

**An exploration of effective classroom management in three  
different phases of a primary school in a small town in  
Southern KwaZulu-Natal.**

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the

degree of

MASTER OF EDUCATION

In the

School of Education and Development,

University of KwaZulu-Natal

2009

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## **DECLARATION**

I declare that this dissertation is my own work, except where otherwise indicated.

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**DECEMBER 2009**

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I am indebted to the following people for their continual support, encouragement and assistance in this project. This dissertation would not have materialized without them.

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

To my wife, Nathasha and my son, Monré who constantly had to cope without me as I attended classes over weekends. Your understanding and selflessness allowed me to sacrifice valuable and irreplaceable family time. To the rest of the family, particularly Mom and Dad for the never ending encouragement, assistance and prayers. To my brother, Jason and my nieces, Lori-Ann and Jasmine who helped with the household duties in my absence and to their parents who were always willing to allow them to help whenever it was required.

To the participants in the study and all the school staff who encouraged and supported me during this project, thank you. The gatekeepers that granted permission for the study to take place and in particular my principal for his encouragement whenever we spoke.

To my supervisor, Neil Avery who constantly put me back in focus when I thought things were hopeless. You are truly a great mentor, a great supervisor and a great human being. Your input in this dissertation was invaluable and it is sincerely appreciated.

To all those people that were in the background and whose efforts were not always visible, thank you for your unselfish comments, criticism and input. The whole is nothing without the small parts holding it together.

**M.J.J. Coetzee**

## **ABSTRACT**

Most teachers want to create classrooms that promote the achievement of learners' full potential. Learners' behaviour, however, often disrupts the teaching and learning. Instead, the fact that those teachers have to spend so much time sorting out disruptive behaviour makes the classroom a place filled with tension and unpleasantness. Various studies have shown that children's troublesome behaviour shows no sign of decreasing and teaching has become more complex and more demanding than ever. Although the teacher brings an enormous amount of expertise to the classroom, this is not enough to ensure that effective teaching and learning will take place. Various, ongoing changes in society and education require teachers to add new understandings about learners' behaviour and the complexities thereof in the classroom. Teachers are thus required to devise practices and techniques to manage their classrooms to promote teaching and learning.

Teachers have to employ methods and techniques to ensure that they create a classroom that is conducive to teaching and learning. Some researchers have suggested that teachers become 'classroom researchers' to look at their own practice and then evaluate means and ways to improve on it. Teachers are required to become 'reflective practitioners' to improve their classroom management skills through reflection and self evaluation. Teachers are also required to teach with influence and care. The classroom context and the relationship between teachers and learners are cited as particularly important in shaping the way that the teacher manages the classroom to achieve teaching and learning.

I have adapted a particular approach to my classroom management that is very specific. This approach focuses on group work, social learning and guided interaction between learners. My method however is not perfect and thus I have set out to review other classroom management approaches with the aim of improving my own practice. To achieve this I have looked at the way in which three of my colleagues manage their classrooms and I have aimed to employ some of their tactics in my personal classroom management.

The research was approached using three research questions as a basis. These were as follows: 1. What methods do teachers use to manage their classrooms?

2. What do teachers perceive as effective classroom management?

3. How can the environment be adapted to achieve effective classroom management?

To explore these critical questions, the case study approach was adopted. The participants were observed in their classrooms and interviews were conducted to get a holistic picture of the classroom management approaches used by the selected participants.

The participants in this study displayed diverse backgrounds, classroom management approaches and personalities. The study revealed that these teachers employed various methods in their classroom management. Group work, reciting of rhymes, arranging the classroom in certain ways, maintaining good human relations and keeping learners gainfully occupied were some of the methods that the participants in the study have employed to achieve effective classroom management. These teachers perceived effective classroom management very differently. Some saw it as a way of getting learners involved in the lesson to minimise distraction, while others had a somewhat idealistic view on this issue. The study also revealed that the teachers involved had reorganised their classrooms, divided their classes into manageable smaller groups and even flooded their learners with work to change the environment to achieve effective classroom management. The findings of this study can be of value in discussion to seek solutions or alternatives to address effective classroom management in schools that experience concerns on this vital issue.

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## **CHAPTER 1**

### **BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY**

#### **1.1 Introduction**

This chapter briefly outlines the motivation for this particular study. The main focus was to explore the various ways in which teachers manage their classrooms and are able to get effective teaching and learning done. Many writers encourage teachers to become 'reflective practitioners' and the aim of this study was partly to reflect on my own classroom management style as well as to explore other options for classroom management. The study was also designed to see how other teachers manage their classrooms and what I could learn in terms of any new skills or approaches to enhance my personal classroom management style.

In order to achieve these objectives, I observed teachers in action within their classrooms. Three teachers from various phase groups were selected to gain a holistic picture of classroom management styles in the foundation phase, the intermediate phase and the senior phase. My main interest was to see how these teachers have adapted their classroom practice to better manage their duties as teachers. To enhance the validity of the study, interviews were also conducted to gather data.

This chapter will essentially provide a brief description of the research problem, the rationale for this particular study as well as a brief outline of the theoretical framework used, the research design and the methodology used to seek answers to the critical questions as stated above.

#### **1.2 The Background and Context of the Study**

My personal teaching experience and management background prompted me to seek a way of giving my learners the best possible learning opportunities by managing the

classroom in such a way that promotes and encourages learning. The defining factor for me was to have the learners take personal responsibility for their learning and also to encourage and assist those learners that were finding it hard to cope with their academic workload and requirements. One of the challenges was the fact that learners have diverse backgrounds as Gootman (2001) argue. Some learners come from dysfunctional homes while others come from more advantaged homes. Furthermore, a learner's motivation to learn has much to do with their behaviour according to Gootman (2001). The caring teacher can make a difference to the learners in their care, however Avenant (1986) suggests that teaching can only be successful once the teacher knows how children learn and which aspects of the learning process promotes effective teaching and learning.

The effective classroom manager therefore has to establish good human relationships with learners as well as to develop the capacity to manage the teaching and learning process within the classroom. Marland (1993) argue that healthy, productive relationships are a prerequisite for effective teaching and learning. Hook and Vass (2002) also believe that the effective classroom manager uses the teacher-learner relationship to influence the learners positively. South African schools however face a number of challenges. Some of these include unequal distribution of resources, over crowded classrooms, different levels of teacher qualifications and experience, low teacher moral as well as a reluctance to take on responsibilities, according to Christie and Potterton (1997). Hargreaves (2001) argues that school improvement includes uncovering methods on how the school can implement, combine and sequence strategies to become more effective. Effective classroom management is a first step in implementing a strategy to improve the school's ability to be effective in teaching and learning.

### **1.3 The Research Problem**

*The teacher is like a gardener who treats different plants differently, and not like a large scale farmer who administers standardised treatments to as near as possible standardised plants.*

The above quote by Stenhouse (1979, p79) summarises the actual research problem discussed in this study. Humans are unique and distinctive beings that respond differently to the same stimulation. Thus the learners in our classes are all different with numerous convergent and divergent qualities, and the same also applies to our teachers. It is therefore imperative for the teacher to find some middle ground in his/her approach to classroom management. Avenant (1986) suggests that the effective teacher can only be successful once he/she knows how children learn and which aspects of the learning process promote effective learning and teaching. Although teachers come to class with a wealth of experience, knowledge and intelligence, this alone does not guarantee educational success on the part of the learners. Gootman (2001) believes that the caring teacher can make a difference to the lives of the learners in their care. It is thus not just a body of knowledge that makes the effective teacher but also the teacher's methods of managing the classroom.

Effective classroom management is achieved in various ways. The focus of my study was to examine how other people manage their classrooms, partly to enable me to improve my personal classroom management style, as well as to provide alternative approaches to other teachers. The methods and techniques which educators employ will thus be explored. The case study approach was chosen to ensure an accurate assessment of the way teachers handle classroom management in real life situations. This approach allows some insights into the reflexive component of teaching and thus gives an overview on how teachers adapt classroom practice to deal with effective teaching and learning. Effective classroom management will be referred to as ECM and classroom management as CM for the purpose of this research.

#### **1.4 Rationale for the study**

The following critical questions were explored to address the issues raised in this study:

1. What methods/ approaches do people use to manage their classrooms?

2. What do teachers perceive as effective classroom management?
3. How can the environment be adapted to achieve effective classroom management?

For the last four years I have adapted my classroom practice to achieve better classroom management. My idea of effective classroom management is to conduct classroom activities in such a way that they promote an atmosphere conducive to effective teaching and learning. Learners should be eager, motivated and willing to learn without feeling threatened, victimised or pressurised. In order to do this I have attempted to use peer pressure in a positive manner to stimulate positive responses from my learners. I have adopted the patrol system, used in the Boy Scout Movement. A patrol consists of six to eight boys and according to the founder of this Movement, Robert Baden-Powell (1963, p24) the main objective of the Patrol System is:

*to give real responsibility to as many boys as possible. It leads each boy to see that he has some individual responsibility for the good of his Patrol. It leads each Patrol to see that it has definite responsibility for the good of the Troop.*

Therefore, my class is divided into various groups of mixed ability, gender and age. Each group has a leader - elected by the group - and functions as a unit. The group leader is responsible for checking that everyone has done homework, tables (bonds) and any given tasks. Points are assigned for all tasks successfully completed and points are lost for tasks not done or incomplete. Thus a group can get 3000 points if homework is done, tables are done and all given tasks are completed (1000 points for each task). Should one of the group members not have done homework, the group loses 1000 points. The group members thus help and motivate each other to ensure that all tasks are completed and thus points are secured for the group. Absenteeism in a group also results in the group losing points. The group with the most points at the end of the school week is rewarded with a packet of sweets.

It appears that Behaviourist Theory is at play in this setup. According to this theory, human development is a continuous, lifelong accumulation of responses which people learn through experience. Gerdes (1988, p54) explains that people are constantly confronted by new stimuli, they learn how to respond to them and thus develop mechanisms to deal with these stimuli.

Behaviourist Theory thus includes three elements namely stimulus, response and reward or punishment in reaction to the response according to Gerdes (1988). In my classroom practice, I provide a stimulus by giving a task, the learners respond by completing or ignoring the task after which I reward them by awarding points or I sanction them by deducting already acquired points.

Correctly, Behaviourism is not immune to criticism and has been cited for its uncompromising adherence to the principle of stimulus, response and consequence. Bandura and Walters (1963) argue that this theory ignores the cognitive processes that determine the way in which people will respond to a situation. They state that Behaviourist Theory cannot explain how people learn in the absence of reward or punishment, or how people respond a considerable time after observing a particular event. Furthermore, these authors propose that another, more expansive theory is at work when people interact with each other. They believe that people learn not only from reinforcement such as a reward or punishment but also through their own responses, through observation, imitation and the contact that they have with other people. This implies that Social Learning Theory is also critical in understanding classroom management.

My personal classroom practice is thus based on some of the above mentioned learning theories and I believe that some other teachers unknowingly also employ practices reflecting some of these theories in their daily teaching.

In the last four years, the Patrol system has paid dividends and I find learners eager to do their work to ensure that they are part of the winning group at the end of the week. In

other classes in the same school, teachers have reported a decline in class participation and expressed concerns with group work being loud, disruptive and hard to control. Docking (2002) argues that the effective teacher and classroom manager employs varied tasks to achieve effective classroom management. Class activities should thus be purposefully planned and delivered to learners. In my class, I aim to utilize peer pressure in a positive way to enhance participation and class involvement. Pressure from the group members (peers) thus serves a positive role in motivating the learners to do their work while it becomes easier to manage the classroom by mediating distractions that can hinder teaching and learning.

My aim in using this approach is to create an atmosphere of positive interdependence to achieve fruitful results in the classroom. Davidson (1990, p.26) argues that three cooperative skills are needed to enable cooperative learning. These are interpersonal, intra-group and intrapersonal relationship skills. I am convinced that my way of managing my class promotes the development of these vital life skills in the learners while also helping me to maintain discipline, control and a vibrant and enthusiastic learning environment and atmosphere. It is also my belief that learners will need these skills to go out into the world to earn a living and to form successful social bonds with life partners, colleagues, employers and their community.

### **1.5 Theoretical Framework**

Social contact between groups is influenced by various theories. Some of these theories include theories of leadership and management. Also linked to leadership and management theories is the concept of collaborative cultures. Collaboration and working together in a school is again influenced by the culture and organisation which exist in the school. The nature of the school's structure, such as whether it is bureaucratically or hierarchically organised, also influences the way a school functions and ultimately how teachers manage their classrooms.

There is no formula or clear-cut set of rules when practicing effective classroom management. Part of the reason for this is the ever-changing nature of our schools. Teachers are required to constantly learn new ways of doing their classroom duties. Elmore (2000, p20) states the following:

*Instructional improvement requires continuous learning: Learning is both individual and a social activity. Therefore, collective learning demands an environment that guides and directs the acquisition of new knowledge about instruction.*

New policies, new teachers, new learners, new rules, new concepts are introduced in schools from time to time. These changes have an influence on the school, society and more importantly, on the classroom situation. Senge (1990) argue that schools should become “learning organisations”, which are essentially organisations which engages in continuous learning and expanding their capacities. Change and theory on change thus also influences the way a school operates and how effective classroom management is practiced.

An exploration of effective management within the classroom will also be affected by theories of social learning, psychological theories such as behaviourism and other learning theories such as Vygotski’s Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). Schofield (1997) quotes an African saying, which states that it takes a whole community to educate a child. Learners should thus be exposed to role models who promote positive learning. Learning is not restricted to the classroom only as teachers can use other people or processes as resources in the learning process. Social learning theory holds that people learn from their contact with other people. Through observation, interaction and communication with society, children learn to do certain things. A good classroom manager could use this vital learning method to effectively manage their classrooms. Learners could learn from their peers, teachers, siblings and wider community. The effective teacher will be able to promote the successful assimilation of those positive aspects which society has to offer.

Effective classroom management also includes an in-depth understanding of which learners need more intervention or guidance than others. Vygotski's theory of assisting learners to achieve a certain level of understanding is very relevant in this situation. According to this theory, a learner has the capacity to understand a concept up to a certain point. This is what is called the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). The teacher then has to assist or aid the learner to go beyond this level of understanding. This social relationship, which exists in a classroom, can be employed to make the ZPD accessible to all learners.

The Behaviourist theory, on the other hand, advocates the idea of stimuli and response. An action takes place, causing a reaction. A teacher thus has a vital role in providing positive stimuli to ensure positive learning. In the same vein, the Social Learning theory holds that thinking is a vital part in learning. Furthermore, learning takes place by observing social behaviour. A teacher must thus ensure that learners are exposed to positive role models and social contact that will bring about positive change. An in-depth understanding of the learning process, social behaviour and outside influences is crucial for classroom management. The effective classroom management must be aware of these vital "tools" which could influence learning and ultimately classroom behaviour.

## **1.6 Research design and methodology**

This section introduces the methodology and conceptual underpinnings of this study. It is followed by the theoretical perspectives which shape this study. These are discussed more fully in Chapter 3. A review of both the strengths and weaknesses of these perspectives will also be given.

My personal experience and teaching knowledge have led me to employ the case study approach. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000) classify case studies as specific instances frequently designed to illustrate a more general principle. Thus a case study is described as "the study of an instance in action." The aim of this research, which is to explore

teacher's classroom management approaches, is thus ideally suited to the case study approach.

Henning (2005) states that research cannot be conducted in a vacuum. It must be based on one or other paradigm and framework using either qualitative or quantitative methods. This particular enquiry is based on a qualitative framework within the interpretive paradigm. Henning (2005) goes on to describe the interpretive framework as a means of deriving meaning from the social interaction which people engage in. The interpretive framework does not see definitions as cast in stone but rather views the context in which an event such as teaching takes place as fluid, changing and unique. The actual interaction between the teacher and learner is the vital criterion for generating knowledge in the interpretive framework. The researcher is seen as part of the research in this framework, taking on an 'insider' role as he/she makes meaning through the observation of social interaction within the school or research setting. Gadamar (1975) concurs with this and states that the interpretive framework is always used against a set of beliefs and practices, presuppositions and assumptions. The way one person understands or interprets a situation might be very different to another person's point of view on the same situation. The interpretive framework acknowledges and embraces this form of 'fluid', unfixed sense-making according to Gadamar (1975).

The qualitative nature of the interpretive framework is most appropriate for this study as this school of thought sees definitions as fluid rather than cast in stone. This is particularly valid as effectiveness can be viewed differently by various people. Furthermore, the vital issue in this paradigm is the fact that meaning is derived through the interaction between people on a social level. Schools vary enormously in issues such as class size, class composition, teacher training, teacher-experience, organisational structure and culture as well as teacher and learner numbers. The vital issue of interaction between teachers and learners is however a common factor in all schools and the interpretive approach is specifically concerned with this social interaction.

The case study approach enabled the researcher to get a first-hand glance at how other teachers approach classroom management in their duties as teachers. I was able to perceive teachers at work without intruding or inconveniencing the learners unduly. I aimed to capture the reality with which teachers deal on a daily basis in this way. We could then engage in discussion (analysis) on the lesson and explore ways to improve on it. This was followed by another lesson observation with a focus on improving on the weaker points identified in the initial lesson. The discussion that followed the second observed lesson then compared the two lessons. The idea was to promote a culture of ongoing efforts to improve classroom practice. A strong focus on the reflexive component of teaching was to be explored.

Three teachers from the research setting were observed. A teacher from each phase of the school was selected, namely the Foundation Phase, the Intermediate phase and the Senior Phase. The reasons for this selection will be elaborated on in chapter three. These three teachers were the main unit of study and the observations were done with the aid of a video camera and an observation schedule. This required my physical presence in the three classrooms to see all the activities in the context of classroom management. The video footage and observation schedule were also supplemented with extensive notes and questions for the sake of clarity and confirmation from the teacher afterwards.

Another data gathering tool, namely a semi-structured interview, was also employed. This data gathering tool was implemented for triangulation purposes and it also provided important demographic information that could shed light on the methods employed by the particular teacher. These interviews were conducted at the school, at the teachers' convenience and in the privacy of their classrooms when all the learners had left.

It should be noted that the first choice of method for this study was an Action Research approach, and elements of this are apparent in the methodology. Factors such as time constraints and opportunities for further cycles in the process, however, militated against the use of the Action Research approach in the final analysis. The value of the findings,

and the focus on reflexivity, however, are still valuable and will be useful in learning much about effective classroom management.

### **1.6.1 Strengths and Weaknesses of the chosen method.**

The first and most crucial strength of the case study method is the fact that neither the learners nor teachers are taken out of their routine and subjected to unfamiliar conditions. This highlights a vital strength of this type of research, namely the ability to experience, understand and interpret the context first-hand. To do this, the researcher had to become an “insider” to the whole teaching experience by being physically present in the lesson.

The fact that the researcher knew and understood the context of the school was a major strength of this particular study. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000) describe a case study as a tool that can establish cause and effect. Although not the ultimate aim, affects can be observed in a real context with the realization that the context is a powerful determinant of both causes and effects. The teachers in the study faced varied contexts and realities in their respective tasks as teachers. Cohen *et al* (2000) acknowledge that contexts are unique and dynamic and this favours the use of the case study approach to investigate and report on the dynamics and the unfolding interactions of events. Cohen *et al* (2000) claims that the case study approach is valuable in situations where the researcher has no control over the events. In a school, the interaction between people is dynamic and often very unpredictable. This once again favours the selected approach. Furthermore, case studies are concerned with rich, thick descriptions of the relevant study. According to Henning (2004) case studies portray ‘what it is like to be in a particular situation.’ Neuman (2000) states that case studies can be used to go into greater depth and to get more detail on the issue being investigated. Henning (2004, p41) suggests that ‘case studies are distinguished from other types of qualitative research in that they are intensive descriptions and analyses of a single unit or bounded system...’ In

the case of this study, the classroom management skills of the participants can be explored in great detail.

Unfortunately, this particular study did not provide for a long lifespan. Yin (1984) argues that case studies could be exploratory and thus be used as a pilot to follow up studies. These authors furthermore describe the hallmark of case studies as *significance* rather than *frequency*. The significance of issues within the respondents' classroom management approaches were thus of more interest rather than how often these events occurred. My study thus ideally makes use of this form of enquiry to explore the significance of the ECM skills employed by the selected participants. The willingness of teachers to participate in the research also showed their willingness to experiment with new ideas to explore the existing practice in the school.

As stated earlier, the hallmark of case studies is significance rather than frequency. Although this type of research can lead to uncovering the significance of a particular context, it is not without limitations. An obvious disadvantage is that the researcher can be biased. Nisbet and Watt (1984) argue that the case study is prone to problems of observer bias. The researcher can show a strong feeling for or against an issue. The research results can be distorted because of the researcher's close involvement in the study. To minimise this, I have used more than one way to collect data to triangulate the responses objectively. Furthermore, data from case studies is difficult to cross-check and it may be selective, personal and subjective. The findings are substantiated by quoting relevant responses or observed actions on the part of the participants to counter this identified weakness. Because the sample in this study is so small and because each school holds its own culture and contextual factors, the findings in this study cannot be generalized. The study can give other teachers more options on ways to improve their classroom management and general classroom practice. It is an identified strength of case studies that they can provide insight into other similar situations and assist interpretation in this way; however as with any form of enquiry, the case study provides some vital strengths, but also some weaknesses.

## **1.7 Ethical considerations**

This study was conducted within the practice of strict ethical considerations. Permission to conduct this study was obtained from all the relevant stakeholders. The University of KwaZulu-Natal, the Department of Education, the school principal and the relevant teachers were all consulted and the latter were given letters to ensure that their participation was free and with informed consent. With the informed consent, the participants were provided with detailed explanations of what the research entailed. Participants were also informed of their rights to withdraw from the study at any given time without any negative implications for them. Furthermore, the identities of the participants were protected by assigning pseudonyms to each respondent. In all the data collecting approaches, the permission of all the respondents was also gained before using electronic recording devices. The researcher also ensured that each respondent knew exactly what was taking place at all times to avoid suspicion, anxiety and confusion. Participants were made comfortable by not taking them out of their classrooms for observation and assured of their confidentiality with every step of the research.

## **1.8 Conclusion**

This initial chapter provides a brief outline of what is to follow in the rest of this dissertation. Chapter Two provides an insight into the literature which I have consulted and engaged with to establish my stance on the topic. Chapter Three gives a comprehensive, detailed description of the chosen research design and methodology used for the data collection as well as the motivation for the methods employed. In Chapter Four, I present that data and provide clarity on the way data were analysed and the key findings from it. Chapter Five concludes with an interpretation of the findings and recommendations based on the study.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter explores various literature related to the concepts of leadership, management, change management and theories of change and learning. The aim of this approach is to acquire an insight into what research claims about how teachers manage their classrooms. The methods that teachers use, the views of some prominent writers and issues influencing classroom management will be addressed.

