desire, without any negative consequences.

I hereby consent to participate in the activities involved in the research study as follows:

ACTIVITY	YES	NO
Interview		
Photovoice		

.....

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT

DATE

.....

WITNESS

DATE