#### **2.2 What methods do teachers use to manage their classrooms?**

Pinchot and Pinchot (1993) emphasize the fact that a school or any organisation must consider its organisational structure to be most effective in attaining its goals. McLagan and Nel (1995) states that teachers have very little room to practice individual initiatives in schooling systems. The schooling system structure is too rigid to encourage teacher's initiatives. Hopkins (2002, p1) also states that we are faced with an education system that 'limits individual initiatives by encouraging conformity and control.' The methods that teachers employ in applying their own initiative suggest that a change in the organisational structure of the school is required. McLagan and Nel (1995) believe that if an organisation's structure supports and requires participation, then that particular organisation has taken a giant leap forward towards participation as a way of life and not just as a means to an end. A sense of participation and involvement in the schooling system, the planning, implementing and outcome thereof is thus proposed. Hargreaves (2001) proposes that teachers be developed to take on expertise in their roles and profession. This can be achieved through a focus on collegiality. Hargreaves (2001) states that 'collegiality takes teacher development beyond personal, idiosyncratic reflection, and beyond dependence on outside 'experts' to the point where teachers learn from each other, sharing and developing their expertise together.' Fullan (2001) also

suggests that collegiality promotes professional growth and this enables schools that follow collegial practices to implement externally introduced changes more effectively. Docking (2002, p.14) states that it is often easier for teachers to stick to their existing manifested ways of teaching and managing classrooms (even if it is ineffective) without the help and support of colleagues. Stenhouse (1975) suggested a system that moves away from teacher dominated classrooms to a setting where pupils can make meaning for themselves without being constrained by the authority of teachers. The teacher is not absent from the classroom but rather facilitates meaningful discussion, debate or the delivering of evidence on a particular topic. This view largely informs the researcher's current classroom practice, which was outlined earlier.

### **2.2.1 Some approaches to classroom practice**

*Being a teacher is not just a matter of having a body of knowledge and a capacity to control a classroom. That could be done by a computer with a cattle prod. Just as important, being a teacher means being able to establish human relations with the people being taught.*

The above quote from The Bégin-Caplan Report (1995, no page number) stresses the importance of good human relations between teachers and learners for the educative process to be most effective. A prominent writer on classroom practice, Marland (1993), believes that effective classroom management should start with the crucial point of the relationship between pupils and their teacher. Corrie (2002) argues that fostering good relations with learners is vital for teaching and learning. Docking (2002) also mentions respectful personal relationships as a prerequisite for effective classroom management. Marland (1993), states that good relations are largely created through technique. In trying to achieve a good relationship with their learners, it is essential for teachers to first look at themselves critically and reflect on who they are. In other words, teachers should become reflective practitioners as described by Morrison (1995). Marland (1993) describes teaching as a special gift that the teacher has for giving the learners insight and understanding and it is precisely this feature which distinguishes teaching from any other

occupation. The teacher must open up unknown or hidden areas of skills and knowledge in his learners. This writer states that only when the teacher is felt to be successful in achieving this, then his/her pupils will warm to him/her. Furthermore, the teacher must also be able to consider and understand learner's motivation for doing something in the class. This does not imply that the teacher should constantly be critical of underlying reasons for behaviour but rather considerate of the reasons behind it. Docking (2002) concurs and states that good behaviour has a lot to do with a learner's motivation to learn. Hook and Vass (2002) also agree and urge a move away from the conventional ABC (Antecedents, Behaviour and Consequences) of behaviour management.

According to Hook and Vass (2002), antecedents refer to the context in which an action takes place. A learner could, for example, have heard some bad news en route to school. This in turn could lead to a poor performance in a test or task as the learner is not totally focused on the task at hand (behaviour). The consequence of this could be a poor mark or failure in the particular task. These writers argue that it is impossible for the teacher to control student's behaviour and thus they propose a move away from the ABC to ERO. By this they mean that the 'Events in your life added to your Responses gives you your Outcomes', therefore  $E+R=O$  (Hook and Vass, 2002). The one thing that teachers do have control over is how they respond to what happens in their class. Hook and Vass (2002) argue that effective teachers focus on precisely the aspect which they can control, namely their own behaviour towards a situation. Hook and Vass (2002, p.9) state:

*I have come to a frightening conclusion. I am the decisive element in the classroom. It is my personal approach that creates the climate. It is my daily mood that makes the weather. As a teacher I possess tremendous power to make a child's life miserable or joyous. I can be a tool of torture or an instrument of inspiration. I can humble or humour, hurt or heal. In all sets it is my response that decides whether a crisis will be exacerbated or de-escalated – a child humanised or dehumanised.*

The above quote echoes the need for teachers to use various techniques to foster healthy, productive relations with their learners. Furthermore, according to Docking (2002) the school might be the only place where certain learners feel secure. The teacher should thus go beyond his/ her calling to forge meaningful relations with the learner. The Ministry of Education and Culture of Namibia (1993) argues that the effective teacher can alter the antecedents by presenting well prepared, relevant content matter to learners. Gootman (2001) also states that the relevance of the lesson content has a lot to do with the learner's motivation to learn.

Healthy, productive relationships are fostered in various ways. Marland (1993) suggests the rigorous maintenance of records and registers can aid this process. This practice, he argues, has many positive spin-offs. It could serve as a tool for a collaborative culture and collegiality amongst teachers; for example, if a teacher is absent for some reason, the availability of up-to-date records could aid the substitute teacher to ensure that meaningful teaching and learning still takes place.

In the same way, the regular maintenance of learner registers fosters a sense of awareness about the learner's schooling pattern and also builds on the earlier mentioned teacher-learner relationship. The committed teacher will immediately notice a change in the attendance pattern of a learner if a regular register is kept. Frequent absenteeism could be an indicator of a problem at home, which falls into the realm of antecedents mentioned earlier. This researcher has, for example, experienced absenteeism by some learners in his classroom on Mondays and Fridays which points to another significant social practice, referred to in the literature as 'labelling'. The regularly attending learners refer to the frequently absent learners as "weekend specials". Docking (2002) also refers to this practice and believes that teachers should be cautious in labelling learners negatively, whether intentionally or not.

Hook and Vass (2002) emphasize the vital teacher-learner relationship and argue that the good classroom manager uses this relationship to influence the learners positively. They identify two zones within the teacher's scope of work. These are the zone of influence

and the zone of concern. As the teacher fosters a good relationship with the learners, the zone of influence grows while the zone of concern shrinks. The learner is expected to be influenced more positively by the teacher and as a result the teacher becomes less concerned about the learner becoming deviant or distracted from schoolwork.

### **2.2.2 Other means of achieving effective classroom management**

The pursuit of effective classroom management can be approached in various ways. Docking (2002) suggests that teachers instil a strong sense of identity in their learners. With a particular focus on younger learners, he proposes three ways to achieve this, namely to get the learners to devise their personal coat of arms, to draw a self portrait and to make an advertisement about themselves. These above-mentioned activities lead to the creation of interesting display material which can also become a source of information that can lead to discussion about the learners.

This is consistent with the vital teacher-learner relationship that Hook and Vass (2002) mentioned as well as the role of the teacher as an interpreter and designer of learning programmes and material. Murray White (1990), cited by Docking (2002), proposes the idea of a “special child” for the day. This is done in the following way: all the learners write their names on a piece of paper. The paper is then placed in a balloon and blown up. The balloons, with the names of all the children are then suspended from the classroom ceiling. Each day a balloon is selected and popped. The name of the child that is revealed becomes the “special child” for the day. This specific learner wears a sticker saying “I’m special” for the day and all the other learners are expected to say only good things to that specific learner. This practice gives the learners confidence and social skills that promote a positive atmosphere for teaching and learning. Docking (2002) suggests that this method can be incorporated into the curriculum as it promotes a positive school ethos. It also promotes a feeling of “honesty, openness, trust and belonging”. Furthermore, it could reduce unwanted behaviour and encourage good behaviour which in turn can pave the way for effective classroom management to take place and to be sustained.

Gootman (2001) believes that most teachers are drawn to the profession because they want to make a difference to the lives of children. However, being sincere in their caring about learners is just not enough to ensure effective classroom management. The caring teacher, she argues, has to employ various other strategies to ensure the classroom is well managed. Gootman (2001), states that teachers can make a positive difference in the lives of their learners, even “when these children go back to dysfunction”. This writer argues that routines are such a measure and that routines provide security and confidence for all learners. According to her, routines are critical for facilitating appropriate behaviour in learners who come from chaotic home environments.

### **2.3 What do teachers perceive as effective classroom management?**

Classroom management is complex and multi-dimensional in South Africa. The educational sector involves many people across the entire population. This highly dynamic sector involves learners, parents, workers and teachers while millions of other parties have an interest in education (African National Congress, 1995). Employers, universities, training institutions and curriculum developers all have an interest in the education system as it feeds their requirements for new students and new employees. Fullan and Miles (1993) realize that change is complex and they aim to provide some guidelines to understand why reform often fails. One crucial fact is that teachers do not know enough about the change process. This indeed rings true when one listens to some teachers’ ideas of Outcomes Based Education (OBE). Varied forms of understanding of what is required by OBE exist amongst teachers. Fullan and Miles (1993, p75) argue that reform fails because people have diverse ideas of change. In schools, reform or change is often overstated in the school itself. This is problematic as reform in schools is also influenced by the community the school serves and other stakeholders as well. Fullan and Miles (1993, p75) mention the following stakeholders which form part of the school:

*teachers, administrators, parents, students, district staff members, board members, state department officials, legislators, materials developers, publishers, teachers or educators, researchers.*

All of these stakeholders play a significant part in educational change and the school is clearly not the only entity influenced by change. Furthermore, so many stakeholders complicate the change process enormously as each person has their own idea and vision of how change should take place. According to Fullan and Miles (1993), complex change cannot be forced but should rather be systematic. The whole education system needs to be involved to ensure successful change. To improve classroom practice in South African schools, this complex change needs to be managed. A more democratic and participatory leadership style is required. This change comes with its own set of associated problems.

### **2.3.1 Democratic education to educate a democracy**

The first and most obvious problem for effective classroom management is the fact that South African principals have not been formally trained and skilled to approach leadership and management in schools tactfully. Fleisch (1993) states that principals were under prepared and ill-equipped for their new roles of leadership in the changing South African context. Coleman (2005) emphasizes the idea that schools require democratic education to educate a democracy. Schools however, are still largely hierarchically structured and this is an obstacle to effective change in schools. A hierarchical structure in a school places visible limitations on collaboration, teamwork and collective decision making and thus on classroom management. Hierarchical organizations worked well in the past according to McLagan and Nel (1995). Their 'effectiveness' was mainly due to three factors which held that:

- thinking is separated from doing;
- work is divided into small, specialized chunks;
- job and group boundaries are clear and relatively discrete;

A school has a dynamic structure that is influenced by various other sectors of society and other stakeholders, as has been pointed out earlier. Social conditions of the society, economic status of the community and the relationship with the education department all

influence the dynamics of a school. According to Pinchot and Pinchot (1993), our world (and schools in particular) does not require the “machine like” organizations that result from bureaucracy. Bureaucracy does not promote effectiveness and efficiency in schools yet most South African schools are still arranged in this fashion. Collegial approaches suggest that this form of management should be reviewed. While bureaucracies worked in organisations where the environment and tasks are stable, a school represents a dynamic, ever changing and challenging environment that requires multiple skills and interventions.

### **2.3.2 From bureaucracies to a flatter structure**

Pinchot and Pinchot (1993) see bureaucratically arranged organisations as no longer effective. This is mainly as a result of the changing nature of schools and the job requirements of teachers. While bureaucratically structured organizations such as a factory flourish in meaningless repetitive tasks, a school requires teachers to be concerned, caring and innovative towards the learners. Schools display various cultures and racial groupings as well as various forms of structure and shapes. The changing nature of schools has made it necessary for consultation, participation and collaboration amongst all stakeholders involved in schools. This change in structure is also visible in society.

According to McLagan and Nel (1995) we need a more flexible, flatter structure to address the changing needs of society. A flatter structure implies that authority is not vested in single person but rather that decision making is a collective, consultative and participatory activity in schools. Grant (2005) echoes this in her view that principals have to relinquish some of their duties and power to their colleagues to ensure effective management of schools. Muijs and Harris’ earlier work (2003) concurs on this point. They state that authority to lead does not necessarily have to be located in one single person, but rather dispersed amongst all the teachers in a school. The collective knowledge, skill, attitudes and values of teachers and other relevant stakeholders thus helps to build the school’s abilities in serving its community. Ash and Persall (2000) see

interactive and participative schools as organizations that promote constructive, collaborative learning.

Thus, as stated earlier, the choices to start on the road towards improvement of classroom practice are varied and wide. The first step should however be the move from bureaucracies to participation, the establishment of a flatter structure that will promote a more effective line of communication amongst the relevant teachers and educational stakeholders.

### **2.3.3 Current classroom practice and culture**

Current classroom practices which prevail in South African schools are reflective of the culture which exists or dominates in a school. Culture can be seen as the way things are done in school as per Bush and Anderson (2003). A change to improve pedagogical practices or classroom practice in schools will inevitably lead to the culture of the school being affected. In Harling's (1989) view, culture is an essential perspective that helps to balance the prevailing emphasis on structure. Bush and Anderson (2003, p87) also describe culture as the "phenomenological uniqueness of a particular organizational community".

Culture, however, is an "elusive" concept which cannot easily be described. Bush and Anderson (2003) however identify four key features, which make up culture. These are:

- Values and believes
- Shared norms and meanings
- Rituals and ceremonies
- Heroes and heroines

In attempting to improve existing classroom practices in schools, the school is becoming involved in an attempt to adopt a culture of team involvement, commitment, teacher involvement and a focus on improvement at all levels. Attempting to improve classroom or pedagogical practice means the school makes a conscious effort to establish or re-establish a culture of teaching and learning. The core business of schools is to teach and

learn. Hopkins (1994) argue that culture needs to be addressed directly to improve school functioning because a strong, undeniable link exists between the culture of a school, school leadership and school improvement.

### **2.3.4 Culture of learning and teaching**

Culture has a direct link with school improvement. It is essential to look at the culture of a school to establish how classroom management and practice can be improved. Christie and Potterton (1997) make reference to the Campaign to restore the Culture of Learning and Teaching (CCOLT). This campaign was aimed at changing the existing culture in schools that were underperforming. It was an attempt to bring schools to actively promote a culture of teaching and learning. These authors also mention a culture of concern where the view of all stakeholders is taken into account. In South African schools, it would thus be a collective effort by teachers and role players to bring about a culture of constant improvement in pedagogical practice and thus classroom management. The school should strive to promote a culture where learners are eager to learn and teachers eager to teach, a culture where differences are not a dividing factor, but grounds for curious intellectual exploration and discovery. Hopkins, Ainscow and West (1994) adapt Rosenhaltz's idea of school culture and identify four expressions of school culture.

They identify “wandering”, “stuck”, “moving” and “promenading” schools and argue that all schools fall in one of these classes. The ideal school in South Africa would be a “moving” school. A “moving school” can be viewed as a school with a healthy balance of stability and change as well as maintenance and new developments, according to Hopkins, Ainscow and West (1994). South African schools are experiencing a vast number of changes, adaptations and new demands. Teachers are expected to implement the much contested Outcomes Based Education (OBE). The Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS) placed its own set of demands on schools and teachers, as does the current National Curriculum Statement (NCS) and as the most recent announcement about the reshaping of the curriculum will no doubt do. Teachers who

have been teaching in schools for a number of years have been expected to change their methods of teaching without much guidance, training and with limited resources. A “moving” school would embrace this challenge and attempt to make the move to effective teaching as smooth and efficient as humanly possible. It comes down to what Hargreaves (2001) calls working “smarter and not harder”. However, in reality no school can be a completely “moving school” all the time.

The opposite of a “moving school” is a “stuck school” and Hopkins, Ainscow and West (1994) acknowledge that schools are never completely “moving” nor “stuck” either, but rather somewhere in between these cultures. As a result they also identify “wandering” and “promenading” schools. Schools that experience too much innovation without producing many results at the end of the day are described as “wandering” schools. Promenading schools are seen as schools that live on their past achievements. They only maintain previous success but do not actually “move” forward.

If South African schools wish to improve their classroom practice, they should attempt to adopt the culture of a “moving school.” Moving schools have the striking characteristics of collaborative cultures. Hopkins, Ainscow and West (1994) describe collaborative cultures as cultures which are supportive of teaching and learning. This involves joint work by teachers, development by means of mutual support and an explicitly agreed view on educational values. A collaborative culture can promote ECM in schools.

### **2.3.5 Organisational development**

Improving classroom management is by no means a simplistic, overnight task. It not only involves change, strategic planning and the school culture, it also involves organizational development. South African schools will not simply improve without addressing organizational development. Schools, as organizations are all different from one another but they share common characteristics. Through educational policy, South

African schools aim to produce well adjusted, well-equipped learners, lifelong scholars and good citizens. According to McLennan and Thurlow (2003), the new educational policy needs people with the ability to work in participative and democratic ways to ensure efficient and effective progress of the organizations.

The school as an organization needs to be improved and geared to promote effective pedagogical practices. At the same time, the schools are made up of individual teachers. In equipping the various teachers or using their combined skills, knowledge, positive attitudes and values, can lead to organizational effectiveness. Hargreaves (2001), interprets school improvements as uncovering how schools can implement, combine and sequence strategies to be most effective. When positive strategy is used at its optimum, it makes the teaching and learning process more efficient and effective. An effective school will find means and ways of improving existing classroom management practices to benefit the learners it serves.

In order to become an effective organization and carry out its task to realize its vision the capacity of the individual teachers are seen as very important. Each teacher's contribution to the school and to teaching and learning is seen as valuable. Davidoff, Kaplan and Lazarus (1994) argue that teacher's capacity as individuals and as part of a group are vital for organizational development and growth. They furthermore identify three basic areas which are vital in organizational development.

The three basic areas for organizational development include staff development, teamwork, conflict management as well as the conditions of employment. The first of these, staff development, is seen as vital to keep teachers up to date with educational trends, policy and new developments. Davidoff, Kaplan and Lazarus (1994) suggest that many South African teachers merely receive pre-service training which is seen as adequate training for their entire careers. They argue that there is a need for ongoing teacher development in South African schools. Teachers need to be abreast of the latest educational information, techniques and aids to be effective. The inception of the Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS) aims to address this issue. IQMS will

not be discussed in great detail in this dissertation as it is a complex issue on its own and is not without its detractors. Some reference will, however, be made to IQMS.

The second basic area of organizational development is teamwork and conflict management. Conflict is a natural and unavoidable part of an organization. In our schools we need to build up teams that can creatively work together and deal with conflict effectively. In my school, we established a Teacher Support Team (T.S.T.) to help teachers deal with issues of conflict. Unfortunately this structure is now dysfunctional because of various reasons which will not be discussed here. It was nevertheless an attempt to aid teachers in dealing with issues as a collective body. It is my sincere belief that such a structure can be a major help in dealing with classroom issues and mentoring and guiding teachers. A poorly constructed team can have their teaching completely derailed if they cannot effectively deal with conflict situations. Conflict handling skills are thus a means of ensuring teaching and learning takes place in a pleasant, neutral environment. Teachers must be skilled in handling conflict situations effectively.

The third basic area of school development is the conditions of employment. Teachers should know their rights, their responsibilities and the employer's expectations of them. The National Education Policy Act (Act 27 of 1996) describes seven roles that a teacher should aspire too to be competent in. The reflexive competence is a major focus of this dissertation and as such it was this aspect that fuelled the initial decision to conduct action research. Furthermore, in addressing the three basic areas of development mentioned earlier, teachers are put on the right path to addressing current challenges of classroom management.

### **2.3.6 Skilful and supportive management**

Pedagogical practice can be improved by addressing staff development, teamwork and conflict management skills as well as the conditions of employment. Schools thus have to reflect on their current practice and attempt to improve them through addressing the

key areas mentioned above. Dalin et al (1993) however, view skilful and supportive leadership as a key requirement for improving pedagogical practice. According to Coleman (2005) effective leadership involves vision and accountability. It is more and more frequently realized that productive leadership is required in South African schools. The previous minister of Education, Pandor (2005) expressed the explicit belief that equity can be achieved by strengthening the role of leadership in education.

The Task Team Report (Department of Education, 1996) identifies various management systems, structures and processes which are inappropriate. The report states that new educational policy requires managers that can function in “democratic” and “participative” ways to produce effectiveness and efficiency in schools. Fleisch (1993) suggest that the period of resistance to apartheid has “destroyed the credibility of certain educational practices”. It has also “undermined the legitimate role of the educational manager”. The confidence of educational managers has furthermore been broken down by the almost complete collapse of the culture of learning and teaching in many South African schools according to these authors. These factors, combined with the dynamic, changing circumstances in our schools have made the move to skilful and supportive management a necessary one.

Grant (2005) argues that leadership should be promoted as a vital role which should be developed by all teachers in a school as teachers take on various leadership roles at various times. Teacher’s taking active leadership roles are thus encouraged to ensure an improvement not only of pedagogical practice but also in classroom management. Principals should therefore be open to practice forms of leadership which are collaborative, invitational, transformational and motivational. In our changing educational system, the transformational style of leadership will promote collaboration amongst teachers.

Coleman (2005) describes transformational leaders as intellectually stimulating people. They encourage colleagues to be creative and innovative in coming up with new ideas which can promote positive interaction in schools. A transformational leader is also

“intellectually stimulating” and inspired and promotes innovative participation from colleagues and learners alike. This point also emphasizes Senge’s (1990) sense of belonging, being an important part of the school. Transformational leadership thus includes participation, collaboration and involvement of all the teachers in a school.

Classroom management in South African schools can be improved by implementing skilful leadership techniques as illustrated by Coleman (2005) who argues that the ideal leader should be able to produce good results while still maintaining a strong concern for people. Teachers need to become active participants and contributors to the leadership in their schools, a trend which is more widely being called teacher leadership. While teachers actively contribute to the leadership of schools, they also work with learners first hand. They are thus in the perfect position to produce good results in learners and maintaining good interpersonal relationships with them.

According to Grant (2005) teacher leadership goes beyond formal positions or actual headship, but rather requires teachers to take on informal roles within and beyond the classroom. This implies that a teacher does not need a formal title, such as principal, deputy principal or HOD to be a teacher leader in a school. By actively taking up informal roles such as rugby coach for example, that particular teacher is actively leading one part of the school that might thrive under his leadership. Teachers taking on these informal roles also display a concern for the well being of the school and its learners. Christie and Potterton (1997) identify teacher commitment and concern for the school over their own interest as a striking feature in the leadership of resilient schools. In adapting this way of looking at South African schools it becomes possible to make a concerted effort to improve classroom management in our schools. My school has afforded me the opportunity and freedom to practice teacher leadership in various ways. The school culture and outlook of the school management and staff can promote the development of effective classroom management by giving teacher leadership opportunities to prosper as I have experienced in my school. Teacher leadership, if promoted, can be a viable response to effectively manage the classroom as it influences teacher responsibility and accountability in the learning process.

## **2.4 How can the environment be adapted to achieve effective classroom management?**

The role of leadership within an organization is by nature complex and multiple. Davidoff and Lazarus (1997, p64) describe leadership as an art. They state that leadership is a “cyclic and sensitive rhythm of opening and closing, stopping and going, creating and receiving, acknowledging and confronting, observing and shaping.” In managing change, a leader has to be even more aware of his surroundings, resources and ultimate aims that the organization wishes to achieve. In our South African schools, a multitude of changes have been introduced over the last few years. McLennan and Thurlow (1997) state that the South African education system has been altered by the introduction of various policy initiatives since 1994. The most notable change being the move from Christian National Education to Outcomes Based Education (OBE) and Curriculum 2005 (and the still evolving succession of forms). Educational change, however, occurs worldwide.

In Australia and New Zealand changes mostly involved decentralization, according to Bennet, Crawford and Riches (1992). They also see changes in the United Kingdom as involving a shift in power from local authorities to both the central government and also the individual institutions. The role of leadership in a changing environment also has to be viewed in combination with the culture and structure, which shapes a school. These challenges to the environment of a school help to frame the research questions, and an understanding of these issues can locate the research in a particular context.

### **2.4.1 Organisational Structure and change**

Culture involves collaboration and participation. Bush and Anderson (2003) quote Morgan (1986), who describes culture as shared sense making, shared collective meaning and understanding. A collaborative culture can certainly promote improved classroom management in schools, but culture cannot be separated from the structure of an organization. The structure of an organization provides the framework for values and

relationships. Values relate to culture and this is why structure and culture have an interlinked role in a school.

Structure and culture do not exist in isolation but rather co-exist in a school. Coleman (2005) defines culture in an organization as the roles and authority which people fulfil. There is no single universal definition for organizational culture but there is general agreement that the word structure refers to the set of establishments, committees and groupings put into place to ensure that a school or other organization can function in a desired way. The structure of a school thus also contributes to the success or failure of the school in achieving its vision. According to Bush (2003) structure can inhibit or promote change in a school. It also displays the educational values of the school.

In South African schools, several internal and external aspects influence the structure of the school. Internally, the teachers, the committees and roles within the school define the structure. Externally, the provincial department, the regional department and the community are some of the aspects that influence the structure of a school. Schools often supplement their structure by having unpaid workers to complete tasks efficiently. These workers fulfil an informal role and this practice could be seen as a form of teacher leadership if teachers play these roles. Teacher leadership will later be discussed further.

A change in the structure of a school does not guarantee successful organisational change will occur. Hopkins et al (1994) describe structure as the visible part of an organization, which can easily be changed. Changing the structure of a school is referred to as restructuring and it is widely accepted that many South African schools should be restructured to promote an improvement in existing pedagogical practice. Since restructuring alone does not ensure successful change, this process has to be done cautiously, tactfully and strategically. Strategic planning has been discussed earlier. Culture and structure within a school work in combination to give each school its unique characteristics. It is precisely these factors, which should be harnessed and utilized to bring about the improvement of the classroom management practice that is used in many South African schools.

The structure of a school refers to the parts or organization such as hierarchies within the school. Traditionally schools in South Africa were hierarchically structured but even this structure is changing according to Enslin and Dieltiens (2002). The Department of Education (1996) states that new educational policy requires managers that can function in democratic and participative ways to construct positive relationships within schools. A more inclusive, participatory style of leadership has thus been favored in South Africa. Culture on the other hand, refers to the shared beliefs, values and norms that people share. A clash of culture is always possible in a multicultural, changing society. As a result, efficient and effective management in a changing climate must consider the impact of culture and structure in a school.

According to Bush (2003) the leadership in a school will determine how the school is organized and which cultures are predominant. This will affect the way teaching and learning takes place in a particular school and consequently how classrooms are managed. Bennet, Crawford and Riches (1992) view the educational changes in Australia, New Zealand and the United Kingdom as both structural and cultural. A vital task of leadership is thus also to consider the effects of both culture and structure in managing educational change. Leadership should be aware that both culture and structure can exert a strong influence on how educational change is handled and particularly how it manifests in the classroom.

#### **2.4.2 Types of leadership**

Issues of structure and culture require a sense of equity. Cultures that are always in conflict with each other will not contribute to an environment that is conducive to learning and teaching. Pandor (2005) expresses the explicit belief that equity can be achieved by strengthening the role of leadership in education. The leadership style that could be conducive to a changing South African school is the transformational leadership style. According to Leithwood (1993) transformational leadership offers a comprehensive approach to leadership in the challenges that leaders face. The transformational leader

aims to bring people together to achieve a common goal. In a school, the common goal could be to achieve an efficient, effective school despite the multitude of changes that a school experiences.

Ash and Persall (2000) argue that an effective school with a positive outlook on education is interactive and participative. This is particularly relevant to this study as the participative outlook of my school allowed me to conduct this study. Bush (2003) concurs with Ash and Persall (2000) and states that studies have confirmed that teachers wish to be more involved in the management of the school. The teachers thus want to be involved and take part in decision making and managing the school. This approach is again seen as participative and could be employed by means of invitational leadership. Invitational participation encourages participation of stakeholders in a school. Stoll and Fink (1996) argue that invitational leadership is based on four basic premises. These include a sense of optimism interpreted to mean believing in high expectations from teachers and encouraging them. The second premise is respect for the opinions of other teachers and all other stakeholders. Thirdly, they refer to a strong sense of trust. This is a genuine belief in the honesty and integrity of other people. Fourthly, they suggest a sense of intentionality which requires the deliberate invitation to staff and stakeholders to participate in the managing of the organization - as I have experienced in my school.

While transformational leadership and invitational leadership could be suitable for confidently handling change, people still react differently to change. Different people bring different personalities, skills and attitudes or opinions to the organization. In a school, the leadership cannot simply support transformational and invitational skills but also have to include democratic skills to involve all stakeholders and teachers in the running of the school. Democratic leadership styles make each person part of the running of the school and promote teachers taking ownership and responsibility for the functioning of the school. Fullan (1993), argues that the involvement of stakeholders makes them own the change process. They thus develop ownership of the change process and become self-leaders. Furthermore, schools have become so complex in their functioning that one person cannot be expected to run it efficiently as also mentioned

earlier by Grant (2005). Muijs & Harris (2003) echo this point in their argument when they state that the authority to lead does not have to be located in a single person but can rather be dispersed amongst other teachers. In this way, the leadership in a school has access to a multitude of skills, knowledge, values and attitudes, which are present in the same school. Sometimes valuable skills exist within the school but it is never utilized as it goes by unrecognized due to ineffective communication.

An awareness of the resources available is vital in a changing environment. The leadership in a school must be aware of the untapped abilities of their staff. Fullan (1999) however argues that schools also need to be aware of the outside environment and how resources outside the school can be utilized and uncovered. Fullan (1999) states that political and technical forces should be isolated to aid school reform. An awareness of the tacit knowledge (unspoken knowledge) of outside stakeholders should be fostered to cope with a changing educational system. Knowledge of resources, including human resources should be clear and the school leadership should know what resources are available inside and outside the school. Skilful leadership must know or learn when to involve these resources when addressing educational change. Elmore (2000, p.236) states the following on learning:

*Instructional improvement requires continuous learning: Learning is both individual and a social activity. Therefore, collective learning demands an environment that guides and directs the acquisition of new knowledge about instruction.*

Learning to work with internal and outside resources is seen in what Fullan calls the Chicago schools “pursuing systematic change.” In South African schools many partnerships between schools and businesses are also seen. Most South African schools have their names on display boards, usually accompanied by the company who sponsored this initiative. In Chicago, those schools that desired change drew on a number of outside partners to assist with the changes they envisioned.

### **2.4.3 The need for partnerships**

Outside partners can make a school's efforts to cope with change easier. Outside partners, however also bring their own culture, their ways of doing things, to the school. Morrison (1998) states that schools have taken a business-like approach in response to policy imperatives since the 1980's and 1990's. Morrison writes from a British perspective and makes reference to a previous prime minister, Margaret Thatcher. Under some of her government's policies, budgetary control and marketing control was given to the schools. Morrison (1998) argues that competition is a major factor in the business industry. Those businesses with a competitive edge usually outperform their competitors. In Britain a market mentality based on choice, diversity, competition, quality control, consumerism and efficiency was adopted according to Morrison (1998).

In South African schools, a similar trend was followed. Budgeting in South African schools has become the school's responsibility. Schools can furthermore market themselves to attract "clients". The introduction of market approaches in schools has not gone without criticism. Ball (1990) states that market places cannot be equated to schools as markets thrive on competition and incentives. Schools, however, do not react in the same way. Morrison (1998) further points out that markets produce winners and losers. A school does not deliberately produce winners and losers but rather aims to produce quality citizens and lifelong learners. Fullan (2001), states that educational change is dependant on what teachers do and think. This particular study explores what teachers think about educational issues, classroom management in particular, and also how they respond to these issues.

### **2.4.4 Chaos and Complexity Theories**

Change indeed depends on the things that teachers do and think. It is thus very relevant when Bennett, Crawford and Riches (1992) argue that a vital management responsibility is to assist those teachers who struggle to cope with educational change in their daily

work. Leadership should thus also include the role of assisting; guiding and encouraging those colleagues that struggle to cope and handle change. In short, yet another leadership role is that of the consultant. Fullan (2001) describe consultation as a means of building capacity, promoting motivation and also a means of encouraging a sense of commitment to improve the school. Fullan (2001) warns that any change innovation must however be assessed carefully before bluntly being implemented. Forcing an innovation on teachers and making them adapt for the wrong purpose is pointless. Consultation and collaboration on an innovation that does not “fit” the required purpose of the school will lead to a waste of resources, manpower and effort. Schools are complex organizations where change is also complex and dynamic. Morrison (1998) argues that we have to review the world as ever-changing, dynamic and far from stable. Thus, in this view Morrison mentions the theories of chaos and complexity.

Chaos theory holds that nothing is stable but is always in a state of flux. Small changes can have significant results, which cannot be predicted or foreseen. In South African schools, teachers are refining, fine-tuning and sculpting the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) all the time to ensure learners’ success. Each class will display different strengths and weaknesses, which have to be addressed. As chaos theory states, what works for the one class might not necessarily work for another class. Morrison (1998) extends chaos theory by referring to complexity theory. Complexity theory holds that complex systems such as a school comprise of many smaller independent aspects. The various grades, the various teachers, various languages, various cultures, religions and social backgrounds all contribute to the complexity of South African schools. We often talk about multicultural schools, for example. The curriculum also contributes to this complexity to some extent.

The presence of various learning areas, knowledge requirements and the ability to work independently as well as in a group further complicates the already complex organization of the school. Complexity theory sees the world as emergent, creative and turbulent and changing. Morrison (1998) quotes Kauffman (1995, p24) in stating that this complex view of the world provides a more holistic, true reflection of reality. Schools are indeed

complex and often operating on the edge of chaos. Learners, however still have to be taught and learning must still take place despite the chaos and complexities that exist in the school. The effective classroom manager should be able to manage the class in such a way that these complexities do not inhibit teaching and learning.

#### **2.4.5 Complex problems require complex solutions**

Coppieters (2005) concurs with Senge on turning schools into learning organizations. This writer argues that schools should develop learners into self-directed learners to foster life-long learning competencies. Coppieters (2005) states that the concept of life-long learning, as mentioned earlier has become a term frequently used in politics and education. One attempt to achieve this ideal is to turn schools into “learning organizations”. According to Coppieters (2005) schools should be seen as “dynamic, unpredictable and complex social organisms”. Thus, any attempt to deal with the complexities of a school should involve complex adaptation systems, which are based on the knowledge of management and learning. This way of looking at dealing with educational change involves two major approaches. Firstly, it falls within the dimensions of the interpretive paradigm. This conclusion can be reached based on the strong focus on human interaction.

Henning (2004) states that interpretive knowledge is derived from the meaning that people make by how they interact and also why they interact. A combination of various forces can determine a person’s actions. Some of these could be economic factors, political factors and social factors. An attempt by an individual to improve their personal circumstances could also be seen from a critical perspective. This perspective is seen as essentially deconstructing the world, according to Henning (2004). It is seen as an attempt to highlight those aspects, which cause oppression, social inequality and injustice in a society. Various inequalities exist within communities, societies and even in households. The constant changes that plague education could be seen as an attempt to bring about equality to all the stakeholders. Both Senge and Coppieters (2005) believe

that the learning organization is a vehicle, which could respond to this pressing issue of change in education and ultimately to effective classroom management.

## **2.5 Conclusion**

The discussed literature gives a clear background and insight into the issues of effective classroom management practices in education. It provides an overview on the methods that teachers use to manage their classrooms and suggestions about improving teacher-learner relationships. The question on structure and culture is also addressed in this chapter. The culture of learning and teaching as well as collaborative cultures are discussed in detail. Chapter two also touches on the issue of organisational development and skilful and supportive management to improve classroom management approaches. The influence of change and types of leadership is also highlighted in this chapter. In the context of change, chaos theory and the complexity theory is discussed that necessitates the need for partners in the school. This literature does however only represent a small part of all that is written on the topic of classroom practice and related issues. The view that the discussed writers express is valid in its own right and it is now up to the observation and data gathering process to explore the topic of this study further. Thus reference will be made to the concepts, theories and arguments represented above and relevant conclusions will be drawn from the findings that emerge from the data later on in this study.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

In this chapter I provide an account of the research methodology and the design that was used to obtain answers to the critical questions posed earlier. This study aimed to explore the ways in which teachers conduct effective classroom management in their daily task as teachers. A strong focus of this study was to foreground the reflexive competence of the effective classroom manager and ultimately, effective teacher. It should be noted that the study was not intended to be a once-off exercise but an attempt to bring about an awareness of the powerful role that the teachers plays in the lives of the learners and the need to constantly reflect and act on their personal classroom conduct.

My school culture and values have allowed me to conduct this study with much help, guidance and participation from my fellow teachers. The section that now follows gives detailed descriptions on vital issues of this study. These are the research design, the data collection plan and process, ethical considerations and the presentation of the data

#### **3.2 The Aim and Research Questions**

The aim of this study was to explore the various methods and techniques that teachers employed to effectively manage their classrooms. Marland (1993) states that an effective teacher is also an effective manager. It is essential for the effective teacher to manage the classroom in such a manner that it promotes teaching and learning in a positive, productive and rewarding manner. In order to achieve the aim of this study, the following critical questions were posed and explored:

1. What methods/ approaches do people use to manage their classrooms?
2. What do teachers perceive as effective classroom management?

### 3. How can the environment be adapted to achieve effective classroom management?

To gather answers to these critical questions, the case study approach was followed where the research was grounded in the interpretative paradigm.

#### **3.3 The Research Paradigm**

The case study research approach is grounded in the interpretative paradigm. McNiff (2002) believes that the interpretive paradigm offers a clear insight into the interactions between people and how the observer makes sense of this social contact. The interpretive framework is more concerned with understanding and describing a situation rather than just aiming to uncover the truth. Henning (2005) quotes Trauth (2001) in describing the interpretive framework as the meaning that people assign to a social interaction they observe.

The key research question, “What do teachers see as effective classroom management?” could be answered in a variety of ways by the interpretive researcher. The interpretive framework does not see definitions as cast in stone but rather as fluid, changing and unique. The researcher, in this framework would not see effective classroom management as a factor for promoting or hindering performance, but rather views the context in which teaching takes place as a whole, as the most important factor. Henning (2005, p20) argues that the interpretive paradigm looks at the *way* in which people make meaning and not merely *that* they make sense or *what* sense they make. An argument could be put forward that effective classroom management can only be achieved or attributed to the social contact, the teaching methods employed, and the trust level of involvement in the class. The actual interaction between teacher and learners is the vital criterion for generating knowledge in the interpretive framework. The researcher is seen as part of the research in the interpretive framework, taking on an “insider” role as he or she makes meaning through the observation of social interaction. Gadamar (1975) agrees

with this point and states but it is impossible to be completely objective within this framework.

The context in which social interaction takes place is very important for interpretation. A small class could be the result of a small community, remote location or a small rural setting serving the worker's children in the school. In the same way a small class might be the result of high school fees, an exclusive language policy or area of specialization. The interpretive framework is always used against a set of beliefs and practices, presuppositions and assumptions according to Gadamar (1975). Interpretation of the same situation can be very different from one person to another. The interpretive framework acknowledges and embraces this form of "fluid", unfixed sense making as stated earlier in this chapter. It is even referred to as a "fusion of horizons" by Gadamar (1975). The horizons refer to the various standpoints people take on, and it is precisely the unique way of this method that causes it to be favored or avoided by researchers. Replicating of such research is seen as impossible as each social setting will be characterized by its own uniqueness.

This study therefore primarily focused on the observed classroom practice and the interview conducted with the various respondents to interpret the collected data. Kelly (1999) categorizes this form of research as contextual research which involves the making of sense based on human experience. As a result the research is qualitative in nature and this type of data is normally associated with the interpretivist paradigm as Denzin and Lincoln (2003, p297) suggest. Interpretivism sees reality as multi-layered (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000) and as such many versions of the same reality can co-exist. These authors cite Brock-Utne (1996) as arguing that qualitative research is holistic and therefore "strives to record the multiple interpretations of, intentions in and meanings given" to various situations and events. The interpretive paradigm thus affords me the opportunity to express my interpretation of the observed events in the classrooms of the three participants. The qualitative approach further supports my search for answers to the critical questions.

### **3.4 Qualitative approach**

The study was qualitative in nature and the focus was essentially to interpret the classroom practice of the participants to seek ways to improve the practice that prevailed. This was done in consultation with the participants and through careful observation and ongoing discussion. The purpose of the qualitative approach was to gain a rich, fruitful description of the actual events that took place in the research setting. Gaining a first hand feel and experience of the teacher's classroom management style allowed me to compile a thick, rich description of how these teachers deal with classroom issues.

The interview also provided rich qualitative data that gave a clear insight into the teacher's biographical history. These aspects, in my opinion are crucial in understanding the way in which these individuals deal with classroom management concerns. A phenomenological approach concerns the analysis of the respondent's statements to explore themes that can be used to interpret their underlying meaning. According to Struwig and Stead (2001) such approaches make use of research methods such as interviews, observation and focus groups. This was thus also one of the motivating reasons for employing the data collection methods of observation and interviews.

Within the interpretive paradigm there is the explicit belief that reality consists of people's subjective experiences of the external world (Terre Blanche and Durrheim, 1999). These writers further state that researchers that subscribe to this ontology usually adopt an inter-subjective and empathic epistemology and employ qualitative methods to explore the subjective reasoning and meanings that lie behind social action. The qualitative approach within the interpretive paradigm also provides for culturally derived and historically situated interpretations (Crotty, 1998, p125). This forms a strong part of analyzing the data generated by this study and the qualitative approach provides the means to give some realistic answers to the critical questions posed.

Some theories that influence the learning process are also vital to mention. These include the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), Behaviourism and Social Learning theory.

Vygotski's theory (ZPD) of assisting learners to achieve a certain level of understanding is very relevant in this situation. The teacher can only assist or aid the learner to go beyond their current level of understanding when they can effectively control or manage the classroom. Social relationship, which exists in a classroom, can be utilized to make the ZPD accessible to all learners. Behaviourism, on the other hand advocates the idea of stimuli and responses. Any action causes a reaction and because of this teachers must strive to provide positive stimuli to ensure positive learning. The social learning theory holds that thinking is a vital part in learning. Observational learning takes place by observing social behaviour. A teacher must thus ensure that learners are exposed to positive role models and social contact that will bring about positive change. An in depth understanding of the learning process, social behaviour and outside influences is crucial for classroom management. The effective classroom manager must make use of these vital "tools" which could influence learning and ultimately classroom behaviour. A learner's behaviour has much to do with their motivation to learn.

### **3.5 The Case Study Approach**

The case study approach is grounded in the interpretivist paradigm as mentioned earlier. Cohen *et al* (2000, p.79) believe that this approach has the ability to 'catch the complexities and the situatedness of behaviour' in a particular situation. Since each class will represent its own contextual issues such as class size, learner's ability and so forth, it holds a uniqueness that cannot be replicated. Case studies furthermore can contribute to action and intervention according to Cohen *et al* (2000). We can thus learn something from a particular case. As the aim of this study was to learn ways of managing one's classroom effectively, the case study approach is well suited to this enquiry.

### **3.6 The Research Design**

The research was undertaken using the case study approach. The primary motivation for this was to explore various ways in which teachers conduct classroom management as part of their daily duties. The approach was aimed at improving my own classroom

practice as well as to stimulate the reflexive competence of the teachers involved and to create an awareness of their own classroom practice. Cohen *et al* (2000) emphasize significance as opposed to frequency as the hallmark of a case study. The significance of the classroom management approaches displayed by the participants was of particular interest in this study.

I selected a sample of three teachers and went into their classrooms to observe their classroom management skills with the aid of a video camera and an observation schedule. After the observation, a discussion was conducted with each teacher to discuss the positive and negative aspects of the observed lessons. An analysis was done to explore possible ways of improving the classroom practice at a further opportunity. This was followed by another observation session using the same observation schedule and electronic media. The discussion that followed the second observation session then looked at the differences between the first and second lessons. This practice emphasises the reflexive component of the teaching process. It also reinforces the fact that learning is a process which can be improved and made easier by implementing certain aspects of classroom management.

The three participants were also interviewed by means of a semi structured interview. This was done to gain an understanding of the biographical history and outlook on their tasks as teachers. The aforementioned information is seen as vital in understanding the ways in which these three individuals approach their calling as teachers. The interviews also provided an opportunity to gain an insight into aspects that might have been missed out or overlooked during the classroom observation and also for triangulation purposes. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000, p112) describes triangulation as a powerful method to demonstrate concurrent validity. The complexity and unpredictable nature of human interaction, such as in a classroom is better understood by using more than one way of gathering data or field notes. Triangulation is also seen as a means of bridging issues of reliability and validity. The fact that the majority of data were collected using observation makes the possibility of the Hawthorn effect a very real threat. Using an

interview reduced this threat and also provided some measure of validity to the collected data.

### **3.6.1 Selection of the participants**

The participants were selected by means of unique-case sampling. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000, p143) describe unique-case sampling as cases where participants share unique or unusual criteria or attributes. The teachers that I have selected all share a common respect and reputation for being highly effective teachers amongst the school staff. They also have a unique approach to their daily classroom practice that makes them favoured and in demand by parents. Parents often come to school and request to have their children in these teachers' classes for the year, based on their good reputation with learners.

The interpretive and qualitative approach to research is not always concerned with statistical accuracy, but it is more focused on a detailed, in-depth analysis. This fact is also significant in the reason for selecting the participants in this study. As a result, the sampling can also be seen as purposive sampling as well as convenience sampling. The participants were selected for their specific attributes and their excellent reputation as well as the fact that they were in the same school as me. The sample was furthermore also stratified as each teacher represented a different phase of schooling. Thus, the sample included a foundation phase teacher, an intermediate teacher and a senior phase teacher. This was done to give a holistic view of the primary school system to benefit all teachers from any phase of the primary school. The fact that all the participants were female was only coincidental. Two of the teachers involved were Coloured while one was Black (Sotho) and this is relevant to this study because it contributes to the linguistic dynamics of the classroom. The foundation phase teacher was Afrikaans speaking but taught in English. The intermediate teacher was Sotho speaking and was teaching in English while the senior phase teacher was English speaking and taught in English. Two of the participants were thus teaching in what was a second language for them. The school's language policy dictates the first language of instruction to be English while the

second language is Afrikaans. There was a designated Xhosa teacher that taught isiXhosa as a third language to grade four to grade seven.

The selected teachers had varied teaching experience and all but one has served in various other schools over their teaching careers. All of them had, however, spent a number of years in their current school. Their selection for this study was done because the majority of the staff perceived them as teachers that were exemplary and that other teachers could learn much from their classroom management approaches.

### **3.7 Data Production Plan**

The following section outlines how the data was collected; the instruments used in the process, and also raise issues related to the data collection process.

#### **3.7.1 Sources of Data**

What follows is the presentation of how data was generated for this study. The techniques, procedures and reasons for the choices made by the researcher are also provided. The primary sources of data were the selected teachers but a variety of relevant literature was consulted to ensure that the data generated was accurate and indicative of ways to obtain answers to the critical questions. The data was obtained by making use of an observation schedule and also by conducting a semi-structured interview with the respondents. Both the observation and the interviews were recorded by means of a video camera after the participants consented to this. What follows is a closer look at the data production instruments.

#### **3.7.2 The Data Production Instruments.**

The instruments used in this study were a self generated observation schedule and a semi-structured interview. These instruments were self designed by the researcher as the topic covered by this study namely Effective Classroom Management has not received

widespread coverage in the format that interested me as a researcher. An intensive search for existing instruments was conducted and the failure to uncover an appropriate instrument compelled me to design my own for this study. These instruments were discussed and permission was requested for their usage from the various participants.

### **3.7.2.1 The Observation Schedule**

My intention with this study was to go into a classroom and observe how the teacher was managing the particular class to ensure that effective teaching took place. In order to stay focused on this, I made use of an observation schedule. This semi-structured observation schedule was based on obstacles and challenges that I faced in my daily duties as a teacher. The idea was that the observed teachers were faced with similar challenges and their ways of dealing with these issues were to inform my classroom practice to improve it. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000, p305) argue that semi-structured observations will review observed data first before attempting to suggest explanations for the phenomena being observed. This was precisely my intention, therefore the observation schedule was designed to provide insight and understanding into how classroom management took place and how it could be improved to enhance teaching and learning.

Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000, p305) suggest that all research is, to some extent a form of observation since we cannot study anything without looking at it. The semi-structured observation schedule was thus an appropriate tool to study the classroom management practice of the participants. The use of a semi-structured observation schedule furthermore provides the opportunity to generate “rich, complex and potentially interpretive data” following Henning (2005). This writer argues that standardised observation alone does not always allow for the generation of *the rich, complex and potentially interpretive data that a contemporary qualitative researcher wishes to capture*. (Henning, 2005, p90)

It is this rich, complex and interpretive data that I wished to capture in order to reach a starting point to investigate the potential for improved classroom practice. Furthermore,

the use of a semi-structured observation schedule provided the space and freedom to observe issues other than those specifically focused on which might have an effect on classroom management. This in turn also makes provision for more than one way of analysis of the recorded data. Once the first observation was concluded, it was followed by a discussion where the strengths and weaknesses of the classroom practice were discussed with the relevant teacher. This discussion could only take place based on the observation of the teacher at work. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000, p305) stress that a semi-structured observation schedule will have an 'agenda of issues but will gather data to illuminate these issues in a far less pre-determined or systematic manner'.

While I knew what challenges I faced in my personal capacity as a teacher I did not know if the participants in this study faced the same challenges and if they did, how they managed to manage them. The best way for me to explore these questions was to simply go and see for myself. Thus the option to observe the teachers in action was the best method to see and experience their classroom practice first hand. A copy of the observation schedule is attached as an appendix at the end of the paper.

### **3.7.2.2 The Interview schedule**

To supplement the observation, I felt the need to also gain some biographical detail from the teachers involved in the study. The most appropriate way of obtaining this information was to conduct interviews with the respondents. Interviews have long been used as a major tool in research. Mathers, Fox and Hunn (1998) distinguish between different types of interviews and I considered the semi-structured interview most appropriate for the data that I required. It had a framework of written questions to guide me in the questioning but also allowed for additional information from respondents to be noted, explored and even highlighted.

The information that I required had direct bearing on the research questions. The responses from the respondents were vital in understanding the way in which they managed their various classrooms. According to Tuckman (1972) interviews can be the

principal means of gathering information that has direct bearing on the research objectives as was the case in my project. They can provide valuable information on what the interviewee knows (knowledge or information), what they like or dislike (values and preferences) as well as what the person thinks (attitudes and beliefs), according to Tuckman.

The interview is not just a data gathering exercise, but is a social, interpersonal encounter. It provides for that personal contact between the interviewer and interviewee which is also noted by Coombes (2005, p102). Coombes (2005) emphasizes the importance of appearance, the absence of threat, and the promotion of interest in other good communication skills. I aimed to acquire a holistic, authentic biographical picture of each of the respondents. Their background, teaching experience and training were all seen as contributors to how they managed their classrooms.

A vital consideration for transcribing the data generated by the interviews was the fact that this form of enquiry generates very large amounts of rich, textual data. To ensure accuracy and ensure that the rich, interpretive and complex data were not distorted in any way; all the interviews were recorded using electronic equipment. Coombes (2005) cautions that the presence of a tape recorder can influence the participants responses to questions posed. To counteract this occurring, I politely requested my informants to please be as honest as possible and also reassured them of full confidentiality.

### **3.8 Ethical considerations**

South Africa has become extremely aware of the rights of the individual in the last few years. In the same way research has undergone a growing awareness of moral issues and ethical practice towards those involved in a research project. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000, p49) state the following:

*ethical concerns encountered in educational research in particular can be extremely complex and subtle and can frequently place researchers in*

*moral predicaments which might appear quite unresolved.*

Research should not infringe on the rights and values of participants in a study. The search for truth should not receive priority over the rights and dignity of the people involved in the study.

My study focused on how teachers manage their classrooms effectively. This required an intense awareness of the ethical concerns which could affect the study. I aimed to produce a responsible, ethically sound and insightful study. In so doing, I acknowledged the rights and dignity of all participants and therefore treated each person involved in the study with utmost respect and dignity. The participants were politely approached and requests for information and access was done with courtesy and respect.

Gaining access to the research setting was a concern that I faced as I am also a full time teacher. This was overcome by selecting participants in my own school as described in the previous section. The only concern that I then faced was to schedule observation lessons at times when I could arrange supervision for my own class and when it was convenient for the informants in the study. Furthermore, written permission was obtained from all the relevant gatekeepers. These include the District Manager, the Ward Manager, the School Principal and the three teachers involved. The relevant letters are attached as appendices at the end of this study. The gatekeepers were informed of my intentions with this study and were requested to acknowledge and sign an attached return slip that was attached to the consent letters.

The three participants were individually given the background, objectives and motivation for the study. They knew exactly what my intentions were and what was expected from them. It should be noted that reasonable attempts were made to get all three teachers in the same room at the same time but their extra-mural activities and other obligations made this impossible.

After the University of Kwazulu Natal had granted an ethical clearance certificate and when all these gatekeepers gave written consent and agreed to the study taking place, the actual research process started.

The participants were assured that any findings would be shared with them. An honest, open minded line of communication was established with them. These people took part in the study based on their own willingness and full disclosure of the study on the part of the researcher. No part of the study was concealed or withheld from the participants in any way. It would have been unethical to do things without the full knowledge of the various participants.

The individual's freedom to decline to participate in the study or to withdraw from it at any given time without any negative consequence was conveyed to the participants. An informed consent letter was signed by each teacher to ensure acceptable ethical procedures were followed. Furthermore, the study assured participants of the absence of harm or danger to them in any way. To ensure this, no procedures that could result in undesirable consequences were employed. An undertaking to avoid misrepresentation or superficial use of the data was also made.

When discussing the research aims and intentions with the participants various other ethical issues were addressed. The participants were given letters to give consent and also to inform them of their rights to withdraw from the study at any time. A copy of these consent letters are attached as an appendix at the end of this paper. The participants were guaranteed of their anonymity by having their identities protected. This was done by referring to teachers as teacher "A, B or C". The identity of the school and principal were also protected by referring to the school as "the research setting". The collected data was also ethically obtained and the participants were informed that this particular data would be stored in a safe place within my residence. After completion of the dissertation the data was to be sent to the University of Kwazulu Natal for storage. After five years the university would than dispose of the data in an acceptable way without participants being exposed in any way.

### **3.9 Validity and Reliability Issues**

Validity is often described as a measure of how accurate the research is and Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000, p105) describe validity as an important key to effective research. Validity of the research instruments are said to be sound if the instrument actually measures what it sets out to measure. Mouton (1996) argues that the researcher, the participants and the context are all potential sources of error. As a result the validity of the instruments was assured in various ways. These were by making use of electronic media (a video camera) which would provide an accurate depiction of what transpired in the classroom. The participants were also asked to read the interview transcripts and to verify that it was indeed an accurate reflection of what was said in the interview. The use of more than one data collecting tool was also a measure to triangulate and verify the data collected for this study.

A reliable instrument for a piece of research will yield similar data from similar respondents over time. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000, p119) suggest that qualitative research reliability can be seen as the fit between what is recorded as data and the actual occurrences in the research setting. The observation schedule that I have used provides a reliable fit between the actual classroom activity and the recorded data. The interpretive paradigm provides for a multitude of interpretations that still holds reliability of the same setting by various researchers. Bogdan and Biklen (1992, p48) emphasise the “degree of accuracy and comprehensiveness of coverage” in a study. There is no striving for uniformity but rather a view that more than one finding can be reliable. The research instruments used in this study can provide valuable information if used in a similar context. These research instruments, namely the interview schedule and the observation schedule are also attached as appendices at the end of this paper. The research instruments reflect the issues that concern me as a teacher in my efforts to achieve effective classroom management in my own class. Issues of class size, teacher training and experience as well as teacher initiatives might vary from setting to setting but they are all very relevant to how the classroom is managed to achieve ECM.

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

The first limitation of this study came about as a result of my own personal knowledge and perception of the school and its staff. The selected school was the school where I was a learner and later a member of staff. Some of the teachers in the school were teachers there when I was only a learner at the school and these teachers are now my colleagues. I thus had to exercise caution not to influence the findings from the study in any way. Henning (2005), argues that case studies are designed to gain an in-depth understanding of the situation and the meaning that the people involved derive from this interaction. Babbie and Mouton (1998), state that research involves a high level of collaboration with the people that are experiencing a problem to completely understand the circumstances that prevail in the school. I thus had to curb my own potential bias to focus on the participants and the search for an improved classroom practice.

The study was also made possible because of the culture and management style of the school. The principal has also completed a Masters Degree in the same field and thus was very understanding and accommodating in allowing and assisting me in doing this project. I firmly believe that conducting this study would have been impossible in a school where the management and school culture were indifferent to this way of seeking improvement. My school gave me the freedom and opportunity to conduct the research without facing much resistance or objection. Furthermore, this type of enquiry is participant driven and it cannot take place without willing participants. Fortunately, the teachers involved in my study were willing to participate in the study and were eager to explore ways of improving their classroom practice.

The case study researcher does attempt to accommodate multiple perspectives. This is because they are strong on reality and reality is often diverse in the way that people interpret it. The term “effective” in seeking an answer to effective classroom management is subjective and might be seen in various ways by different people.

In a school, the principal might feel that the pass rate of learners is vital, while a teacher might be less concerned with the pass rate and more concerned with the learners' sporting achievements. Thus a conflict situation can evolve between academic contact time and time for sports practice in the school. This could be a reflection on the kind of diversity that one could expect in a multi-cultured school such as mine. Although it might be possible to replicate the study in another school, it would be inaccurate to accept the findings as the norm in every other similar context. Coupled with generalizability, another limitation of case studies is the role of the researcher.

The role of the researcher is also questioned from other perspectives. Mouton (2001) highlights the subjectivity of certain forms of research. The researcher being part of the study is seen as a potential weakness in research. The personal involvement of a researcher might distort the research process and the findings. Participants can furthermore influence or manipulate the research process to suit their own interest. As mentioned earlier, case studies are considered prone to observer bias and I had to guard against this during class visits and observations.

The advantages of case study research far outweigh the disadvantages and any form of research inevitably presupposes some advantages and disadvantages. The selected approach should thus fit the purpose and the reasons for employing it. The fact that case studies catch unique features that pertain to the case is of particular relevance. The classroom management skills that the participants employed were not only diverse and interesting but also unique and special in their own right.

### **3.11 Conclusion**

Case study research is an approach that aims to catch unique features of the case that is being observed. It involves skilful research and an awareness of those aspects that are significant and unique within the case being studied. The researcher thus employs methods that capture the reality of people's lives or as in this case, the classroom management skills that teachers display. Therefore, I had to be very selective in

choosing the respondents for my study. A balance between theory and practice, (praxis) has to be achieved as both the practice and the acknowledgement of underlying theory are important in case studies, while the participation and commitment of role-players are similarly vital for achieving success.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **DATA PRESENTATION**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

In this chapter, I present the data that was produced by this study. As mentioned earlier, the case study method of enquiry was used as this method placed particular focus on the interaction between people. This very interaction between the selected participants and their environment forms the basis of the exploration for an improved classroom management practice. This section will present the profile of the school and a profile of the three selected participants. This will be followed by a description of the first observation lessons and the discussions that followed the observations. Thereafter, the second observation lesson will be described with the discussion that followed this event. The interviews done with the participants will also be presented. The conclusion will sum the data presentation.

#### **4.2 Profile of the school**

The selected school was located in the eastern part of a small town located in the southern part of Kwazulu Natal. The school was first taken into use in 1979. This happened shortly after two other schools (a Catholic and a Congregational school) amalgamated into a new school. The research setting has been growing in learner numbers steadily over the last thirty years. Its initial inception was to cater for the predominantly coloured community in the local environment but today it comprises a learner population of more than one thousand learners of which almost seventy percent is Black and about thirty percent is Coloured. The exact number of learners stands at one thousand one hundred and seventy eight (1178). There are five hundred and seventy one (571) boys in the school and six hundred and seven (607) girls. This large number of learners is served by forty educators. Six are employed by the School Governing Body (SGB) while thirty

four are state employed. The school also employs four caretakers, three of whom are appointed by the School Governing Body (SGB).

The school comprises seven buildings that serve various purposes. The first is the administration block. This single story holds the offices for the principal, deputies and school secretary as well as the staffroom and toilet facilities for the staff. The second building is a double story that houses the computer room and fifteen classrooms. The third building is a new addition for the school and holds three classrooms that are separated by two roll-up doors. The building sometimes serves as a venue for meetings and the doors are rolled up to create a big hall that is used for parent meetings. Next to this building, are the toilet facilities for boys on one side and for girls on the other. The toilets are also designed to cater for both juniors on one side and seniors on the other. The next block is a double storey building which holds twelve foundation phase classrooms. The last building is the soup kitchen which caters for the disadvantaged learners of the school. It is funded solely through donations from sponsors and the SGB employs a cook that prepares meals for these learners. Several attempts to obtain state funding for our feeding scheme have been unsuccessful. The soup kitchen initiative is kept afloat by the school and volunteers from the business community that sponsor items or cash on a regular basis.

Each class is equipped with an intercom system and all learners from grade three are trained in basic computer literacy in the computer room. The school has a twenty six seater school bus and is in the process of purchasing another similar bus. These are mostly used to transport learners for sporting events to neighbouring schools. The school provides sporting opportunities in soccer, rugby, netball, cricket, and athletics. Parking is provided for the teachers in an access-controlled area. These gates are also monitored by CCTV cameras and access is restricted to teachers only. The SGB has many more plans for the future but many are on hold as a result of the poor payment of school fees. On average, about sixty percent of learners pay their school fees in full. A small portion of learners' parents apply for exemption from school fees based on various reasons such as foster parenting. The rest of the learner population simply does not pay

school fees. The school is ranked as Quintile five (5) and is a section twenty one (21) school. The school's profile is of particular relevance to the study as it demonstrates the vast diversity of the learner and teacher population. Not only is the school in the process of becoming an English first language school, where Afrikaans will only be taught as a second language but learners and teachers are of various race groups and experience as well as different levels of education and training. The school principal is, however a person who continually promotes further professional development and has obtained a Master's Degree in Education in his own right. Various other teachers on the staff are also in the process of improving their qualifications. The participants in this particular study were not studying at the time of the research but have recently upgraded their qualifications as will be shown in the teachers' profiles.

#### **4.3 Profile of the participants.**

What follows is a profile of each of the selected participants. This was compiled with the use of the observed behaviour and the interviews conducted with each teacher.

##### **4.3.1 Teacher A**

Teacher A is a female teacher, fifty five years old. She comes from a very big family consisting of eight sisters and two brothers. She is widowed and has two daughters of her own. Teacher A often compares the learners in her class to her own daughters. She is also the proud granny to two grandsons and a grand daughter. She lives with her children and grand children.

Teacher A has been teaching for thirty five years, having started teaching in 1974 at the previous mentioned Catholic school, where she taught for five years, thereafter in 1979 she moved to the research setting. Although she was on accouchement leave at the time of the move, she soon joined the staff of the research setting. Teacher A still uses the very first class that she occupied on arrival at the school. Her move to the new school was as a result of an amalgamation of two schools as a result of the Group Areas Act.

This particular teacher regards discipline as a vital factor for effective classroom management. To achieve this she teaches her class recitations or rhymes and while they are moving around, she lets them say them to keep them busy and in this way, the discipline in the class is manageable. Teacher A finds this method very effective in achieving a measure of classroom management.

Teacher A prefers to have groups of learners that do counting while the others do other work. They all have their activities to do; while she is busy with one group on the mat, she has her flashcards so that the learners can see what she is doing. She finds this very effective because the cards are kept on the board all the time and the learners know exactly what is going on at all times during the lesson.

Regarding education, Teacher A left school in standard eight and started teaching with a two year diploma in Teaching. Realizing the importance of qualifications, she completed her matric and did M+3 and then finished M+4 in 2007. She is currently occupied with echoing the word about the Catholic faith and how to teach little ones catechism. This teacher clearly loves children and often refers to them as 'little ones'. She finds it very rewarding to work with these children and she feels that she understands them well, like her own children. She says the following:

*'Oh! I love the little ones. It's like uh...It's very rewarding, I think so, because I think I understand them more than, like my own children, you know. I only have these two (my daughters) and now I've got how many? Forty of them and they are quite a hand full but you have to know how to work with them, you know, and I think they need more... they need lots and lots of attention.'*

Her attempts to do this include lots of praising and encouragement. Teacher A has Afrikaans as her first language but she teaches in English. She had an Afrikaans class at various stages of her career and she is conversant in both English and Afrikaans. This teacher is however not conversant in isiXhosa at all.

The teacher also feels fairly satisfied with her learners' performance. She has different groups, which she calls excellent, slow and very slow ones. The groups are compiled only after the teacher has worked with the entire class for some time. This is done to make an accurate assessment of which learner should go in which group. The intervention is taken further as the teacher takes the ones that are really struggling to her table and assists them there, while also encouraging others that do not understand something to come and ask for help. Teacher A furthermore believes that parental involvement plays a very big role in these children's lives and if they don't have that at home, they will always come and cling to the teacher as she is the nearest to them. This, she believes gives rise to other social problems such as learners not wanting to sit next to those that they perceive as threats. Teacher A tries to counteract this by grouping them and then working with them in groups. She feels that each learner has the potential to grow academically and she stated that learners from one group often progress to a stronger group as their comprehension and ability to grasp concepts improve. For this very reason she often resorts to initially creating four groups which might change in the fourth term when her top two groups become one and she is again left with just three groups.

Learners' performance is measured in various ways. She gives the learners activities and worksheets and assessment is done on work covered. If the work is done very well or neatly, Teacher A rewards them with a little star or a "smiley face" and that makes them very excited and eager to be recognised. This form of rewarding can be seen in terms of behaviourism where the learners are rewarded for work well done. The reward (star or smiley face) boosts their motivational levels and they often say, "I know my work", so it inspires them. Teacher A does have some issues that she perceives as obstacles to learning; some of these are poverty and HIV. She states that a sick child, especially the little ones that she works with, tend to just sit there and look at the teacher and if they also had nothing to eat, one gets nothing out of them. For this reason she perceives the soup kitchen as a very good thing to supply basic nutrition to needy learners. She also

encourages learners who bring bread to school and do not intend to eat it to bring it to her class. She is convinced that there is someone else that might need it.

Teacher A has thirty eight learners in her class. She was overwhelmed with such a large number, but has made controlling them easier by setting them up in groups. The class comprises of Black and Coloured children but Teacher A perceives children as children and not as a Black or a Coloured child. Each learner is treated the same as the next and the teacher takes all of them as her own children. She also acknowledges that her learners are not worried about race or colour and they often help each other.

To deal with discipline problems, Teacher A does not normally send her learners out of the classroom as they are still so small. She tells them to go and sit right at the back of the class and she ignores them for a while. After they have been sitting there quietly for a while, they are allowed to join their classmates. Teacher A does, however, state that this form of punishment makes her feel very bad but she regards it as necessary from time to time. Teacher A is genuinely concerned and cares for her learners and even allows them to go to the soup kitchen earlier, before official break time, before the bigger ones come so that they can have something to eat. The years of experience and the natural motherly instinct is clearly visible in Teacher A's approach to her learners, revealing her calling as a teacher and her caring and supporting role as a colleague and fellow teacher.

#### **4.3.2 Teacher B**

Teacher B is a single, female teacher, thirty three years old. She comes from a family of six members and has three sisters and two brothers. Her parents are still alive and well, and Teacher B has a child of her own. He's six months old and he is her pride and joy. This particular teacher has been teaching for nine years. She started teaching in 2001 at a school in Libode. It is a Catholic School and she lived there with the nuns before bringing her experience to the research setting. She has been teaching at the research setting for four years. Teacher B regards effective classroom management as a kind of management where learners are handled in such a way that they can do their work without fear of failure and in an open surrounding where exploration is not only

permitted, but the norm. She believes that this is achieved by engaging the learners fully in the lesson, by giving them time for reflection and by allowing learners to think critically. Her preferred means of assessment is continuous assessment and she is a strong supporter of constructivism.

Teacher B likes starting from what the learners know then moving to the unknown. She realizes that learners are strong individuals in their own right and she states that learners sometimes come to class with alternate conceptions and sometimes misconceptions that the teacher has to address. Teacher B values prior knowledge and encourages learners to learn in more than one way. For this reason, she gives time for group discussions and encourages work in pairs as well as individual work. Teacher B believes that a learner should be developed holistically and she treats each learner as a unique individual with their own strengths and weaknesses. She therefore gives projects, assignments and assessment sheets where the learners can reflect on what they have been doing and comment on how they feel about it.

Teacher B has completed her B.Ed (Hons.) graduating in April 2009. She also completed her Bachelor of Technology in 2004, and before that she completed her Senior Teacher's Diploma in 2000. Her home language is Sesotho and she regards herself as lucky that her parents are not of the same culture. Her mother is Zulu, while her father is Sotho. She thus sees her culture as quite diverse and expanded as she is part Sotho and part Zulu. Teacher B prefers to speak of "home language", because the term "mother tongue" does not reflect her reality, because her mother speaks Zulu, while her father speaks Sotho.

Teacher B measures her learners' performance in various ways. She gives them work schedules, tests and activities as the lesson progresses. She also gives them various tasks and believes that the learner should be assessed using a variety of forms of assessment which cater for different learning approaches.

This particular teacher recognises that her approach creates challenges as she encourages her learners to be broad minded. She regularly reminds them that they can learn from

watching television and from reading newspapers, magazines and so forth. She identifies reluctant learners and therefore encourages a variety of forms of learning. Teacher B argues that if learners are not knowledgeable, it's difficult to deal with such a challenged learner because they do not know what is happening in their own world. This is perceived as a real challenge to this teacher. Teacher B also addresses this issue by placing learners in mixed ability groups where more knowledgeable learners can engage with those who seem less in touch with academic and social issues.

Teacher B applies discipline through various rules such as class rules, school rules and group rules. She furthermore encourages her learners to come up with their own life motto and to live by it. She also enforces discipline by keeping learners in after school to complete work and she even takes away learners' break time in extreme cases. If this does happen, she allows learners to go to the toilet, to eat and so on, but playing is not permitted. She is extremely aware of her responsibility towards her learners and she realizes that she is not allowed to deprive them of basic needs. Teacher B believes that the punishment must fit the offence and that learners should know why they are being punished at all times. She states that learners must acknowledge their behaviour. Teacher B has forty two learners in her class, half of whom are Coloured and half who are Black.

Because of the racial composition of her class, Teacher B finds it necessary to code switch occasionally to accommodate all learners. In one of the observation lessons, she asked a learner to say that 'time was up' in isiXhosa. Teacher B complimented the learner, telling him that she could not have done as well because she is not Xhosa speaking. The instruction is then expressed, acknowledging the learner's own culture. Socio-economically, Teacher B's class is fairly well off. She regards them as about average and no one really makes use of the school's soup kitchen.

Teacher B feels that teacher planning needs to be done well. This, she argues stimulates the learners to respond to the lesson more intellectually. According to her, the learners respect her efforts, respond and become appreciative. She also feels that the teacher should get to know her learners on a more personal level and not focus strictly on

academics. Teacher B recognises that teachers needs to address certain problems of a personal nature from time to time, but the teacher can only realize that there is a problem if the teacher knows the learners on a personal level. This teacher therefore takes her pastoral role very seriously. She realizes that her learners are at a very sensitive age in their development and that they should be handled with care, dignity and respect. She states the following;

*I feel that it is really my responsibility to develop them, especially in their age. They are teenagers, they can easily be misled and you need to not only consider the learning area based on the curriculum but also get to know them better. Get into their lives and if they need somebody to sympathise and empathise with them, you should do so as a teacher and be a role model to them.*

This teacher is clearly in touch with her learner's needs and she clearly understands their delicate minds and the challenges they face on their way to adulthood. She treats them like her own children and goes out of her way to be attentive, aware and approachable to her learners at all times.

#### **4.3.3 Teacher C**

Teacher C is a twenty five year old single female. She is in her fourth year of teaching. This teacher comes from a family of five children, three of whom are from a previous marriage. Each of her parents has a girl from their respective new partners. Teacher C herself is the proud mother of a two year old daughter. This is the teacher's first teaching post. The only other schools that she worked in previously were the schools in which she did her practical teacher training.

Teacher C has very specific ideas on what effective classroom management is. She thinks that E.C.M. is when the learners are busy working and are responding and are doing what they are told to do. Teacher C feels that effective classroom management will lead to the class being quiet, the teacher and learners being busy, while the class is

peaceful. Her preferred teaching method includes extensive writing on the board. She believes in writing all her notes on the board, from beginning to end, and this sometimes takes more than one lesson. Once the learners have written all the notes, Teacher C allows the children to read through the notes on their own and from there, she reads through the notes with them, explaining each section as they go along.

Teacher C has not received any additional training as a teacher since she started teaching at the research setting. She has expressed a desire to further her studies but has not yet decided on the issue. Her home language is English and she also teaches in English. According to the grade seven timetable, Teacher C is supposed to teach Life Orientation to one class in Afrikaans, but she stated that the particular class preferred her to teach them in English. She assesses her learners' performance through various methods. In English she assesses poetry; she uses language tests, comprehensions, and some group work. In Life Orientation and Economic Management Science, she makes use of assignments, projects and task to assess learners' performance.

The main obstacle to learning that this teacher experiences is behavioural problems. She is aware of some of poverty and socio economic problems in some classes, but her own class seems to be well off, the way she sees it. Her class has forty one learners equally divided by gender. This class has predominantly Black and Coloured learners with the exception of one Indian girl.

The coping methods that this teacher employs to deal with discipline include chasing learners out of the classroom. She also gives them punishment like writing out lines and if the offence disturbs the rest of the class, she resorts to chasing them out of class for the period. Teacher C describes her class as about average. She noticed that many of the learners bring lunch tins and if they are asked to do something, like a task or project, they buy the charts and the resources needed to do the task without complaints or interventions from the parents or guardians. Furthermore, none of the learners from Teacher C's class makes use of the soup kitchen.

Teacher C is in the awkward position that she is involved in subject teaching and has to move from class to class to teach any one of four grade seven classes. She thus only sees her own class of learners when she teaches them for that lesson. Her own class is very differently arranged to the other classes that she works in. Resources such as charts and textbooks are at hand and within close reach in her own classroom but this is not so in the other classrooms. She clearly feels more comfortable and at home in her own classroom but her subject teaching forces her to spend three quarters of the school day in someone else's classroom. This in itself poses an enormous challenge for effective classroom management and for general control of the classroom setup and atmosphere. Her frustration and helplessness with the situation came through clearly at times.

#### **4.4 Observation lesson one**

What follows are the reports on the first observation lessons. The reports constitute an account of what transpired in the various classrooms and further comment and analysis will be given in the next chapter. The observation schedule is attached as an appendix.

##### **4.4.1 Teacher A**

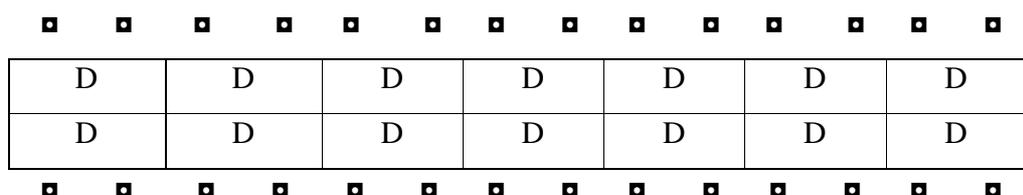
This particular teacher has a grade one class and has forty (40) learners in the class. On arriving in the classroom, the learners were expecting me as the teacher told them that they would be having a visitor. The learners greeted me excitedly and called me by my name saying "Good morning Mr. Coetzee". I politely greeted them and thanked them for allowing me to see how they worked in their classroom. I then found a spot where I could see everything but not be in their direct sight, in order not to cause any form of distraction. I took out my observation schedule and video camera and started recording the events in the classroom.

The teacher had a typed lesson plan and referred to it at the beginning of the lesson. The language used in the classroom was English and I did not detect any other language used during my visit. The teacher proceeded to explain that she was going to read a story to

the learners. She asked them to fold their arms and to listen to the story attentively. The story was boldly written on a chart. The chart was placed on the board where all the learners could see it. The teacher read the story and then she asked the learners to read the same story. This was followed by individual learners being asked to read the story while the rest were listening. Each learner pointed at the words and then read them. All these activities took place while the learners were seated on a mat in front of the classroom.

The teacher asked learners to look at the first sentence of the story. She sounded the “et” sound. Both teacher and learners then looked and sounded all the”et” sounds in the first sentence of the story. This action was repeated twice. After this, the teacher asked some learners to go back to their seats and to write all the words with “et” sounds from the story in their notebooks. Some learners stayed on the mat in front of the classroom. They were given a chart with the alphabet on it. They also received a moneybag with labels in. These had the letters of the alphabet printed on them. The learners on the mat then had to match the letters on the chart with the letters on the labels. These learners (as the teacher explained afterwards) were struggling with letter recognition and she had devised the given exercise to improve the skill of recognizing letters and then sounding them.

While these learners on the mat were matching the labels to the chart, the rest were writing all the words with”et” sounds into their notebooks. The teacher rendered assistance where it was required and moved around frequently to get an idea of what each learner was doing. The learner’s desks were arranged in a linear formation where one group of learners sat next to each other but also faced the other learners on the other side. The diagram shows how the learners were seated.



D = Desk    ■ = Learner's Seat

The entire class was well dressed in school uniform and the majority of learners were from middle and upper socio economic income groups according to the teacher.

#### 4.4.2 Teacher B

This teacher had a grade six class with forty (40) learners. Just as in the previous class the teacher and learners were expecting my visit. The learners enthusiastically greeted me and also called me by my name. I responded politely and made myself at home in a desk that was out of the way from the already set-up groups. The learners were sitting in groups of six. The diagram indicates the way that groups were set up.



The teacher addressed all learners and gave each group the opportunity to select a name for their group. After a while, the groups were asked to give their names to the teacher who wrote them on the board. She commented on the names in a positive manner. After writing all the group names on the board, the teacher called for all the learners to listen attentively to the task that they had to perform. Each group was given a specific area within the school and that group then had to formulate a set of rules for the specific area. The areas included the entire school, the classroom and the playground. Thus, some groups had to formulate school rules, the next group class rules, another group group-rules and another group formulated playground rules. Each group's task was clearly explained and the teacher made sure that each group knew what to do. The teacher stated that she was only allowing ten minutes for this task to be completed.

As the groups started their discussions, there was an interruption. Another teacher entered the classroom and started talking to Teacher B. Teacher B politely requested the other teacher to please see her later. The teacher agreed and left the classroom. Teacher B moved around between the groups and noticed that some groups had not completed the assigned task. She then announced that she would give each group five more minutes to complete the task. She also gave clarity on the role of each member in the group. They needed a scribe, a timer and a reporter.

After five minutes, the teacher reminded the group that time was running out. A short while later, the teacher started with a countdown. She said “Five, four, three, two, one and stop.” The whole class joined in the countdown and all groups stopped writing after the teacher said stop. The teacher reminded the groups that misbehaving groups would be disqualified. She called learners by their names and encouraged them to report back on their discussions. One group complained that their selected reporter was reluctant to perform his assigned duty. The teacher encouraged the learner. She told him that he could do it and that he would do well as it was a group effort and he had to do his part in making the group’s work complete. The learner then felt confident and agreed to report back on the group’s discussion.

The groups came to the front of the class one by one. The reporter from each group reported on the discussion and the teacher wrote each rule as it was mentioned on the board. All the other learners could see the rules being written on the board. At this point there was another interruption. A learner from another class had returned some Xhosa books from the Xhosa teacher, who had been marking them. Teacher B asked the learner to place the books in front of the classroom which the learner did then left. Teacher B continued to write the rules on the board as each was reported.

As each group finished, the teacher praised them and asked the class to applaud them. The applause was very specific. The teacher shouts “Hola” and the rest of the class responds by clapping their hands only once. I found this method of control very interesting. Teacher B continued by encouraging learners and telling them to be proud of

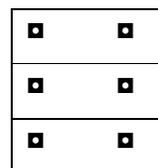
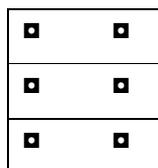
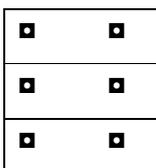
themselves. At this point there was yet another interruption. The intercom had buzzed and an announcement came through. All the learners and teacher listened attentively. The announcement called for all the learners with eye problems to be sent to the staffroom. Teacher B responded by sending the already identified learners to the staffroom. The rest of the learners were asked to take down the notes written on the board. The learners obliged and I thanked the class and their teacher for their time and left the classroom.

#### 4.4.3 Teacher C

Unlike the previous two classes, this particular class was not aware of my visit. They did however greet me courteously and welcomed me politely. This was a grade seven class with forty two (42) learners. Teacher C was not their regular class teacher and taught this particular class English and Life Orientation. The classroom also did not belong to Teacher C, as the grade seven learners stay in their classrooms while the teachers move from class to class because in this grade learners experience subject teaching. The idea of the teachers moving from class to class was an effort to curb the noise factor which always accompanied the learners when they were expected to move to the next teacher's classroom.

The Technology teacher had just finished his lesson and left, but learners were still taking notes from the board. Teacher C was now coming into the class to teach English but she had to give the learners some time to write their Technology notes from the board. Teacher C announced that she was giving them a few more minutes to finish their notes before she would start with her lesson.

The classroom was arranged in rows, as indicated below.



□	□
□	□
□	□

□	□
□	□
□	□

□	□
□	□
□	□

After a few minutes, Teacher C asked learners to please put their Technology notes away. She then explained her plan of action for the lesson. She explained that she was going to read a story to the class. (The teacher referred to the poem as a story) The learners would then read the story to themselves. She continued to read a poem to the learners. They listened and followed on the handouts that had been distributed by one of the other learners. After completion of the reading of the poem, the teacher allowed the learners to read the poem. She then started moving among the learners as they read on their own. I could hear giggling and laughing from some of the learners as they were reading the poem. The teacher ignored this and I have to admit, some of the terms used in the poem were quite funny. After a while the teacher asked the learners to read the story together, which they did. After completion of this task the teacher thanked them for the reading saying: “That was okay. It could be better.”

Teacher C then asked learners to take out their pencils. She said “We are now going to take the poem apart.” At this point there was an interruption. There was a knock on the door. One of the learners responded by opening the door. Someone wanted chalk and the learner who opened the door gave them some after which they left. The teacher did not even look at the door or the person who wanted the chalk. She continued with the lesson. Competition was encouraged among the learners when the teacher commented that the girls could read better than the boys. The boys protested and claimed that they were better at reading. Upon hearing this, the teacher allowed the boys to read the poem and thereafter the girls got an opportunity to read. The learners debated on which group was the best at reading. The teacher did not intervene but rather moved to the front of the classroom where all the learners could see her.

The teacher then explained that she was going to give the learners an opportunity to look at the poem to identify any difficult words that they might not understand. The learners started engaging with the text while the teacher started moving around between them

again. After a few minutes, the teacher asked if there were any words that they did not understand or words that they needed clarity on. The learners all agreed that they understood all the words. The teacher, however, was not convinced. She walked towards the chalkboard and wrote a word on the board.

She wrote the word “imitate” on the board. Teacher C then turned towards the class and said that she wanted to know what this word meant. The learners started discussing the word and the teacher allowed the deliberation to continue. I could hear some learners talking in Xhosa. One learner asked another for a dictionary. After consulting the dictionary, this learner explained what the word meant. The teacher acknowledged the answer and asked the rest of the learners to turn to the questions on the poem. She read through the questions with the class following on their own sheets. The teacher assessed the learner’s comprehension on the questions by asking if they understand them and if they would be able to answer them. The class responded positively.

The learners started reading through the questions while the teacher guided them in obtaining the answers. They were then instructed to answer the questions in their notebooks. She also made reference to previous notes. Learners were asked to look at their earlier notes to find out what a ‘metaphor’ is. Teacher C encouraged learners to do their own work and not to copy from their neighbour. It was quite noisy outside as it was the last period for the day. The teacher did not seem bothered by the noise and continued her work as normal. She continued moving around between the learners checking on them doing their assigned task. The end of the period arrived and I politely excused myself from the classroom.

#### **4.5 Observation lesson two**

What follows are the reports on the second observation lessons. It is merely a review of what transpired in the various classrooms and the interpretation of the events will be given in the next chapter. The observation schedule is attached as an appendix.

#### **4.5.1 Teacher A**

The second observation lesson started with the teacher explaining what she was going to do. She said that she was going to read a story to the class; thereafter the entire class would read the story. Teacher A then continued to read the story while the class listened attentively. The learners then read the story in the same way as the teacher did with the exception that the teacher pointed at each word and then the learners read the word. All the learners were involved in the reading activity. The teacher called the learners by their names and those called were asked to stand in front of the chart with the story on. These learners were then asked to point out the “et” sounds in the story. These learners in turn pointed at a word in the story, read the word and then sounded it. The rest of the learners would sound the word and say it out loud as well. This exercise continued and more and more learners would come to the chart and get a chance to point at a word, read it and sound it.

After a number of learners had done the identifying exercise, the teacher asked the learners to find a name in the story. Most learners put up their hands and the teacher called one by his name. The learner came to the front and pointed at the word “Ben” in the story. The learner read the word, sounded it and read it again. The class echoed his action and also read and sounded the name in the story.

After the learner had returned to the rest of the group, the teacher asked the class what they could tell her about the word Ben. One hand was raised. The learner was given the opportunity to answer and he said that Ben was a name. The teacher acknowledged the answer and said indeed, that Ben was a name. She then asked if anyone else could say anything about the word Ben. One learner responded that his dog’s name was Ben. Teacher A acknowledged the answer but wanted to know what else was special about the name Ben. The class grew quiet. The teacher prompted them. She said that “a name always starts with a ..... “ and the class responded, “with a capital letter”. The teacher wanted to know whose name this was. She wanted to know if it was a boy or a girl’s

name. The class responded that it was a boy's name. Teacher A praised the class and thanked them for their answers and participation.

Teacher A continued with the lesson. She said that she was going to say then what they were going to do in their groups. There was one particularly disruptive learner. The teacher called him by his name saying "Come Cole, come Cole." The learner immediately behaved and sat down on the mat. The teacher explained that she wanted the learners to write some "et" words and then write a pattern. She also said that she was going to give smiley faces for neat work. Teacher A then called upon the Blue group to stand up and to go back to their seats. They had to write their words while the other learners remained on the mat. The work was already written on the board, so the Blue group could start with their writing straight away. The teacher politely asked them not to take too long to write. Teacher A then started moving around between the learners on the mat and those in their seats.

A short while later Teacher A reminded the Blue group that she was only giving them five minutes to finish their task of writing their six words. Both the learners on the mat and those writing were occupied at the same time. The learners that were writing were however, reminded that they should finish their writing and join the ones on the mat again. The teacher continued to move about the two groups and it was puzzling me that the Blue group was so small compared to the group on the mat. As Teacher A moved between the learners on the mat, she encountered a learner that was struggling. The teacher responded to this learner by telling her to look at the word again and to try to sound it again. The learner looked at the word again and tried to sound it again. This time the learner was successful in reading and sounding the word. The teacher praised the learner and told her that she had done well. The learner smiled and was eager to read another word exploring her newfound confidence. At this point the teacher asked the Red group to stand. I now had identified two groups, the Blue and the Red groups.

The Blue group returned to the mat, while the Red group made their way to their desks to write their six words. The teacher repeated her instruction saying, "Red group, please

write your six words and return to the mat once you have finished”. The disruptive learner from earlier was again addressed by the teacher. She said, “Cole, sit properly.” The learner responded by changing his posture on the chair and now sat facing the chalkboard in front of the classroom. After a while the teacher thanked the Red group and asked the Yellow group to stand and to go to their seats to write their words. At that point there was an interruption. Another teacher entered the classroom and handed a book to Teacher A, who was standing close to the door. Teacher A quickly took the book and the other teacher left the classroom. Teacher A then moved towards her table where she started marking the words written by the previous groups. She requested some books that were not placed on her table for marking. After these books were given to the teacher, she asked the Green group to please stand.

The Green group then made their way to their seats and started their writing. The teacher continued to move around between learners, occasionally marking a book but keeping an active presence between all learners. I could hear another teacher shouting at some learners outside Teacher A’s classroom. The learners had been running outside the classroom and since running between the buildings was not permitted, I assume that this was the reason for the shouting. Teacher A was not distracted by this at all and continued to monitor her learners and helped where there was a need to do so. A short while later, all the learners were asked to return to their seats. They now had to take down some notes from the board. The notes were already written on the board so the teacher could still move freely move around the classroom without still having to write notes on the board. The teacher that was shouting outside earlier entered Teacher A’s classroom. She had a brief chat with Teacher A after which she moved towards a cupboard. She then opened the cupboard, removed a kettle and left the classroom.

Teacher A focused her attention on the learners again and asked them to look on the board. She then asked some learners to name some “et” sounds in the story. They were asked to put their hands up and not to shout the answers. Many learners responded by putting their hands up but the teacher asked a specific learner, whose hand was not up to respond to the question. The learner struggled to give an answer but the teacher

encouraged her and tried to help her to find a word in the story that had an “et” sound. The rest of the class was asked not to look in their books but to try to remember some words. The teacher returned to the struggling learner and went through each word in the story until the learner could identify at least five words that had the “et” sound. After assisting this learner, the teacher told the rest of the class to open their books and to continue taking down the notes from the board. They eagerly responded by quickly opening their notebooks and taking down the notes. The teacher continued to move around between the learners and occasionally stopped to check on some of them. The learners were still taking notes from the board as I left the classroom.

#### **4.5.2 Teacher B**

Teacher B started her lesson by writing a sum on the board. It was  $6 \times 3 - 4 + 8 = \dots$ . She then looked at the learners and said that she wanted an answer to the sum on the board. The learners responded by putting their hands up. Upon this Teacher B told them that she wanted them to work the answers out in their groups. Discussion in the groups started almost immediately and a few minutes later the teacher started with a countdown. She said “Five, four, three, two, one ...and time up”. The groups responded with different answers. Teacher B did not refute or acknowledge the answers given, instead she wrote another sum on the board. It was  $8 - 3 \times 2 + 2$ . The teacher then showed the learners how to get the answer. This was followed by writing a third sum on the board. The learners quickly responded with some answers but the teacher commented that she was getting different answers. Teacher B then said that the groups had to work out the answers and then decide on one answer. She then started moving from group to group to see how the learners were going about working out the answers.

After spending a brief moment with each group, the teacher moved to the front of the classroom and said, “I want your final answers”. The class responded and the teacher asked the groups to ask someone in the group to write their answers to each sum on a page. The page was then placed in the middle of each group where all the group members could see it. The teacher told them that they would come back to the answers on

the pages. She then said that she was going to give the learners an exercise with some of the same sums. The learners were instructed to work in pairs after which a discussion was to take place. Teacher B then wrote some sums on the board and repeated her instruction saying, "Please work in pairs". There was a buzzing from the learners as they started working and discussing the task at hand. The teacher announced that she was giving them ten minutes to finish the exercise and she then started moving around between the learners. Teacher B emphasized that she was interested in the learners' answers and she also reminded them that they only had ten minutes to complete the task.

As the teacher moved around, she encountered a learner that was not in a pair but working alone. There was no one in the seat next to this learner. Teacher B asked the learner if he was alone. The learner confirmed that he was alone. The teacher asked if he wanted to be alone and the learner responded that he wanted to work alone. The teacher responded by saying, "I like the spirit" and allowed the learner to work on his own.

There was a buzzing around the class as the learners were discussing and working out the answers to the given sums. The noise levels were quite acceptable and I noticed all the learners engaged in the activity. The teacher also made sure of this by saying that she did not want to see people folding their arms but all learners involved in finding the answers to the sums. She also reminded the learners that she was counting down and that they had nine minutes left. Teacher B also encouraged the learners to come up with their own answers and then to compare their answer with their partners before deciding on one answer. The learners eagerly went about this. Teacher B encouraged the learners to look at some examples that she had written on the board. She said, "I know you are very clever but please work in pairs. Do all the sums with your partner and agree on one answer." After a while she asked the learners if she could see what they had done. She again enquired if the learners were coping or if they were struggling to get the answers. They responded positively, saying that they are coping.

The teacher again started moving around between the learners. At one point the teacher stopped and shouted "Lets!" and the entire class responded saying, "Work it out". Thus, 'let's work it out'. One group had finished the task and again the teacher said, "What do

we say?” The class responded saying, “Well done!” The other groups were now working faster to also complete the task. Teacher B reiterated the point that they would look at the answers in a short while. She continued to move from group to group more frequently and eventually returned to the board. She then wrote a number six (6) on the board, indicating that the learners still had six minutes left to complete the exercise. Teacher B reminded the learners that some groups had completed and were just double checking their answers. The teacher then again moved from group to group and eventually stopped at one group. She addressed two girls in this particular group. She told them that it was not right to cheat and that they should follow the instruction that they were given. It appeared that these girls might just have been waiting for others to work out the answers and then simply copy them. The girls acknowledged what the teacher was saying and started working out the sums on their own.

Teacher B moved to the other groups, making sure that they were completing the exercise and also reminding them that they had only five minutes left to complete the work. The teacher then moved towards the cupboard and took out a ream of paper. She handed this to one learner and the learner left the classroom with the paper. The teacher then turned to the learners and reminded them that time was against them and that they should now complete their task. The groups that were still busy were being visited more frequently by the teacher. After a while the teacher asked one learner to please stand up and to tell the class in Xhosa that their time was almost up. After the learner had done this, the teacher again stressed that there was only three minutes left. The groups were then urged to make sure of their answers and to reach consensus on their answers. She also gave a reminder that the examples were significant and that learners should look at these to find the correct answers.

Later the teacher reminded the learners that there was only two (2) minutes left. A short while later, she said, “One minute left.” Upon hearing this, one learner stated, “sixty seconds” and the teacher acknowledged this by saying, “Yes, sixty seconds left.” This was followed by another countdown where both teacher and learners said, “Ten, nine, eight, seven, six, five, four, three, two, one and time up.” At that point there was an

interruption. Another teacher had entered the classroom and was talking to Teacher B. the two teachers had a brief conversation after which the other teacher left the classroom. Teacher B immediately focused her attention on the learners again and asked them if they could talk about the examples that she gave them. One learner responded that the sums were confusing. The teacher called the learner by his name and asked what he was trying to say. The learner just insisted that he found the sums to be confusing as so many answers are found. Teacher B asked if anyone could try to explain how to get to the right answer. Another learner responded, saying that you have to start with the sum in the bracket first. The teacher then called this learner by her name and asked the rest of the class to listen to what she had to say. The learner then said out loud that a person should start the sum by working out the answer in the bracket first. The teacher was very impressed by this answer but asked the learners what would happen if there were no brackets.

The class was very silent and no answer was being offered by any learner. The teacher asked if they knew what to do and they responded that they were not sure. Teacher B then stated that she liked people that were honest. She then put up a poster on the board for all to see. The letters B O D M A S were boldly written on the poster. Teacher B then referred to the four basic operations in mathematics. The learners knew this and responded well. The teacher then asked them to keep these four basic operations in mind all the time. She then went on to explain what each of the bold letters on the board represented. The B was for brackets, the O for of (X), the D for division, the M for multiplication, and the A for addition and finally the S for subtraction. Teacher B then made these bold letters into a rhyme that the learners had to repeat several times. She also explained that learners should follow the sequence explained in the rhyme to find the correct answers to the sums that they had worked out. The learners were quite eager to check on their answers and to use the formula of BODMAS as the teacher had explained to them. The teacher could see that the majority of learners seemed to understand the formula and said, “Muntu kamamke”, which I later learner was a form of praising the learners on a job well done. As the learners were checking their answers using the formula, the teacher was writing a new similar exercise on the board to give learners a

chance to practice and implement their newly learned knowledge. At that point I left the classroom to give the learners and teacher a chance to do their work in private.

#### **4.5.3 Teacher C**

This teacher introduced the lesson by stating that they were going to talk about the environment. She posed the question, “What destroys the environment?” The class quickly responded that pollution destroys the environment. The teacher acknowledged their response and asked them what types of pollution we encounter. They responded and the teacher wrote the different forms of pollution on the board for all the learners to see. The teacher then asked the learners to explain what pollution was. They could not formulate an answer to this question, so the teacher helped them to define pollution. She made reference to the Oprah Winfrey show where pollution was discussed. The schoolwork was thus related to the everyday life of the learners. The class was differently arranged when compared to the previous observation lesson. The teacher could move around more freely and seemed more comfortable in this set up. I later learned that this was the particular teacher’s own classroom and own group of learners.

Teacher C asked the learners if they knew what “biodegradable” meant. She wrote the word on the board and asked the class to repeat the word. The class again could not give an answer on what the word meant. The teacher then wrote the word on the board but this time, she broke the word up into two parts. This was “bio” and “degradable”. She then explained what each of these meant. After this Teacher C asked one learner to hand out some books to the learners. The learners were then asked to turn to page eighty two in the books. One learner asked the teacher how is it possible for deodorant to cause air pollution. The teacher responded that it was not the actual deodorant that causes air pollution but other ingredients that are present in the spray that can disturb the delicate balance in the air. The learner seemed convinced by this explanation.

The teacher requested the learners to look at the glossary in their books. She then asked the class if anyone knew what a community was. The learners were not supposed to look

for the answer in the book, but had to use their own words and knowledge to provide an answer. One learner provided an answer upon which the teacher responded quite positively. The teacher praised the learner saying, “Well done, Tyrell. You put that very nicely.” Teacher C then proceeded to go through some difficult words in the glossary. She asked the learners what certain words meant occasionally but explained all the words in the glossary to ensure that all learners knew the basic concepts used in the lesson. The teacher then explained to the class that she was going to divide the class into groups (the learners desks were already set up in groups) and then give each group a section to read and explain to the rest of the learners. Teacher C then proceeded to assign a section of the work in the book to each group. She explained that the groups should read all the notes that she assigned to them and then come to the front of the classroom and explain the read topic to the rest of the class.

The teacher moved around from group to group. She asked learners not to read aloud as this was going to disturb the other groups. The learners complied and I could see all of them busy reading their assigned section in their books. Teacher C went to the front of the classroom and also started reading the notes on the lesson. A short while later, she told the learners that they were not suppose to write anything down. Instead they were supposed to read their section and then discuss the read area with the group members. The groups seemed to be made up of mixed ability, mixed sex and mixed race learners. The teacher started moving about the groups and noticed one learner not engaging with the book. She addressed him by his name saying, “Tyrell, you are wasting so much time.” The learner immediately continued with reading and the teacher moved to the next group. A short while later, the teacher asked learners to please start discussing the passage once they had completed the reading. Teacher C commented on one specific group of boys. She said, “These boys will read the whole day. I think we will start with this group. You have two minutes left”. I could hear discussion and talking taking place in the groups. At this point there was a disruption. Someone wanted to see a learner in Teacher C’s class. The teacher allowed this and again reminded the learners that they had two minutes left.

A few minutes later, Teacher C said, “I know you guys are always ready”. She pointed towards one specific group and signalled for them to go to the front of the classroom. They protested that they had not finished their reading and needed more time. Teacher C responded by saying, “Too bad if you did not read everything.” At that point there was another interruption. Someone had entered the classroom and was looking for another teacher. Teacher C responded by saying that the particular teacher was on the sports field busy training athletes. The person thanked Teacher C and left the classroom. Teacher C then turned to the learners and requested the first group to come to the front for their presentation. The appointed group made their way to the front.

This group had to do a presentation on “fauna”. The teacher and the rest of the class listened attentively. The group’s members each took a turn to explain what they had read. The teacher prompted them in giving more information. She constantly asked what else the group had read. They responded by mentioning more issues that came up in the reading. The teacher asked if there were any plants in danger and the group responded by mentioning a few endangered plants. The teacher then responded by saying, “Right, thank you.” These learners then made their way back to their seats and the second group went to the front of the classroom. The teacher made a request for learners to be quiet and the second group continued with their presentation. The teacher commented that the discussion was very interesting and thanked the learners for their effort. At this point there was another interruption. The intercom came on and there was a request for the teachers to please send all the athletes to the sports field. Teacher C thanked the learners and asked them to return to their seats. The end of the period was a few minutes away and Teacher C was also involved in the training of athletes. She thus had to dismiss her class and make her way to the sports field. The rest of the groups were told that they would get another opportunity to present their given topics.

#### **4.6 Interviews with the participants**

The interview conducted with each participant is presented in this section. The interview is described as an interchange of views between people that leads to knowledge

production according to Cohen et al (2000, p. 267). The interviews conducted in this study were mainly to gather data as well as to sample the participant's opinions on the issue of classroom management. The interview schedule is attached as an appendix.

#### **4.6.1 Interview Teacher A**

##### *1. Tell me a bit about yourself.*

I have a very small family but I come from a very big family. I've got eight sisters and two brothers and I think maybe that is why I only have a small family because I saw that a big family...I don't know, it's got its advantages and disadvantages...and of course I have two daughters. Shale and Cailyn and I can see the difference between my daughters too, like the children in my classroom, I have uh...two grandsons and a grand daughter. Okay, my husband is late and I have my children with me and they stay with me at the moment.

##### *2. How long have you been teaching?*

I have been teaching for thirty five years. I started in 1974 at St. Mxxx and that is where I started with my first foundation phase, like the Junior Primary phase and then I came...In 1979 I came to Kxxx Primary, I was on accouchement leave. I started here and I'm, this was my very first class and I'm still here.

*Wow! So you were at another school, St. Mary's for five years?*

Yes, like we amalgamated, remember the Groups Act that came in and we moved down but I wasn't ...That time I was already on accouchement leave but when I came back, I started here (KXX) and my principal was Mr. P – late Mr. P. With your mom and them from their school and the school from St. Mxxx.

##### *3. What do you regard as effective classroom management?*

I think the first thing that comes in there is your discipline and I think if you have so many little ones in our classroom and if they are moving around...I think when you teach them recitations or rhymes and while they are moving around, let them say that there and it keeps them busy then they don't have all this distractions in the class. That is very effective, I think.

*4. What are your preferred teaching methods?*

Do you want me to talk about language or maths? Which one? Uh...We'll talk about maths. Uh...there again, I have my groups but before that, we do some counting and I have my little groups that have to go and work. They all have their activities to do, while I'm busy with one group on the mat maybe – say I do numbers or...ja, say numbers then I have my cards, flashcards so they can see what I'm doing, and I think that is effective because you keep it on the board all the time and they know exactly what is going on.

*5. Do you have any additional training as a teacher?*

Okay, when I started teaching I just, I left standard eight. Can you believe it? But of course, I had to do my matric and I did M+3 and I finished M+4 in 2007, and at the moment I am busy with echoing the word about the Catholic faith and all that, ...how to teach little ones catechism. That's all.

*6. Would you say that helped you a lot with working with these small ones?*

Oh! I love the little ones. Its like uh...Its very rewarding, I think so, because I think I understand them more then, like my own children, you know. I only have these two (my daughters) and now I've got how many? Forty of them and they are quite a hand full but you have to know how to work with them, you know, and I think they need more... they need lots and lots of attention. Praising and all that there.

*7. What is your first language and what do you teach in class?*

My first language is Afrikaans but I teach- the first language I'm teaching now is English. I had- years back in '79, when we started here, I had an Afrikaans class all along and only now lately then we had a remedial, you know, we had Afrikaans like a first language and then we switched over to English as a second language and now for the third time we just have English as a first language and that's all I teach but I can teach... I mean, I taught both languages in the time that I was teaching.

*8. Do you experience difficulty in swapping between languages?*

No, not really. I think the only snag with it now is my charts, but I still use them, some of them. Some of the children know the words, you know, the Afrikaans word or the Xhosa word but now with me, I... I'm not a Xhosa person, I've never spoken the language and all that there and I think the children help me and I help them and we like... Afrikaans, you know Afrikaans words into Xhosa... (Laughing) We learn a lot from one another.

*9. Comment on your learner's performance.*

Like, as my class is now, I think their performance... some of them okay, I have different groups. I have my excellent ones and I have my slow ones and I have my very slow ones. If I have my groups, okay at the beginning I work with them together and then I can see already which are my first, second and third groups but then I don't leave it at that. If I see that my little ones are really struggling, I make sure they come and stand here (by the teacher's table) or if they don't understand something, they must come to me and ask me. But then I think parent involvement plays a very big role in these children's lives and if they don't have that at home, they will always come and... you are the nearest to them, you know and they become clingy, standing here and finishing their work there, they don't want to sit next to so and so. But I think that is the best thing I can do with them is grouping them and then I'll see and then we work like up towards... and

from the little ones...some of them that are maybe in the third group, they come up just like that there...here say after September, you'll see them.

*10. Is my understanding correct? You have three groups?*

I've actually got for groups now. Ja, but if now say after the fourth term I will see how my one and two groups become one and I'll maybe just have three groups.

*11. How do you measure your learner's performance?*

Okay, I have a ...I have activities that I give them. I have worksheets that I give them and of course when we do assessment its exactly the same work that they've been doing throughout the year so even with their work, whatever work they do and if they done very well or neat work, I give them a little star or I give them a "smiley face" and that makes them very wild and they say, "I know my work", you know and they brag amongst one another, you know that type of thing. So it inspires them.

*12. What do you perceive as obstacles to learning?*

I think poverty and HIV, all that there...I think once a child is sick man, especially little ones, they tend to just sit there and look at you like...if they did not have anything to eat, you get nothing out of them, do you understand what I'm saying? And so, maybe what we have here at school (soup kitchen) is a very good thing but I also tell my little ones, it you got bread and you don't want it, please bring it to my class. There is someone that needs it. Besides the soup kitchen, if they have bread and they don't want it, someone else can have it.

*13. You spoke about language earlier.*

I think the language barrier plays a lot in the children because they come from a Xhosa background, you know...and they've never...but I think some of them that come even

from the rural areas, hey, and they've never heard words like that or never seen something like that there, whatever you explaining, so you have too...I have to use my little ones that know the language well...What do you say for uh...cow in Xhosa to the other...the things that they did in the morning. Luckily there were cows outside, so I took them outside and they saw it, so they know what we are talking about. Even the Afrikaans children, especially our Afrikaans children, out Afrikaans coloured people...very lax with their children...sorry to say it but its reality. They need our encouragement and support, you know.

*14. What is the composition of your class?*

I have thirty eight in my class, I thought it was quite a lot but maybe because of my groups, I can handle them. We have Black and Coloured children and children are children man. They looks...they got...they not worried about because you are White or you Black they...they can help each other. They can give you the answer and they think nothing of it.

*15. Do you have more Black or Coloured learners?*

I think I have more Blacks in my class then Coloureds.

*16. What coping mechanisms do you use to deal with discipline issues?*

Discipline problem...I don't normally sent my learners out because they still so very little, you know. So what do I do with them? I tell them you sit right at the back there and I ignore them. For a while and then afterwards He'll notice now...his putting up...because he's always got an answer or shouting out an answer, then he'll see...Miss. Is not taking notice of me then he'll just sit quietly and afterwards, say after a third or forth question, he'll put up his hand and I'll ask him to answer. But you feel so bad, hey, you feel very bad.

*17. We spoke about socio economic factors. We spoke about poverty, the involvement of parents. Let's talk about the feeding scheme. Are there a lot of your learners that go to there?*

No, not really. I think I have a few of them, especially the Coloured children...and they...I tell them...I make them go earlier, before time, before the bigger ones come so that they can have something to eat.

*18. Is there anything else you want to add?*

I just like to say that I hope this will be a good help for you to further your studies and I hope you enjoyed it and make a success of it. Thank you.

*Thank you for your time and effort.*

It's a pleasure, Mr. Coetzee.

#### **4.6.2 Interview: Teacher B**

*1. Please tell me a bit about yourself.*

We are a family of six members at home. Four girls and two boys. I still have both my parents. I've got a child of my own, little T. He's six months old...Ja, that is it.

*2. How long have you been teaching?*

I've been teaching for nine years now. I started teaching in 2001 at Mount N. It is in Lxxx. It is a Catholic School and I've been living there with the nuns and with the experience that I got there, I came down to Kxxx. I taught in Kxxx for about four years now.

3. *What do you regard as effective classroom management?*

Effective classroom management is a kind of managing learners to do their work. That is engage them fully into the lesson...uh...give time for reflection, give time to think critically and assess them continuously, managing the discipline, disciplinary measures as well.

4. *What are your preferred teaching methods?*

Uh...there are different types of methods. I like starting from where the learners are and that is constructivism, because sometimes learners come to class with alternate conceptions, misconceptions of which you need to address, so you might not be able to know what the learner is thinking without having the introduction...that is linked to what the learner did previously...and I give time for group discussions and in pairs and individual work. A learner should be developed holistically as I treat a learner as a different individual, unique individual amongst them and I also give projects, assignments and...uh...assessment sheets where the learners could reflect on what they were doing and say how they feel about it. Well, I can say that is an evaluation sheet where they evaluate themselves.

5. *Have you received any additional training as a teacher?*

I've studied my B.Ed (Hons.) recently, I graduated this year, 2009 April and I have done my Bachelor of Technology. I completed it in 2004...and I have also done my Senior Teacher's Diploma, which I have completed in 2000.

6. *What is your home language?*

My home language is Sesotho; well I'm lucky in that both my parents are not of the same...uh...race. My mother is Zulu, so I'm a Zulu as well and my father is Sotho. I

like it best when you say home language, because if you say mother tongue, then I will be confused because my mother speaks Sotho, Zulu and my father speaks Sotho.

*7. How do you measure your learner's performance?*

I give them work schedules or I give them tests and I give them activities to do as we going along the lesson and I give them tasks where the different operations can be portrayed, you know, like you don't ...uh...or assess the learner on one thing. You give different tasks so that if the learner cannot perform on a certain activity, then they still stand a chance on another activity.

*8. What do you experience as obstacles to learning?*

Um...I prefer my learners to be broad minded. I tell them everyday that they can learn from watching television, from newspapers, magazines and so forth. What hinders learning is a learner that's not willing to be knowledgeable, that's why I encourage them to go through all these other forms of learning. So, if a learner is not knowledgeable, its difficult to deal with that learner because he doesn't know what is happening in his own world of which to address it might be also different because you don't know your learner well...so I've got types of learners in my class, others are very, very shy of which I have to stimulate them to say something, so such learners, I group together so that they get a chance to come out and speak when we have discussions.

*9. To get some exposure?*

Yes, yes.

*10. Please describe the composition of your class.*

Yes, I try to give some disciplinary measures. First of all we have class rules, school rules and group rules. I also said to my learners that they can come up with their motto,

that's words to live by. So if you don't do what you said you believe in, in your group that is a violation of the rules that we've got, then I'll give little things like okay, you'll have to stay after school and work and for those that have transport, uh...break time. You don't go for break, though I know it's not right but I let them sit inside with me, eat, go to the toilet, you know, all the things that they do break time, except play. Its not that I'm punishing children not to play but children can always play, even after school, but they must realize that its not right what they have done...and maybe give them tasks to do like maybe clean the windows and so on. Yes, that is it. Uh...I've got forty two learners in my class and half of them are Coloured and half of them are Black, but I only have one learner that speaks my language... (Laughing).

*11. Thank you Miss. At least you have someone to talk to in your own language.*

Yes, because now and again, you know, you have to switch code to accommodate all learners when you can, and if you can't, for example with the other lesson that I've had lately, I asked one learner to say the time was up in Xhosa, you know. He said it in a very nice way and I couldn't have said it like that because I'm not Xhosa, so sometimes you can give a chance to learners to explain to other learners.

*12. To express it in their own culture?*

Yes, yes.

*13. Please describe the socio economic conditions in your class.*

Well, uh...I don't really have children from mostly disadvantaged areas. My children are better off.

*14. Would you say that they are about average?*

Yes, they are average.

*15. Do you have many children that take part ...that goes to the soup kitchen?*

No, not really. They go there now and again when they wish, when the food is good but not that they really need it.

*16. Is there anything that you would like to add?*

Uh...its just uh...I feel that if a teacher plans well, the learners also respond to that. They respect, they respond and they become appreciative. I'm not praising myself, but my learners tell me everyday; Miss, you are the best teacher, you really concerned about us and you are there for us. Even break time, when I'm not on duty, I spend time with them and say...sometimes they even come with problems from home...

*17. Personal problems?*

Yes, personal problems and I need to address that as well, but of cause, I know its very confidential and I don't disclose what we talk about.

*18. So you take your pastoral role very seriously?*

I tell them that they are my own children. They are just like my own biological children but they are my children and because I spend more time with them than their own, own parents, I feel that it is really my responsibility to develop them, especially in their age. They are teenagers, they can easily be mislead and you need and you need to not consider only the learning area based on the curriculum but get to know them better. Get into their lives and if they need somebody to sympathise and empathise with them, you should do as a teacher and be a role model to them.

*Thank you for your participation. It is much appreciated.*

### 4.6.3 Interview: Teacher C

*1. Please tell me a bit about yourself.*

I am twenty five years old. I'm doing my fourth year of teaching. I come from a family of five children...uh...three of us are from a previous marriage and then two younger girls from each different parent. Anything else?

*No thank you, any children of your own?*

I do. I have a daughter...a two year old daughter.

*2. How long have you been teaching?*

Four years...new in the game.

And this is your first school?

Yes, besides the schools for prac teaching.

*3. What do you regard as effective classroom management?*

Uh...let me see...uh... (Laughing). Oh gosh...I think when the kids are busy working and are responding and are doing what they are told and not on their own trips...this one's going there and that one's going there...and ja...class is quiet...teacher is busy, kids are busy...perfect. Peaceful.

*4. What are your preferred teaching methods?*

I prefer to write on the board...all my notes, from beginning to end, which could sometimes take more than one lesson...and then, what we do is the children read through

the notes on their own and from there, I read through the notes with them, explaining each section as we go along.

*5. Have you received any additional training as a teacher?*

While I'm teaching, no.

*6. What is your home language?*

English.

*And you teach English?*

Yes I do.

*It's a distinct advantage, hey?*

Not all subjects. I do have Afrikaans, the seven D's, where I have to teach them Life Orientation in...Afrikaans, but they prefer it done in English.

*7. How do you measure your learner's performance?*

There is a lot of stuff. In English there is the Poetry, the Language Tests, the Comprehension, some group work, in Life Orientation and EMS (Economic Management Science) there's assignments, projects, tasks...uh...hu.

*8. What do you experience as obstacles to learning?*

Uh...behaviour. I've got somebody that basically terrorizes me...uh...in the other classes there is a bit of poverty and socio economic problems, but in my class it is mostly just behaviour because they all seem quite well off, the way I see it...I don't know.

*9. Please describe the composition of your class.*

I have more boys than girls, I think. Twenty one boys and twenty girls, somewhere there...uh...and I think there's more...or maybe they're even, Blacks amongst Coloureds and one little Indian girl.

*10. What coping methods do you employ to deal with discipline?*

I do chase children out of the classroom and I give them punishment like write out lines...otherwise, if it disturbs the rest of the class, I do use more severe measures (will not be discussed here). I am being honest.

*11. Socio economically, you said most of your learners are well off?*

Uh huh. (Yes)

*12. Would you say average or slightly above average?*

I'd say average. Lots of kids bring lunch tins and you ask them to do something, they buy the charts...I don't know.

*13. Do you see many of them going to the soup kitchen?*

None from my class. I haven't seen anybody from my class, but there are others from other classes.

*14. Is there anything that you would like to add?*

No, thank you.

#### **4.7 Conclusion**

The observation of the participants has provided much insight into their teaching practice as well as their classroom management approaches. The three individuals showed some interesting and very innovative ways of dealing with the challenges and successes that they experience in their respective classrooms. What was extremely clear was the fact that these teachers each displayed some unique and very insightful measures in conducting their daily tasks. I got the distinct impression that they were committed and even excited to be part of the study. Teacher A and Teacher B were particularly enthusiastic and even gave me encouragement and explanations for the way in which they performed certain tasks during the observation long after the lesson was concluded. These participants and the related observations gave me the distinct impression that my choice in selecting these teachers was bearing fruit. The interviews conducted provided clarity on the participants' ideas on ECM as well as gave much biographical data. The interviews were presented verbatim to depict an accurate and true reflection of the conversation between the participants and the researcher.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents the analysis of the collected data. The analysis is done in response to the critical questions which were as follows:

1. What methods do teachers use to manage their classrooms?
2. What do teachers perceive as effective classroom management?
3. How can the environment be adapted to achieve effective classroom management?

The data that emerged from the research process will be analysed to explore how the selected participants' responses relate to these central questions.

#### **5.2 What methods do teachers use to manage their classrooms?**

McLagan and Nel (1995) state that teachers have very little room to practice individual initiatives in schooling systems. The schooling system structure is too rigid to encourage teacher's initiatives. Hopkins (2002, p1) concurs and states that we are faced with an education system that 'limits individual initiatives by encouraging conformity and control. However, despite these systemic limitations the teachers in this study employed various means to manage their classrooms effectively. Their management styles can be attributed to various factors and influences such as their love for the profession, their level of training and experience and the way their time tables were set up. These factors and their impact on the relevant teachers' methods of managing their classrooms will be discussed.

McLagan and Nel (1995) believe that if an organisation's structure supports and requires participation it makes a huge leap in a positive direction to improve the existing teaching practices. This factor has allowed me to conduct the research in this school. The school's management and authorities were accommodating in allowing me to conduct the

study and to do research in the school. What follows is the interpretation of the way in which the participants have managed their classrooms. The quotes used are taken from the particular participant's interview as presented earlier.

### **5.2.1 Teacher A**

Teacher A manages her classroom by controlling the physical organisation of learners in the class. Although the number of learners in the class cannot be reduced for better control, this particular teacher divides her class into four groups. The groups consist of learners that share more or less the same abilities and understanding about the work. Teacher A states the following: *I have different groups. I have my excellent ones and I have my slow ones and I have my very slow ones. If I have my groups, okay at the beginning I work with them together and then I can see already which are my first, second and third groups but then I don't leave it at that. If I see that my little ones are really struggling, I make sure they come and stand here (by the teacher's table) or if they don't understand something, they must come to me and ask me.*

Teacher A thus believes in working in groups but also in giving those learners who underperformed individual attention. Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) was evidenced in her attempt to help these learners. The teacher pointed out a word that was missed out by a learner while she was reading the poem. The learner was asked to look at the words again and to read the poem once more. On reading the poem for a second time, the learner noticed that she had missed out a word and now read it more confidently. The teacher also used her own initiative in designing a poster with the alphabet on it. This poster was coupled with letters of the alphabet that the learners had to match to the poster. This exercise was used to help those learners who were struggling with letter recognition. They seemed to enjoy matching the letters to the chart as the teacher encouraged them continually. This behaviour was also reinforced through repetition and encouragement by the teacher and illustrates classical behaviourist reinforcement. The Ministry of Education and Culture of Namibia (1993) argues that any kind of attention is rewarding, particularly to pupils who do not receive much positive

attention. Teacher A has used this to her advantage by giving these learners attention to promote their learning and progress.

The teacher furthermore asked a lot of questions that were very relevant to the work done. She asked the learners to find a name in the poem, after which she wanted to know what was special when writing a name. This technique again encouraged learner participation as almost all the learners had something to say about the name in the poem. One learner commented that his cousin's name was Ben. The teacher also asked the learners how fast they thought a jet was. This style of questioning challenged the learners and it also encouraged their participation in the lesson.

Teacher A further employed a technique described in the literature as extinction when the learners answered the questions. This technique suggests that the wrong answer is ignored and the learner then unlearns it because it is not acknowledged. In support of this as a teaching strategy, the Ministry of Education and Culture of Namibia (1993) argues that extinction can lead to unwanted behaviour being unlearned. Behaviour that is reinforced is more likely to happen again while behaviour that is ignored is less likely to be repeated. The responses that the teacher favoured were reinforced through repetition as the poem was read repeatedly by the learners. She also employed elements of the behaviourist theory by rewarding neat work with a star or a "smiley face". Behaviourism holds that human development is a continuous, lifelong accumulation of responses which people learn through experience. Gerdes (1988, p54) explains that people are constantly confronted by new stimuli; they learn how to respond to them and thus develop. Positive responses are rewarded and negative responses are punished or go unrewarded as in the case where learners did not qualify to get a star or "smiley face". The Ministry of Education and Culture of Namibia (1993) also argues that negative reinforcement is however, a good alternative for punishment. A statement indicating negative reinforcement almost always starts with "as soon as" or "after" or "when". Teacher A effectively used this management strategy when she promised learners a star if their work was neatly done. The reward boosted the learner's confidence and it promoted their

efforts to do their work as quickly and as accurately as possible. This teacher describes the effect of rewards on her learners as follows:

*...if they done very well or neat work, I give them a little star or I give them a “smiley face” and that makes them very wild and they say, “I know my work”, you know and they brag amongst one another, you know that type of thing. So it inspires them.*

Furthermore, Teacher A’s teaching and classroom management practice also includes features described by social learning theory. She believes in working in groups as the large number of learners in her class (38) would be very hard to handle in one group. The teacher thus divides them in groups of learner with more or less the same academic abilities. Her comments on the groups are as follows:

*I think my blue and red group are the ones that are faster then the last two. I’ve kept them like that so that I can monitor them, you see,...but now I’ve seen, I mean that sounds we’ve done already, so I’ve seen already...this will be my first group.*

The Bégin-Caplan Report (1995) stresses the importance of good human relations between teachers and learners for the educative process to be most effective. Marland (1993) believes that effective classroom management should start with the crucial point of the relationship between pupils and their teacher. Corrie (2002) argues that fostering good relations with learners are vital for teaching and learning. Docking (2002) also mentions respectful personal relationships as a prerequisite for effective classroom management. Marland (1993), states that good relations are largely created through technique. The responses from Teacher A suggest she has taken this task very personally. She refers to her learners as ‘little ones’ and clearly cares a great deal for them. She states that working with them is extremely rewarding. Her own words are as follows:

*Oh! I love the little ones. It's like uh...It's very rewarding, I think so, because I think I understand them more than, like my own children, you know. I only have these two (my daughters) and now I've got how many? Forty of them and they are quite a hand full but you have to know how to work with them, you know, and I think they need more... they need lots and lots of attention.*

According to Docking (2002) the school might be the only place where certain learners feel secure. The teacher should thus go beyond his/ her calling to forge meaningful relations with the learner. Teacher A stated that she does not send learners out of her classroom as they are too small and they could get hurt outside the class without supervision. The Education For All Global Monitoring Report (2002) stresses the fact that all learners have the right to education and it is thus important for learners not to be sent out of the classroom where they will be deprived of this basic human right. Corrie (2002, p16) argues that teachers can make a great deal of difference to some children's long-term outcomes, so it is vital for teachers to make learners feel safe and secure.

The Ministry of Education and Culture of Namibia (1993) argues that the effective teacher can alter the antecedents by presenting well prepared, relevant content matter to learners. Corrie (2002) concurs and believes that careful planning, preparing and organising as well as an appropriate curriculum are essential for effective classroom management. Teacher A has clearly measured up to this requirement as her lessons were very well planned. She had a specific activity planned for each of her four groups during the lesson. She stated the following:

*Uh...there again, I have my groups but before that, we do some counting and I have my little groups that have to go and work. They all have their activities to do, while I'm busy with one group on the mat maybe – say I do numbers or...ja, say numbers then I have my cards, flashcards so they can see what I'm doing, and I think that is effective because you keep it on the board all the time and they know exactly what is going on.*

Furthermore, her notes were already written on the board when the learners entered the classroom. This indicates that the teacher had prepared the lesson in advance and not written something on the board on the spur of the moment.

Christie and Potterton (1997) identify teacher commitment and concern for the school over their own interests as a striking feature in the leadership of resilient schools. Teacher A has been in the same profession for thirty five years and has been using the same classroom since she started at the research setting. She stated the following:

*I have been teaching for thirty five years. I started in 1974 at St. Mary's and that is where I started with my first foundation phase, like the Junior Primary phase and then I came...In 1979 I came to this school, I was on accouchement leave. I started here and I'm, this was my very first class and I'm still here.*

Teacher A has demonstrated her commitment to being a teacher by being in the field for so long. She also mentions that she finds her work very rewarding and enjoys it enormously.

### **5.2.2 Teacher B**

As indicated earlier good human relations and care are critical for effective classroom management (Corrie, 2002, Marland, 1993). Teacher B stresses this vital aspect of teaching. She has devised a number of innovative ways to achieve this critical teacher-pupil relationship. For example, Teacher B has set her up classroom in a group formation that promotes continual group work and learner interaction. Groups are given the leeway to choose their own names and are even encouraged to come up with their own motto and outlook on life. Teacher B also subscribes to the learners taking ownership for the rules that dictate classroom behaviour and they set out the rules on their own. She states the following:

*Yes, I try to give some disciplinary measures. First of all we have class rules, school rules and group rules. I also said to my learners that they can come up with their motto, that's words to live by. So if you don't do what you said you believe in, in your group that is a violation of the rules that we've got, then I'll give little things like okay, you'll have to stay after school and work and for those that have transport, uh...break time.*

According to Docking (2002) as indicated earlier, learners often feel more secure in school than anywhere else. Gootman (2001) also promotes the idea that the classroom should be made a safe and enjoyable environment with the aid of rules and routines. Teacher B seems to have a keen awareness of this and takes her pastoral role (The National Education Policy Act 27 of 1996) especially, very seriously and she believe that the teacher should not focus solely on the curriculum but should take the time to get to know the learner on a more personal level. Her comments are:

*I tell them that they are my own children. They are just like my own biological children but they are my children and because I spend more time with them than their own, own parents, I feel that it is really my responsibility to develop them, especially in their age. They are teenagers, they can easily be misled and you need to not only consider the learning area based on the curriculum but get to know them better. Get into their lives and if they need somebody to sympathise and empathise with them, you should do as a teacher and be a role model to them.*

The importance of preparing, planning and presenting suitable and interesting lessons as suggested by the Ministry of Education and Culture of Namibia (1993) can alter the antecedents in the classroom, affecting the effectiveness of the lesson. Teacher B's lessons are well prepared and they always involve the entire class. She has even grouped those learners that shy away from public speaking to enable them to get a chance to speak and not be outshone by their more vocal classmates. She states:

*...I've got types of learners in my class, others are very, very shy of which I have to stimulate them to say something, so such learners, I group together so that they get a chance to come out and speak when we have discussions.*

Docking (2002) suggests that teachers instil a strong sense of identity in their learners. With a particular focus on younger learners, he proposes three ways to achieve this, namely to get the learners to devise their personal coat of arms, to draw a self portrait and to make an advertisement about themselves. Teacher B has gone far beyond this. She encourages her learners to come up with their own motto, as explained earlier but she also does more than just this. Her class has its unique identity as the teacher employs various unique classroom management innovations. For example, during the lessons observed, the teacher would shout, "Let's" and the class would respond by saying, "work it out.", thus, "Lets work it out". When something positive happens in the class, the teacher again shouts, "Hola!" and the class respond by applauding only once. This unique and (unfamiliar to the researcher) action was a technique to manage the clapping so that it did not continue indefinitely. She also encourages learners to be proud of their efforts and to always do their best. Of the unique once-off clap after the "Hola" call, the teacher states the following:

*Children like to clap unendingly and it's time consuming and the Hola is more powerful in controlling this. It's a norm in grade six B. I don't really know the meaning, but it's like Hola, Hola....*

Christie and Potterton (1997) concur with The Ministry of Education and Culture of Namibia (1993) which suggests that the teacher who talks to learners and shows interest in their concerns and problems can foster a positive reaction from learners. This organisation also feels that learner participation is vital for educational success and for their concern for the school. They state that learners who clean and wash the classroom walls are less likely to dirty them in the future. Teacher B seems fully aware of this. She believes that the teacher should demonstrate a genuine concern for the learners that she works with. She says:

*...I'm not praising myself, but my learners tell me everyday; Miss, you are the best teacher, you really concerned about us and you are there for us. Even break time, when I'm not on duty, I spend time with them and say...sometimes they even come with problems from home...*

Teacher B has also demonstrated a vital aspect of classroom management mentioned earlier. This is the fact that lessons should be rigorously planned and presented to accommodate all learners. She states that learners respond and learn better if the teacher has made a concerted effort in her lesson planning and its presentation. She says the following:

*Uh...it's just uh...I feel that if a teacher plans well, the learners also respond to that. They respect, they respond and they become appreciative.*

This teacher also demonstrated an admirable sense of time management. She constantly reminded learners that they only had a certain time to complete their given tasks. The time was written on the board for all to see. Apart from this, the learners were also involved in the time keeping in a unique and innovative way. Teacher B would start a countdown when the given time was up. She would say, "Five, four, three, two, one and...stop!" The entire class would join in the countdown and no one would continue working once the teacher said stop.

Teacher B also uses techniques which Behaviourists would call rewards and sanctions when she responds to learners and their behaviour. She uses this management strategy to control discipline in her class and she justifies it as follows,

*Well, I'm not so strict, but if you tell them that they will lose marks or be disqualified, they get scared and do what they have to.*

The learner's unwanted behaviour is discouraged by letting them know that this behaviour will cause them to be disqualified or to lose marks. Behaviourist theory

suggests human development is a continuous, lifelong accumulation of responses which people learn through experience according to Gerdes (1988, p54). Apart from illustrating Behaviourist strategies, Teacher B also demonstrates a preference for the Constructivist theory. As a management technique she constantly evokes the learner's sense of curiosity and the need to explore and find out things. Teacher B states that she likes to see learners discover new things. She argues that she likes to move from the known to the unknown. This however is only possible when the teacher knows her learners well. She states:

*I like starting from where the learners are and that is constructivism, because sometimes learners come to class with alternate conceptions, misconceptions of which you need to address, so you might not be able to know what the learner is thinking ...A learner should be developed holistically as I treat a learner as a different individual, unique individual ...*

Social learning theory also explains some of Teacher B's classroom practice as she encourages group discussions and learners engaging in the lessons. Corrie (2002, p16) believes that this can lead to the exchange of ideas, creative ways of thinking and even shape values in learners.

### **5.2.3 Teacher C**

Teacher C stated her intentions clearly to her learners. She said: "I'm going to read the story, and then you will read the story. Once you have read it, we will discuss it". This management strategy made clear to the learners what they should expect. It also allowed them to be part of the lesson. This supports Corrie's (2002, p16) argument that factors such as irrelevant curriculum, poor instructional strategies and rigid classroom practices hinder effective classroom management. Gootman (2001) states that unpredictable situations can lead to disruptive and unfocused behaviour by learners. Teacher C seemed to be aware of this since the observed lesson presented a relevant topic with a fair balance of humour and academic challenge. It was a poem that dealt with a new teacher called

“Our new teacher’. The humour in the poem led to learners giggling from time to time. The teacher probably realized that some terms used were actually very funny and did a good job of managing the learner’s amusement constructively. Since any kind of attention is rewarding, particularly to pupils who do not receive much positive attention, Teacher C did not respond to the occasional giggles but rather saw it as learners understanding what they were reading. Furthermore, Corrie (2002) also feels that behaviour cannot be separated from the context in which it occurs, so a lesson should be taught in a context that supports good behaviour. The learners giggling were thus appropriate to the context of the funny poem and the teacher did well to manage the class effectively.

The teacher acknowledged the learners’ efforts when they read the poem. She said, “Thank you that was okay. It could be better.” This comment was aimed at motivating the learners to do even better. Gootman (2001) argues that learner’s feelings should also be acknowledged and the teacher should consider that learners also get angry and frustrated, just as the teacher does. Learners are also confronted by situations and incidents that cause anger and frustration. Teacher C went further and encouraged competition among the learners. She stated that the girls can read better than the boys. This was another attempt on the part of the teacher to promote learner’s involvement in the lesson and classroom activities. Teacher C probably expected the boys to dispute this claim and tried to improve on their first attempt at reading, and this is exactly what happened. While competition can be a motivator, it should be used tactfully not to incite negative aspects such as cheating and conflict or labelling.

Docking (2002, p.14) states that it is often easier for teachers to stick to their existing manifested way of teaching and managing classrooms (even if it is ineffective) without the help and support of colleagues. This seems to be the case with Teacher C. She is forced to spend three quarters of the school day in other teacher’s classrooms. The timetable dictates that she has to move around between four grade seven classes and teach various learning areas. This step was an attempt to reduce the noise level that was experienced when the learners had to move from class to class. The teacher now leaves

her own classroom and moves to the next teacher's class to present their lesson. Furthermore, this teacher often spends the whole period writing notes on the board. She states her preference as follows:

*I prefer to write on the board...all my notes, from beginning to end, which could sometimes take more than one lesson...and then, what we do is the children read through the notes on their own and from there, I read through the notes with them, explaining each section as we go along.*

This means that the learners often spend long periods of time just writing notes and not in meaningful communication with the teacher or fellow learners. Gootman (2001) argues that poor communication is often a source of many disciplinary problems in the classroom. Stenhouse (1975) suggested a system that moves away from teacher dominated classrooms to a setting where pupils can make meaning for themselves without being constrained by the authority of teachers. Teacher C does however, have minimal control over the classroom setup and structural arrangement in the other teacher's classes that she teaches. This was evident in the first observation lesson where Teacher C had to give learners a chance to complete taking down the previous teacher's notes from the board. Although the previous lesson was completed and that teacher had actually left, Teacher C could not just step into the classroom and start with her lesson as the learners still had to take down the notes given by the previous teacher. Teacher C again had very little control over this situation and the best she could do was probably to talk to the previous teacher and to make arrangements for him to accommodate her in some way.

Teacher C was noticeably more at ease in her own classroom (Observation 2) than when she was in another teacher's classroom (Observation 1). Corrie (2001) argues that effective classroom management can be achieved by organising the physical environment like rearranging the furniture and defining rules for the classroom. This bold step is almost impossible for Teacher C as it could be seen as disrespectful to rearrange another teacher's class. That particular teacher's class would most likely be arranged to suit her

preferences and requirements and Teacher C would just have to adapt her teaching style in engaging the learners. Gootman (2001) believes that by organising space and time, a teacher can avoid disciplinary pitfalls. Since Teacher C cannot fully control this strategy, it seems that she has compromised herself by accepting the need for reduced noise level. She now has no control over the environment that she works in. Marland (1993) also argues that the classroom can be an ally or an enemy to teaching. Teacher C clearly has a challenge in addressing the issue of using her own class and then dealing with the noise factor that accompanies the process of learners moving from class to class. The employment of a high school system in a primary school seems to put additional pressures on the teacher for effective classroom management given the fact that most of her visual resources such as charts were placed in her own classroom and was not accessible to the learners in the other teacher's classes that she taught. She also expressed a distinct dislike in using someone else's classroom. She states:

*What I hate is being in someone else's class.*

The techniques that Teacher C employed included calling learners by their names. She commented that she knows all one hundred and sixty five learners by their names. She also used moderate praise and often linked the lessons to everyday life. She said, "Well done, Tyrell" and repeated this method of praise towards other learners who did well. Teacher C also mentioned television and specifically the Oprah Winfrey show when she discussed pollution and the environment. Most of the learners had seen this program and it allowed for some discussion and deliberation on the topic of discussion.

Docking (2002) regards the school as the only place where certain learners feel secure, as mentioned earlier. Hook and Vass (2002) also mention the vital teacher-learner relationship required for effective classroom management. In the classroom, children have relationships with space, materials, and peers but most importantly with the teacher. Corrie (2002, p.16) believe that children's home experiences lead them to expect certain things from their relationships with adults and they will behave in ways that fit their expectations. The relationship with between Teacher C and her learners always seem

premature or in a developmental stage. This could be as a result of her limited time with the learners. Unlike the previous teachers this teacher only deals with her learners for a small portion of the day. Gootman (2001), states that teachers can make a positive difference in the lives of their learners, even “when these children go back to dysfunction” but the case of Teacher C limits her influence on her learners lives. The learners in her own class seem to respond more eagerly to her questions and comments. She also experiences fewer disciplinary problems and less disruptive behaviour from her own group of learner. She describes the grade seven D class as a challenge. She says:

*They all the same...especially the English classes, teaching them. Teaching the same thing over and over. The same responses, the same ...problems. It's the D's (grade 7D) that would be a challenge.*

The antecedents can be altered by presenting well prepared, relevant lesson as explained earlier. Teacher C attempted to do this by making reference to previous notes on more than one occasion and she asked learners ‘to look it up’. Her own class was decorated with charts and posters that depicted the lessons covered previously. The descriptions for terms like similes, metaphors and the like were clearly visible in her own class but these essential resources were not available in the other classes that this teacher taught. It was my explicit impression that this fact hinders learning to some extent or it favours one class as they see these resources on a daily basis, while the other classes are not exposed to these teaching aids.

Christie and Potterton (1997) identify teacher commitment and concern for the school over their own interest as a striking feature in the leadership of resilient schools. While Teacher C is committed to giving her learners the best possible education, she does send outside those learners that disrupt the class. The Education For All Global Monitoring Report (2002) stresses the fact that all learners have the right to education and it is thus important for learners not to be sent out of the classroom where they will be deprived of this basic human right. The Ministry of Education and Culture of Namibia (1993) proposes a “quiet place” where learners that display unwanted behaviour can go for a few

minutes. This place should not be outside the classroom where learners are deprived of learning opportunities. It could be in one corner of the classroom for example. Teacher C might consider using this approach where learners will not be totally deprived of learning opportunities.

Teacher C has not been teaching for very long and this could possibly be offered as a reason for her observed classroom management and practice. She is also involved in subject teaching that takes her out of her class where she is clearly more comfortable than in the other classes. The limited time spent with her own class, causes Teacher C to appear distant and less approachable as compared to the previous teachers that spend the whole day with the same group of learners.

### **5.3 What do teachers perceive as effective classroom management?**

The term “effective” is an evaluative term, which can draw very different responses from teachers. What is clear is that most teachers want to create supportive classrooms where children can achieve their full potential, according to Corrie (2002, p16). Teachers do however hold different views on what effective classroom management actually is. Discipline is often described as consistent, acceptable practices that promote learning and routine to ensure a certain classroom culture. Punishment on the other hand is the inflicting of measures to deter negative behaviour in learners. The following section explores the different ways in which the participants in the study perceive effective classroom management. The quotes used are taken from the interviews conducted with the particular participants as presented in the previous chapter.

#### **5.3.1 Teacher A**

Teacher A described her view of effective classroom management as follows:

*I think the first thing that comes in there is your discipline and I think if you have so many little ones in our classroom and if they are moving around...I think when*

*you teach them recitations or rhymes and while they are moving around, let them say that there and it keeps them busy then they don't have all this distractions in the class. That is very effective, I think.*

This particular teacher firstly mentions discipline as a prerequisite for classroom management. Gootman (2001) believes that rules in the classroom should make the classroom a safe and enjoyable learning environment. She states that once rules are in place, more time can be spent on teaching and learning and less time on discipline and tending to negative behaviour. The Ministry of Education and Culture of Namibia (1993) argues that children can be disciplined with care. This organisation states that the desired outcome of discipline should be that children show improved behaviour. Teacher A explains that she does employ certain disciplinary measures from time to time:

*Discipline problem...I don't normally send my learners out because they still so very little, you know. So what do I do with them? I tell them you sit right at the back there and I ignore them. For a while and then afterwards He'll notice now...his putting up...because he's always got an answer or shouting out an answer, then he'll see...Miss. Is not taking notice of me then he'll just sit quietly and afterwards, say after a third or fourth question, he'll put up his hand and I'll ask him to answer. But you feel so bad, hey, you feel very bad.*

Teacher A subscribes to the concept of discipline with care. She states that it makes her feel bad to impose punishment on a learner, but she feels it is necessary from time to time. She also employs a similar idea to the “quiet place” that the Ministry of Education and Culture of Namibia (1993), suggests. The learner is thus not deprived of learning opportunities but is still disciplined for his wrong doing. His right to education is thus not violated and the learner gets a chance to realize that he had transgressed and needed to be disciplined for his offence. The rule, if it applies, should be known to the learner according to the Ministry of Education and Culture of Namibia (1993). Rules should not be a surprise to the learners and they should know what the consequences are when breaking the rules. Gootman (2001), also feels that learners should be taught that their

actions always have consequences which can either be positive or negative. Teacher A reinforces this concept by rewarding learners that perform well while those who display unwanted behaviour are sent to her designated “quiet place” for a while.

Teacher A further states that she keeps her learners occupied by teaching them rhymes and recitations, which they say while the teacher is otherwise occupied. The learners are thus gainfully engaged if the teacher cannot attend to them for some reason. They are thus not disruptive or excessively loud as they are all involved in saying their rhymes or a recitation. The repetition of these rhymes gives learners the opportunity to articulate words and explore meaning, as well as to engage in a social action with fellow learners. The risk is, however, that the repetition can lead to boredom and eventually disruptive behaviour as some learners might find this type of activity repetitive and unstimulating. The reciting of one group is used as an opportunity for the teacher to attend to those learners who experience learning problems or who do not understand the work that was covered in class. Managing behavioural problems erodes teaching and learning time according to Corrie (2002). When this happens the teacher ends up frustrated and unproductive. Teacher A has counteracted this negative complication by ensuring that her learners are always occupied in an activity to keep them from becoming distracted or displaying unwanted behaviour.

The learner’s desks in Teacher A’s class are arranged in rows. In this way they all have a clear view of the board to take down any given notes. Corrie (2002, p.25) believes that children sitting in rows are easier to handle. Active learning however requires more social interaction and Teacher A achieves this by letting all the learners sit on the mat while she teaches certain aspects. She thus practices a combination of social learning in the groups and also individual learning when learners are seated at their desks.

### **5.3.2 Teacher B**

Teacher B has some very specific ideas on effective classroom management. She describes effective classroom management in the following way:

*Effective classroom management is a kind of managing learners to do their work. That is engage them fully into the lesson...uh...give time for reflection, give time to think critically and assess them continuously, managing the discipline, disciplinary measures as well.*

This teacher thus views effective classroom management as a prerequisite for learners to do their work. This concurs with the view that Corrie (2002) expresses. She feels that without effective classroom management teachers will feel like police officers engaged in crowd control rather than helping children to learn.

In the event of Teacher B having to discipline learners, she does make use of the following measures as she explains:

*Yes, I try to give some disciplinary measures. First of all we have class rules, school rules and group rules. I also said to my learners that they can come up with their motto, that's words to live by. So if you don't do what you said you believe in, in your group that is a violation of the rules that we've got, then I'll give little things like okay, you'll have to stay after school and work and for those that have transport, uh...break time. You don't go for break, though I know it's not right but I let them sit inside with me, eat, go to the toilet, you know, all the things that they do break time, except play. Its not that I'm punishing children not to play but children can always play, even after school, but they must realize that its not right what they have done...and maybe give them tasks to do like maybe clean the windows and so on.*

These measures are in place to ensure that Teacher B can maintain her preferred classroom management style. She maintains a very close relationship with her learners and takes her pastoral role very seriously. The National Education Policy Act (Act 27 of 1996) describes seven roles that a teacher should aspire too. One of these roles includes the pastoral role of the teacher. Teacher B regards her calling as a teacher as twofold.

She maintains that a teacher should not only focus on academics but should take a personal interest in the learner's well being as well. Corrie (2002, p16) feels that certain teachers can make a great deal of difference to some children's long term outcomes. Teacher B refers to her classroom approach as "holistic". She states the following:

*A learner should be developed holistically as I treat a learner as a different individual, unique individual amongst them...*

Teacher B also believes in the concept of inclusively. She realizes that her class is made up of various racial groups and she often tries to accommodate all of them in certain ways. She made the following comments on this particular classroom management practice:

*Yes, because now and again, you know, you have to switch code to accommodate all learners when you can, and if you can't, for example with the other lesson that I've had lately, I asked one learner to say the time was up in Xhosa, you know. He said it in a very nice way and I couldn't have said it like that because I'm not Xhosa, so sometimes you can give a chance to learners to explain to other learners.*

This teacher even tries to accommodate those learners who shy away from the spotlight and are introverted. She practices reasonable measures to ensure that these learners also feel like a part of the class and that they are involved in the lesson and the learning experience. Teacher B sums this practice up as follows:

*...so I've got types of learners in my class, others are very, very shy of which I have to stimulate them to say something, so such learners, I group together so that they get a chance to come out and speak when we have discussions.*

Teacher B subscribes to the three R's that Gootman (2001) describes for achieving long term effective classroom management. These are Recognition, Remorse and Resolve. She views problem solving as a practice that has social and academic benefits. Her classroom management approach appears as a balance between shared responsibility between the teacher and her learners. She comments that her learners should always know what is acceptable and what is not. Her class also actively takes care of their classroom by setting up their own rules and thereby also taking ownership for these rules. This is a direct result of the teacher's influence on the learners. Her relationship with her class is such that they do not view her only as their teacher but as a role model, a confidant and an inspiration to aspire to better all the time.

### **5.3.3 Teacher C**

Teacher C appears to have a very idealistic idea of effective classroom management. She describes her idea of effective classroom management as follows:

*...I think when the kids are busy working and are responding and are doing what they are told and not on their own trips...this one's going there and that one's going there...and ja...class is quiet...teacher is busy, kids are busy...perfect. Peaceful.*

Teacher C's view of effective classroom management is idealistic as the only real response that the teacher has control over, is her own. Hook and Vass (2002) are adamant that the teacher has no control over how any learner will respond in the class but the teacher does have full control over how they would react to the learner's response. These authors believe that effective teachers focus their energies on precisely the aspect which they can control, namely their own behaviour towards a situation. The earlier mentioned  $E+R=O$  suggestion comes to mind here. The Events that happen in the classroom and how the teacher responds to it, will determine the Outcomes of her lesson. Teacher C seems to have reverted to transmission teaching. She expects learners to simply do what they are 'supposed' to do and the class to be peaceful. This is not

possible at all as all learners come to class with their own personalities, problems, personal issues and abilities. The classroom is a combination of multiple ideas, intentions and possibilities and this makes Teacher C's expectations unrealistic and idealistic.

The learners also seem to have developed a preference for their own class teacher. They seem to merely accommodate the other teachers that come and teach in their classrooms during the day. Teacher C expresses her feelings on this issue as follows:

*I don't know. I just picked up that...always with the class teacher...with us that do subject teaching... The children ...respect the class teacher more, they do what they supposed to do, they'd be having their dictionaries; they'd be in top form.*

Teacher C clearly feels that the learners respect their class teachers more than the subject teachers and this seems to make her distant and unconnected to her learners. Her own class seem to respond to her in a better and more open way, compared to the other classes. This became evident in the observations. Teacher C's relationship with the other learners also seem impersonal and she states the following:

*Uh...behaviour. I've got somebody that basically terrorizes me...uh...in the other classes there is a bit of poverty and socio economic problems, but in my class it is mostly just behaviour because they all seem quite well off, the way I see it...I don't know.*

Teacher C thus seems to have a need to address this issue. Since she is one of four teachers that teach the same group of learners, she cannot address this issue on her own. The only way that her concerns could be adequately addressed would be to consult with the other teachers that work with these learners. "Schools cannot be improved without people working together" according to Lieberman (1986). This seems to suggest a need for collegial discussion. Hargreaves (2001) argues that 'collegiality takes teacher development beyond personal, idiosyncratic reflection and beyond dependence on outside

“experts” to the point where teachers learn from each other, sharing and developing their expertise together.’ Collegiality promotes professional growth and this enables the school to implement changes more effectively according to Fullan (2001). Teacher C might benefit from airing her concerns to her colleagues in the same grade and attempt to address her issues collectively.

#### **5.4 How can the environment be adapted to achieve ECM?**

The majority of teachers strive to create supportive classrooms where learners can achieve their full academic potential according to Corrie (2002) and Marland (1993). This however, is not easily achieved and learners’ behaviour often disrupts teaching and learning which causes the class to be filled with tension. Teachers that subscribe to the concept of learning organisations (Senge, 1990) aim to continually expand their capacity to create the desired results that they want. Fullan (2001), also suggests that teachers develop the capacity to learn by developing new skills and attitudes. These teachers work “smart and not hard” as Hargreaves (2001), suggests. The following section will explore how the environment can be adapted to achieve effective classroom management.

##### **5.4.1 The physical environment.**

The classroom can be arranged in ways to promote effective classroom management for the teacher and learner’s benefit. According to Bush (2003) structure can inhibit or promote change in a school. Marland (1993) concurs and argues that the classroom can be an ally or enemy to the learning process. This resonates the view expressed by Gootman (2001), that space and time should be organised to avoid disciplinary pitfalls. The simple task of arranging the learner’s desks to ensure a clear view of the chalk board or the teacher is often taken for granted. The Ministry of Education and Culture of Namibia (1993), refers to such practices as changing the antecedents. Furthermore, the classroom should be a safe and enjoyable environment where learners can enjoy spending time and learning. Gootman (2001) believes that this can be achieved through classroom rules in which the learners have a central role in setting up. She argues that learners need

reasonable limits and that learners will own up to rules that they have formulated on their own. The rules should also be clearly stated, be visible on charts for example and it should also be known to all the learners.

The Ministry of Education and Culture of Namibia (1993) also echoes the need for rules in the classroom. This organisation suggests that rules be discussed often in the class. They state that rules should be stated positively rather than negatively. Saying “Close the door quietly” instead of saying “Don’t slam the door” is stating the rule positively. They also feel that learners that follow the rules should be positively reinforced. The breaking of rules should have consequences and learners should be aware of these. Gootman (2001) feels that learners should be taught that all actions have consequences and these can be positive or negative, based on the behaviour displayed. The Education for All (2002), initiative perceives learning as a human right and cautions against the violation of this right. Teachers should take note of this and ensure that the consequences that they impose for unwanted behaviour do not violate the learner’s right to education. The Ministry of Education and Culture of Namibia (1993) suggests a “quiet place” within the classroom where learners can still see and hear what is being taught in the classroom. This suggestion was quite effectively employed by Teacher A as discussed earlier.

In the classroom, learners have relationships with space, material, equipment, peers, teachers and support staff. Corrie (2002), believes that these relationships should be harnessed to promote effective classroom management strategies. Grouping of learners to ensure effective classroom management is a feasible option for the lower grades as demonstrated by Teacher A. More senior grades could possibly make use of active learning methods where learners interact more socially. Corrie also argues that learners seated in rows are easier to control while active learning, which is harder to control, requires more social interaction. Children however learn through interaction with others as well as interaction with materials, tools, equipment and events according to this author. The physical classroom should thus provide these requirements as it aids in learning and will also assist in the effective management of the classroom.

#### **5.4.2 Teacher initiatives and commitment**

Fullan (2001) states that educational change is dependant on what teachers do and think. A striking feature of resilient schools is the teacher's commitment to teaching and learning as described by Christie and Potterton (1997). Corrie (2002) acknowledges that teachers bring enormous expertise to the classroom but changes in society and education require them to add new understandings about learner's behaviour. She states that complex problems do not respond to simplistic solutions. The teacher thus requires an understanding of the change process in order to respond to it. Fullan (2001) argues that reforms sometimes fail because teachers do not understand the change process fully. He refers to this as "faulty maps" of change. The effective classroom manager should equip himself with the knowledge and skills to address the changing demands in the teaching profession. As illustrated earlier, teachers have no control over how learners respond but they do have control over their reaction to the learner's behaviour.

The one thing that teachers do have control over is how they respond to what happens in their class. Hook and Vass (2002) believe that effective teachers focus their energies on precisely the aspect which they can control, namely their own behaviour towards a situation. Gootman (2001) feels that poor communication can lead to discipline problems in the classroom. She argues that effective discipline means listening as well as responding correctly and appropriately. Corrie (2002) believes that teachers should design interventions that are based on evidence. She calls this evidence based practice to ensure positive and lasting change in the effective teacher's arsenal. Evidence is very often seen from colleagues who have experienced similar situations. This practice is thus a focus on not reinventing the wheel, but by learning from the experience of others.

Davidoff, Kaplan and Lazarus (1994) argue that teachers' capacity as individuals and as part of a group are vital for organizational development and growth. This implies that teachers can be very competent individuals on their own but can achieve so much more when they work together as colleagues or collectively as a staff. According to Senge (2000) leaders need to realize the importance of teamwork and the building of a shared

vision that promotes genuine collegiality. Institutions that display these qualities have people that share the same vision, their thoughts are aligned and they work together for the benefit of the organisation. Corrie (2002) also mentions that collegial relationships paves the way for professional growth and thus ultimately more effective classroom management as teachers are exposed to the expertise and experience of their fellow teachers who have been in the profession for longer periods of time. Hargreaves (1991) echoes this point and states that one factor that is consistent in enhancing school effectiveness is collaboration amongst teachers.

Teacher initiatives such as those employed by Teacher B can encourage co operation and social interaction among learners. The Ministry of Education and Culture of Namibia (1993) argues that behaviour can be learned and unlearned by learners. The effective teacher can use this fact to their advantage. Behaviour cannot be separated from the context in which it occurs, so teaching should take place in a context that supports good behaviour according to Corrie (2002). Coupled with this, Gootman (2001) suggests that problem solving is an essential skill for the effective classroom manager. She claims that problem solving has social and academic benefits and it should be viewed as a life skill that always has value. Problem solving skills can also become a vehicle for conflict resolution and social interaction through discussion and reflection. Gootman (2001) believes that some anger can be defused by giving learners the means to verbalise their feelings and then giving them guidance to seek solutions to their concerns.

The effective classroom manager can alter the antecedents in the classroom by presenting well prepared and relevant lessons according to The Ministry of Education and Culture of Namibia (1993). Corrie (2002) agrees with this point and feels that irrelevant curriculum, poor instructional strategies and rigid classroom demands can hinder effective classroom management. She states that teachers should become researchers in their own classrooms and explore various solutions and interventions to promote academic progress. According to Avenant (1986) a learner's motivation to learn is affected by the interest that the teacher shows and the relevance of the content presented. Docking (2002) also states that good behaviour has a lot to do with a learner's motivation to learn. The

National Education Policy Act (Act 27 of 1996) describes seven roles that a teacher should aspire to. One of these roles includes the teacher as a researcher and a lifelong learner. Thus, teachers should constantly be engaged in seeking new ways of making their lessons better, more relevant and intellectually stimulating to their learners. The concept of being a reflective practitioner is also an aid in planning relevant and valued content matter for teaching that can promote ECM.

#### **5.4.3 Policy to improve classroom management.**

The teachers' classroom practice can be adapted to achieve effective classroom management but a supporting way of achieving ECM is through the introduction of policies. As mentioned earlier, McLennan and Thurlow (1997) state that the South African education system has been altered by the introduction of various policy initiatives since 1994. South Africa also experienced an acute awareness of human rights and the dignity of learners. This prompted policies such as the policy on Alternatives to Corporal Punishment (2000) in line with the views echoed by the Education for All initiative (2002). Although the value of this policy is debatable, it made it clear that educational practices had to be done without the use of methods that undermined the human dignity of the learner. Teachers thus had to be creative, exploratory and innovative in devising strategies to maintain discipline and ultimately, develop effective classroom management.

Davidoff and Lazarus (2002) also identified various policies that were introduced in schools. Some of these included prescriptions for issues such as school organisation, funding and governance such as the South African Schools Act (SASA) in 1996. The Norms and Standards for Educators (2000) policy outlined teacher education while the curriculum was prescribed in the Curriculum 2005 policy of 1997. Policies that referred to teacher professionalism (SACE Code of Professional Ethics) were also introduced in the education sector. The introduction of the Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS) in 2003 was also an attempt to improve on the previously introduced Development Appraisal System (DAS). I.Q.M.S. is a policy aimed to provide the drive

to ensure educational success and this policy has to be implemented and upheld in schools. This policy aims to empower teachers by using tools to identify weaknesses and strengths in individual teachers. These issues are then addressed by giving advice, guidance and opportunities to work on the identified weak areas. The Integrated Quality Management System procedure Manual (2003) states that I.Q.M.S. aims to support the empowering, motivating and training of educators, in order to achieve educational goals. Empowering teachers through development can have a positive impact on classroom management. Since teachers are to be trained on identified weak areas, they should experience enlightenment on how to approach classroom practice in a positive and constructive way. The perennial issue of the success of these policies is however questionable and the ultimate drive to achieve effective classroom management lies with the teacher and the support structures that they rely on for guidance and leadership.

## **5.5 Conclusion**

The data presented in this chapter conforms to the rich, thick description that Henning (2004) describes. The various ways that the participants approach their classroom management is outlined. The participant's views and perceptions on classroom management are also presented as depicted in the interviews conducted earlier. The chapter concluded with an overview on how the participants adapted the learning environment to achieve effective classroom management.

## CHAPTER 6

### CONCLUDING REMARKS

#### 6.1 Introduction

This study set out to explore effective classroom management in a primary school in a small town in the southern part of KwaZulu Natal. The aim of the study was to look at how teachers manage their classrooms effectively and what other teachers could learn from the participants' way of handling this issue. The objectives of the study were explored by looking at three critical questions. These were as follows:

1. What methods do teachers use to manage their classrooms?
2. What do teachers perceive as effective classroom management?
3. How can the environment be adapted to achieve effective classroom management?

The study was grounded in the interpretive paradigm and was conducted using the case study approach. The case study approach enabled the researcher to capture the uniqueness of the situation that each of the participants experienced in their classrooms. The data was collected using observations and a semi structured interview. The observation schedule was based on the constraints that the researcher experienced in daily teaching and was self designed. The researcher aimed to produce an ethically sound study that adhered to the strictest of controls and ethical practices to ensure that the participants were not harmed, exposed or subjected to any form of discomfort or unpleasantness. Participants were given all the information about the study and participated willingly and under no pressure from any party. The findings of the study revealed some interesting and innovative ways in which the selected participants managed their classrooms. In this regard, the aims of the study were realized as the exploration of effective classroom management was captured conclusively.

## 6.2 Recommendations

The observed lessons, the interviews and the experience gained in my own class as well as the literature studied have prompted me to make the following recommendations to achieve effective classroom management:

- The teacher's response to any situation is their own choice. Teachers should realize and accept the fact that they cannot control how learners react to a situation. The only thing that they have complete control over is how they respond to an action.
- The teacher should take responsibility for their circumstances. They should not blame anyone for their situation but rather work at improving on it. The Department of Education might be slow in service delivery but teachers can achieve much on their own if they take action rather than blame someone and remain inactive.
- Children do what adults do. Teachers should thus display exemplary behaviour and should be role models worthy of emulation by their learners.
- Thorough preparation of lessons should be done at all times. The Curriculum should be relevant, interesting and presented in an appealing manner.
- Teachers should refuse to be failures. Failing to get the expected reaction from learners should motivate teachers to try even harder in the next lesson to be more successful. Failure should be used as a motivational tool.
- Teachers should strive to become reflective practitioners. They should always aim to improve on previous mistakes and strive for improvement on the positive aspects. It therefore requires the teacher to make a concerted effort to review previous lessons with the aim of improving on it.
- Teachers should improvise in the following ways to achieve ECM:
  - Forget past failures; use it as a learning curve,
  - React against failure, try something new,
  - Be a productive thinker, turbo thinking.

### **6.3 Conclusion**

The good teacher is a good classroom manager. These words by Marland (1993), sum up the findings of this study, and this author's concept of good classroom practice. Effective classroom management can, however, be pursued through the utilization of various approaches. Issues such as teacher commitment, teacher initiatives, and the implementation of policies as well as the creation of collaborative cultures can promote the establishment of effective classroom management practices and ultimately good educational practices. By looking at the classroom management practices displayed by the respondents in this study, one can clearly acquire some answers to the critical questions posed earlier. In closing, effective classroom management can promote a culture of teaching and learning. Without ECM the teacher will be reduced to practicing crowd control which will erode teaching time and lead to frustration and tension. It is thus essential that teachers develop classroom management practices that are humane, practically viable and socially acceptable. The three participants in the study have demonstrated that ECM can be achieved through various approaches. It is thus up to each teacher to strive to be a good teacher and thus a good classroom manager to promote effective educational ideals.

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## **APPENDICES**

### **Informed Consent Letter:**

Dear .....

I am a Master of Education at the University of Kwazulu Natal. My studies require me to conduct an in depth research project and I am currently involved in this project.

My study deals with effective classroom management and I therefore have to gather information on this topic. You can assist me in this matter by participating in an interview session. This information that you will provide will help me to improve on the efficiency of my research and help me to get a conclusive result.

I thus kindly request you to assist me by allowing me to interview you on your classroom practice and also to observe your classroom activities for a short period of time. Your input can make a difference in how this issue is viewed.

My contact number is 083 286 6405 and my supervisor is Neil Avery. His telephone number is 082 374 2278. You are welcome to contact either of us should you have any queries or concerns. Your confidentiality will be ensured and you are free to withdraw

from the study at any time without fear of any negative implications. The findings of this study may be made public but your identity will be protected at all times.

For the sake of accuracy I request your permission to use a tape recorder for our conversations. You will have access to the findings and can see me for any issues, which you regard as concerns.

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**Declaration: I am granting permission to take part in this study. I am free to withdraw from the study at any time without any negative consequences. I am also granting permission for the use of electronic equipment for recoding purposes. My confidentiality will be respected and the findings may be made public after I have viewed it.**

**Signed .....on this day.....at.....**

#### **INTERVIEW SCHEDULE - M.J.J Coetzee**

1. Tell me a bit about yourself?
2. How long have you been teaching?
3. Describe some of your preferred teaching methods.
4. Describe any additional training, which you have received.
5. How did this impact on the quality of your teaching?
6. Comment on your learners' performance.
7. In what way did your professional development contribute to your learners' performance?
8. How do you measure your learner's performance in the classroom?
9. What do you perceive as obstacles to learning? Please explain.
10. Is there any professional development programme at your school or offered by the department to assist you with overcoming some of these obstacles?
11. Describe the composition of your class with regard to discipline.

12. What are the coping mechanisms that you employ in dealing with discipline problems?
13. How does socio – economic factors impact upon teaching and learning in your classroom? Explain.
14. Does the school have any programme in place to deal with some of these issues e.g. a feeding scheme, fund-raising ventures, and community - involvement?

Other:

Do you have any thing else to add, such as other questions or comments?

Please may I request to speak to you again at another occasion should the need arise?

Kindly contact me if you think of anything else that you regard as important to this study.

Thank you for your time and effort.

## **Observation Schedule: M.J.J. Coetzee**

### **EFFECTIVE CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT**

#### **Learning Organisation**

1. Classroom setup:

#### **Content:**

2. Written lesson plan:
3. Teaching aids:

#### **In the introduction:**

6. Learning outcomes:

#### **During the lesson:**

7. Revision:

8. Link to previous lesson:
9. Mode of delivery:
10. What happens when a learner/s are disruptive?
11. What happens when a learner is addressed by the teacher?
12. How does the learner's respond/interact with one another?

*Educator Initiatives:*

13. Resources used:
14. Examples:
15. Distractions or interruptions:

*Models of learning:*

16. Rote learning:
17. Demonstrating:

*Collegiality:*

18. Reference to other subjects/ learning areas:
19. Resources from other teachers:
20. Presentation by other teachers:
21. Involvement by outside people/ experts:

*Learning Mechanisms:*

22. Association:
23. Reinforcement:
24. Observational learning:

25. Imitation:

26. Other:

*Learner-Teacher Interaction:*

27. Learners ask questions:

28. Learners require clarity:

*At the conclusion of the lesson:*

29. Is the lesson related to the outcomes?

30. Any other significant events/ occurrences: