DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF TEACHERS' AND PARENTS' RHETORIC ABOUT TEACHERS' WORK

by

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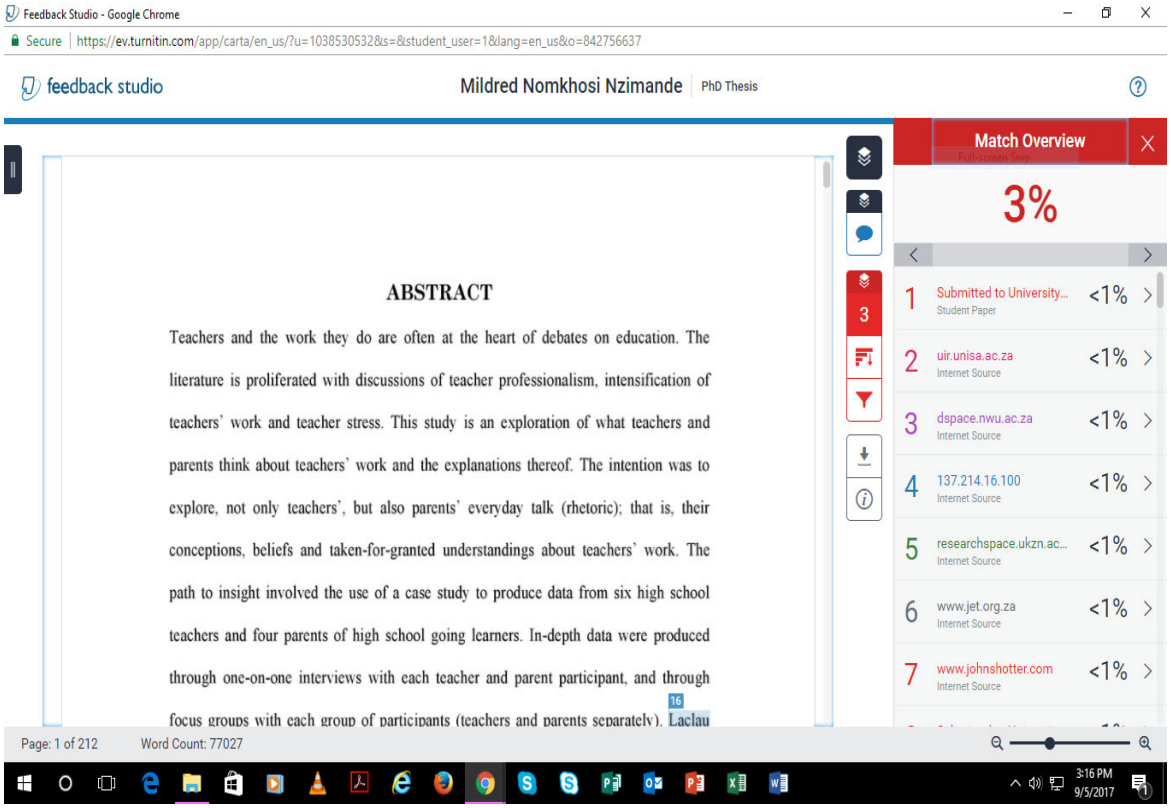

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A THESIS SUBMITTED IN FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN EDUCATION.

Although the greatest care was taken in the editing of this document, the final responsibility for the product rests with the author.

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ABSTRACT

Teachers and the work they do are often at the heart of debates on education. The literature is proliferated with discussions of teacher professionalism, intensification of teachers' work and teacher stress. This study is an exploration of what teachers and parents think about teachers' work and the explanations thereof. The intention was to explore, not only teachers', but also parents' everyday talk (rhetoric); that is, their conceptions, beliefs and taken-for-granted understandings about teachers' work. The path to insight involved the use of a case study to produce data from six high school teachers and four parents of high school going learners. In-depth data were produced through one-on-one interviews with each teacher and parent participant, and through focus groups with each group of participants (teachers and parents separately). Laclau and Mouffe's (2001) discourse theory was used as an analytical tool which provided lenses to identify, not only the taken-for-granted, but also the competing as well as the challenged or altered discourses (in the form of rhetoric).

Juxtaposing teachers' rhetoric with parents' rhetoric revealed their points of similarities, differences and tensions. The analyses of both sets of data enhanced understanding of teachers' work; moving it beyond parents' and teachers' beliefs. The study posits that the rhetoric is a class-based perspective. The rhetoric of parents (who come from low socio-economic class) showed that, despite their disillusionment about the negative attributes of teachers (such as laziness and unprofessional behaviour) parents are sympathetic towards teachers. I argue that parents from the low socio-economic background are sympathetic because they understand the plight of teachers who have to work with ill-disciplined learners, and sometimes under unbearable conditions of work. At the same time, I argue that teachers (who are middle-class) feel unsupported by the department of education,

parents and school management; and as a result, teachers feel powerless to challenge some of the departmental policies they are expected to enact.

The study suggests that a multi-layered support will be beneficial for teachers and it may enhance their work experience. Moreover, collaboration between teachers, parents, learners and the Department of Education, may improve learner achievement, hence contributing positively to teachers' work.

Key words: teachers' work, parents' rhetoric, teachers' rhetoric, discourse analysis

PREFACE

The work described in this thesis was carried out in the School of Education. I hereby declare that this thesis titled: **Discourse analysis of teachers' and parents' rhetoric about teachers' work,** is my own conception, execution and production which has not been submitted to any other institution (in part or whole) for examination.

All sources cited in text and are included in the reference list.

---------- Nomkhosi Nzimande
Researcher February 2018

---------- Prof Nyna Amin
Promoter February 2018

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS OR ACRONYMS

CDA…….Critical Discourse Analysis

DA……Discourse Analysis

DoE……...Department of education

EMS……..Economic Management Systems

FET……...Further Education and Training

GET……..General Education and Training

HOD…….Head of Department

IQMS……...Integrated Quality Management System

KZN…….KwaZulu-Natal

NSE……..Norms and Standards for Educators

SABC……...South African Broadcasting Corporation

SACE……South African Council of Educators

SMT……..School Management Team

STD……...Secondary Teachers Diploma

TRC……...Truth and Reconciliation Commission

USA……...United States of America

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Engaging in research is like trying to solve a maze. Solving a maze means that one has to take particular routes that will lead one to the desired goal. However, mazes are no walk in the park. Some contain hedges, brooks, or stones of different shapes, colour and sizes that one has to navigate through if one is to reach the desired goal. Likewise, doing research is not an easy straightforward journey. It is an act of finding one's way through the complex labyrinth. The fear of being trapped in the multi-curved maze was superseded by the assurance of being surrounded by people who provided different kinds of support when I needed it most. These people showed care and concern about my well-being, emotional and intellectual state. I acknowledge all of these people from the bottom of my heart:

The **teachers and parents** who participated in this study. They are the heart of this Thesis.

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For their undying love, support, understanding and patience: my husband **Thamsanqa**, my sons **Thembalethu and Nkanyiso** deserve my gratitude. Thank you for providing a strong safety-net and for all the encouragement when I wanted to give up. For taking care of the home chores during my condoned absences: I thank you **Thabani Kunene**. My mother, sisters and friends, for their love and prayers, you are highly appreciated.

My sincere thanks also go to the **National Research Foundation** for affording me 'time-off' from work (through a sabbatical grant - **Ref: SGD150617119615**) to finish my PhD.

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to:

My guardian angel, my late dad, **Pius Dlamini** who had a passion for education and wanted to see all his children and grandchildren reaching greater heights in the education sector. My mother, **Gladys Dlamini** for moral support.

The late Emmanuel and Attanasia Nzimande for watching over us from above.

My beacons of hope, my sons **Thembalethu and Nkanyiso Nzimande**. I hope you are inspired to do your best at all times.

My number one supporter who always has my back through thick and thin, my husband, **Thamsanqa Nzimande.**

All the great minds who will read this text.

To God be the Glory…AMEN!!

CHAPTER ONE

The Rhetoric About Teachers' Work

Introduction

Under the apartheid regime, education in South Africa was racially segregated as it was used to impose identities on people. The racial segregation in the education system corresponded to the divisions that were inherent in society; and therefore, as argued by Msila (2007, p. 146), the nineteen departments of education which were, not only racially but also ethnically divided, "reinforced the inequalities of a divided society". The inequalities are also argued by Msila (2007), to have filtered through the curriculum which seemed to favour one race (the Whites) over others. Consequently, knowingly or unknowingly, when doing their work, teachers seem to be always carrying out a political mandate since the act of educating is not a neutral one (Apple, 1993).

At the demise of apartheid in the in the early 1990s, the nineteen departments of education were replaced by one Ministry of Education which comprised a national department and nine provincial departments of education (Moloi & Strauss, 2005). As a result, the new democratically elected government took over a disjointed, "racially-polarised, profoundly unequal system of education" (Harley, Barasa, Bertram Mattson & Pillay, 2000, p. 287). Education was unequal on the basis of funding that the state made available to different schools and consequently in the manner in which the schools were resourced. Therefore, disparate learning environments were created through disproportionate funding of schools (Ocampo, 2004), either geographically (urban, township or rural schools) or racially (White, Black, Coloured or Indian[1] schools). For this reason, the education landscape of South Africa presents many diversities due to its unequal background. Its combination of the nineteen departments of education which had different kinds of schools that were differently or unequally resourced; made it very complex, nebulous and heterogeneous. Although South Africa has one system of education now, it must be understood as working against the background of a history of inequality. From this history, a range of issues emerge around teachers' work.

[1] These are racial categories that were created by the apartheid regime to segregate and discriminate persons according to race; however, these categories were inherited and still exist in the post-apartheid era.

What was clear about the goals of the new system of education in South Africa after the fall of the apartheid regime, was the transformation agenda underpinned by the creation of a new South African learner identity which was in line with promoting democratic education (Roberts, 2008). A democratic education and a curriculum needed to correspond to the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa's (Act 108 of 1996) aims which included: healing the injustices of the past, improving the quality of life for ***all*** citizens and the provision of an education based on social justice and human rights (Msila, 2007). Teachers are no longer dealing with the generation that spoke about "freedom first, education later". They deal with a generation which wants education first, and not just any education, but quality education which is in line with international standards. Against this background, the question to ask is, how do teachers and parents understand teachers' work?

The new dispensation came with a number of common policies underpinned by the values and the aims of the Constitution. The policies included the Norms and Standards for Educators (NSE), Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS) and South African Council of Educators (SACE) code of professional ethics just to name a few. The NSE policy stipulated the various roles that teachers were supposed to play in the transformation of education in South Africa (Morrow, 2007). In this policy, teachers were referred to as educators in line with the idea that they are guides on the sides rather than sages on the stage. It was more a political way of understanding that a teacher will be guiding the children and not dictating or indoctrinating them as was the case during apartheid. Hence, teacher roles included being a learning mediator; interpreter and designer of learning programmes and materials; leader, administrator and manager; scholar, researcher and lifelong learner; community, citizenship and pastoral role; assessor; and learning area or subject specialist (DoE[2], 2000, p. 13).

The Integrated Quality Management System was introduced as a policy to, not only evaluate teacher competence and performance, but also assess "strengths and areas for development, provide support and opportunities for development to ensure continued

[2] DoE is an abbreviation for the Department of Education, the official educational authority at a national level in South Africa.

growth, promote accountability, and monitor an institution's overall effectiveness" (Centre for Development and Enterprise, 2015, p. 5). Moreover, the teacher performance aspect was linked to the salary or grade progression for individual teachers (Nkambule, 2010) which could progressively lead to teacher promotion.

Furthermore, the SACE code of professional ethics is intended to control the professional and ethical conduct of all teachers that are registered with SACE. As a professional council of educators, SACE was established in the year 2000 to ensure excellence in education through monitoring of teacher quality by keeping a register of all teachers, promoting professional development and ensuring that professional and ethical standards are maintained by teachers at all times (SACE, 2011). In this way, issues of quality assurance across all schools and teachers, irrespective of their geographical positioning or racial demographics, are supposed to be upheld to ensure quality education for all. It is against this backdrop that the present study sought to understand what people, particularly teachers and parents, said about teachers' work.

The South African context is therefore, characterised by the historical background, geographical complexities and policy directives about teachers' work. However, this study does not seek to match teacher practice to policy, neither does it try to determine how teachers are managing the historical past, nor is it about how teachers work in disadvantaged or under-resourced schools. The study is about teachers' work and how it is understood by both teachers and parents. It is about getting deeper insights about what the discourse tells us about how the everyday work that teachers do is played out in the public and professional domains.

The reader will note throughout this thesis that the literature provides a deep understanding of teachers' work from a scholarly perspective. What has been discussed in this section however, is a political, socio-economic and cultural landscape of where the actors in this study are located and where the phenomenon that I wish to understand is positioned. Again, it will be apparent in both chapter six and seven how parents from disadvantaged background understand teachers' work. The parent participants do not represent all South African parents, but they are a group of parents who are in the depth of poverty in South Africa and who are sending their children to school in the hope that they will get an education that prepares them for the future. These are parents who want

the next generation to have a better life than they do. The study therefore, seeks to understand these parents' thinking about teachers' work. As will be revealed at the end, the parents' opinions and rhetoric have a surprising twist.

This study entitled 'discourse analysis of teachers' and parents' rhetoric about teachers' work' is conducted with the aim of obtaining deep insights about what teachers and parents understand teachers' work to be about and why they hold those understandings. It can be argued that teachers and parents, as important stakeholders in education, can be nodal points (a detailed explanation in Chapter Three) for the taken-for-granted rhetoric about teachers' work.

This chapter presents the overview of the study. Thereafter, all the key elements of the study are revealed through a discussion of research questions, theoretical framing, research methodology, and approaches to generation and analysis of data. These elements are presented in order to offer an overview of the study and to indicate what went into the creation of this thesis.

1.1 Significance of the Study

In the post-apartheid era, teachers are continuously being seen by the public as non-performing and non-dedicated (Masondo, 2016; Savides, 2017). While Savides (2017) identifies either unqualified or under-qualified teachers as contributing to this perception of teacher non-dedication and non-performance, Masondo (2016) argues that the teachers' lack of content knowledge and the interference of the teacher unions in the processes of monitoring of teachers' work largely contribute to teacher non-performance. This rhetoric of non-dedication and non-performance seems to be in line with the report compiled by the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) based on the research by the Centre for Development and Enterprise (2011) which claimed that teachers usually,

> make insufficient cognitive demands of learners, do not develop concepts, set insufficient written work, and provide students with few opportunities to read. Moreover, many teachers often come late to school, leave early, spend only 46 per cent of their time teaching each week, and hardly teach at all on Fridays (p. 11).

Such discourses portray teachers as undependable and contributing to the deteriorating standards of education in schools. This view was also evident in an Australian study by

Thomas (2009) in which she suggested that the media discourses create a perception of teachers as professionally incompetent to raise the standard of education. These, often negative comments about teachers and their work, are likely to leave teachers feeling downtrodden.

The purpose of this study was to theorise about the discourses surrounding teachers' work. The study explored the nature of the rhetoric about teachers' work by looking at what the parents say about teachers' work and what the teachers themselves say about their work. The purpose was to find out the extent of the differences and or similarities between these rhetorical utterances, and whether or not they influenced the manner in which teachers perform their work.

The rationale for doing this study was derived from three imperatives namely; personal, public and literature based. Firstly, on a personal level, I present my experiences from engaging with friends who are high school teachers and from anecdotal evidence from parents who have children in schools. Having had the experience of teaching at high school, I still engage with my previous colleagues on a social level. In our conversations, we cannot help but talk about our work, and this is where I gather some information about the situations in schools, and about teachers' frustrations with the state of things in the education system. Furthermore, having siblings who are parents of teenagers, they are often candid about their views of what they think is wrong with what teachers are doing in schools. These experiences challenged me into finding out, in a systematic way, the teachers' views about their work and also to find out from the parents (who are not only an important component of the education sector but also members of the public), what they understand teachers' work to be all about.

Secondly, I draw from public discourses, especially the media discourses (which are often negative) about teachers in general and sometimes about teachers' work. Generally, various types of media often report negatively about teachers and their work. In particular, South African media reports abound with negativity about teachers, for example, about teachers' misconduct (Khoza, 2016; Veriava, 2013), fake qualifications (SABC News Live Blog, 2016; Sapa, 2013), to name a few. Because some of the incidents that are reported in the media are often exaggerated and presented as the truth generalisable to all teachers, there was need for this study in the field of teachers' work research (through the

teachers' rhetoric) to establish the realities of teachers' work from their perspectives, and also to understand what influences parents' rhetoric about teachers' work.

Thirdly, studies on teachers rarely touch on their work. Rather, they talk about things that affect teachers personally, for example, their sexuality (Davids, 2005), racism (de Wet, 2001), masculinity (Schneider, Cockcroft & Hook, 2008), to mention a few. Hence, the need for this study to understand, not only the teachers' but also the parents' rhetoric, regarding teachers' work.

Additionally, because most South African research studies in education have concentrated on other aspects of education, for example, changes in policies and their effects on education (Chisholm, 1992; Hugo, Jack, Wedekind & Wilson, 2010; Jansen & Taylor, 2003; Shepherd, 2011; Taylor, Fleisch & Shindler, 2008), continuing teacher professional development (Avalos, 2011; Mukeredzi, 2013; Ntloana, 2009; Ono & Ferreira, 2010; Stein, 2011), classroom-based research on teaching and learner achievement (Fleisch, 2008; Howie & van Staden, 2012; Reddy, 2006); a study on teachers' work would offer diverse perspectives, hence the present study. From the literature that I surveyed, there was no study which dealt with teacher and parent discourse about teachers' work simultaneously. This study therefore, potentially contributes methodologically and theoretically to the debate on teachers' work and how it is understood by teachers and parents. The juxtapositioning of the two perspectives would potentially reveal, not only the differences, but also the tensions in the points of articulations between the teachers' and parents' rhetoric. Data produced from parents (as primary sources) would strengthen the originality of this study; primarily because some studies (locally and internationally) have referred to public teacher discourses using the media as the main source of data (Thomas, 2011) and relying on reports which are not empirical evidence (Masondo, 2016; Veriava, 2013).

1.2 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to understand the everyday rhetoric of teachers and parents about teachers' work, focusing on high school teachers and parents of children who are high school learners in the Pinetown district, KwaZulu-Natal province, in South Africa.

1.3 Research Questions

The study sought to answer the following three critical questions about the rhetoric on teachers' work:

1. What is the teachers' rhetoric about teachers' work? Why?
2. What is the parents' rhetoric about teachers' work? Why?
3. What is the nature of the teachers' and parents' rhetoric about teachers' work? Why?

Through the first question, I wanted to explore the different ways in which teachers talk about their work and the understanding that goes with it. The idea was to unpack the reasoning behind what teachers were saying about their work, how and why they made certain articulations and not others. The second question was about exploring the parents' understanding of teachers' work. Through this question, I wished to obtain a better sense of, not only how, but also why, parents would articulate certain things (good or bad) about teachers and the work they do. Through the third question, I wanted to explore how the presence of other participants would influence the rhetoric of the individual teacher and individual parent respectively. I wished to, not only uncover, but also to understand, the kind of negotiations that would occur and why they would occur in spaces which I perceived as 'neutral', on the basis that teacher participants all had a single common factor – that of being a level-one-teacher[3] at high school level; and parent participants were all 'parents' of high school going children.

1.4 Theoretical Framework

The study used Laclau and Mouffe's discourse theory to understand the rhetoric on teachers' work from teachers' and parents' perspectives. This theory was used as an analytical frame to identify or understand, not only the dominant or taken-for-granted

[3] A teacher who is not part of the school management team. This is a teacher whose core responsibilities are mainly classroom-based.

issues regarding teachers' work, but also what is not said (omitted intentionally or unintentionally).

In their discourse theory, Laclau and Mouffe (2001) define articulation as the attempts made to convert elements into moments (even temporarily) as a way of forming a "structured totality" (p. 105), which they call, discourse. Their definition indicates that any discourse is constituted by different positions (Szolnoki, 2006, p. 12) which they call moments, whilst articulations that fall outside of these moments are called elements. These are described by Laclau and Mouffe (2001) as a field of discursivity (a terrain of surplus meanings), which they claim to be an essential component of any social practice. They suggest that a constant struggle exists between the elements (unfixed meanings) which attempt to filter into a discourse for the purpose of being transformed into moments (fixed meanings) and becoming part of a discourse.

The teachers' and parents' rhetoric, in this study, was used to establish what meanings were outside of normal understanding (the taken-for-granted) that occurred in what teachers and parents say about teachers' work. Hence, the diversity of meaning available in the field of discursivity provided the possibilities for the rhetoric to be challenged, transformed or even altered.

In this study, the teachers' and parents' rhetoric offer incomplete structures that exist in an undecidable terrain[4]. This terrain results from the different 'subject positions' that teachers and parents occupy within a particular rhetoric.

Laclau and Mouffe's (2001) discourse theory is concerned with scrutinising *how* discourse (structure) is constituted and transformed. This can be done through looking at how utterances and articulations persistently replicate, question or transform the rhetoric. In interpreting the data, chains of equivalence and chains of difference (these will be explained later in chapter three) were used to understand the circulating rhetoric within or between the two groups of participants.

[4] A field outside of a dominant discourse which presents possibilities for unpredictable ways in which articulations can be shaped into a discourse or competing discourses (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002).

1.5 Research Methodology

The study used a qualitative approach to research. Researchers using this approach seem to value the context in which meaning-making occurs. Hossain (2011) suggests that qualitative research seeks to understand people's behaviours by attempting to address the rationale behind people's "attitudes, beliefs, fears, etc." (p. 144). This study follows a qualitative approach to research since it does, not only seek to understand the dominant teacher and parent rhetoric about teachers' work, but also the silences and the possible reasons for such.

Drawing from Cohen, Manion and Morrison's (2009) characteristics and focus of case studies as focusing on participants individually or in groups whilst seeking to fully comprehend their insight of events, a case study was appropriate for my study. The present study on teachers' work focused on teachers and parents individually (through the use of one-on-one interviews) and as groups of participants (through the focus group discussions) in an attempt to gain deeper insights about their understanding of teachers' work. Yin (2009) suggests that through case research, information is produced from multiple sources of data. In this study, data were produced from multiple sources (five teachers and four parents) individually or in groups as will be discussed further in chapter four.

The participants – the participants in this study consisted of five teacher participants of African (Black South Africans) origin, from diverse backgrounds and possessing varied educational qualifications and years of teaching experience. Four parent participants (all Blacks) shared their about teachers' work. Like the teacher participants, they came from diverse backgrounds as will be explained in detail in chapter four. These two groups of participants were a mono-racial group sharing similar characteristics owing to uniformity of race and culture. However, their differential understanding of education matters allowed for a sufficient measure of heterogeneity in perspectives of teachers' work.

The data - Since a case study allows for the use of multiple data generation methods, semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions were used in this study. Using focus groups allowed for critical interaction between participants (teachers and parents separately) while they were involved in meaning making (Kamberelis & Dimitriadis, 2004), that is, in generating discourses (rhetoric, in the context of this study). This

potentially revealed particular discourses that were unlikely to be explored through other research methods. The focus was not on what was said by the individual participant, but how the discourse of an individual was representative of that of a group, e.g. teachers or parents (collective identity). From Laclau and Mouffe's perspectives, the two groups (teachers and parents) are 'nodal points' around which discourse obtains its meaning.

The data obtained from teacher interviews and parent interviews are presented in chapters five and six respectively. The data generation, as explained in chapter four, details the decisions, reflections and reflexive responses made by the researcher during the production of data. While it may be assumed that the teachers' rhetoric exhibit one kind of a reality to that of parents, both sets of rhetoric (teachers' and parents') were mediated in the analysis.

Analysis and synthesis - In relation to the theory used in this study, data were analysed using discourse analysis as an analytical tool beyond just the identification of themes from the data. As such, it was not analysis of merely what the participants said, but of why and how it was said and by whom. It was important to understand the meaning of utterances in relation to their context(s) (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2009).

Through the analyses of both teachers' and parents' rhetoric, some of the empty signifiers[5] were temporarily filled, that is, given a variety of meaning depending on the participants' understandings of concepts that came up in the discussions, such as: monitoring of teachers' work, work overload, teacher professionalism and unprofessionalism, teacher laziness, dedicated or passionate teachers, parental involvement to mention a few. The meanings made by the participants in their articulations, appeared to create either chains of equivalences or chains of differences (detailed explanations in chapter three), thereby rendering some articulations more important than others, that is, hegemonic in Laclau's terms (Laclau, 2000). The synthesis of the articulations and interpretations is then reconnected to the literature as a way of theorising the rhetoric on teachers' work as understood by the actors in this study.

[5] Empty signifiers refer to those signifiers which do not have attachment to any specific content; hence the multiple interpretations, meanings or experiences (Laclau, 2000).

The synthesis is connected back to the literature, highlighting the interconnectedness and the points of contestations between the teachers' and parents' rhetoric. Additionally, the synthesis feeds back to the lack or loss of authority that teachers find themselves in, due to the proliferation of indiscipline in schools.

1.6 Limitations of the study

The limitations of this study were methodological due to the use of focus group discussions. Certain participants tended to dominate the discussion and others seemed not at ease to voice their honest opinions. However, data produced through the focus group discussions were analysed in ways that highlighted these issues because the aim was not to minimise or avoid these limitations. Smithson (2000) argues that findings from focus groups cannot be invalidated because of the constraints presented in the discussions. She further emphasised that, "focus groups permit some insights into rhetorical processes, or 'practical ideologies'" (Smithson, 2000, p. 116).

1.7 Organisation of the thesis

This thesis on teachers' and parents' rhetoric about teachers' work consists of five parts with eight chapters which are unequal in their length or distribution.

PART ONE Overview of the study	**Chapter one** The rhetoric on teachers' work		
PART TWO The landscape of essential concepts	**Chapter two** Review of literature on discourse, discourse analysis, rhetoric and teachers' work		
PART THREE Paradigmatic lenses	**Chapter three** Theoretical lens	**Chapter four** Methodological lens	
PART FOUR Working with the data	**Chapter five** Teachers' rhetoric	**Chapter six** Parents' rhetoric	**Chapter seven** The nature of the rhetoric
PART FIVE Thesis	**Chapter eight** Rhetoric is a class-based perspective		

Figure 1 Organisation of the Thesis

Part One: Overview of the study

This first chapter provided the foundation for this study by describing its focus and rationale, research questions and why the study is important (motivation). The chapter

reviewed the scholarly work that exists in the field in an attempt to identify the gap that exists, particularly in the South African context.

Part Two: The landscape of essential concepts

The second chapter presents a literature review as a way of contextualising the study into the scholarly work that exists in the field. However, reviewed literature is incorporated throughout the thesis as a means of validating the analysis of the data and the theorisation of the themes identified from the data.

Part Three: Paradigmatic lenses

This part includes two chapters which introduce the reader to the theory underpinning the study and the methodology adopted by the study. Elaboration on these chapters is presented below:

In **Chapter Three**, the theoretical framework that guided the analysis and understanding of the teachers' and parents' rhetoric about teachers' work is discussed.

Chapter Four discusses the research methodology, detailing the research design that the study adopted and the justification for the choices made. It provides extensive details about methods that were used to generate data, challenges that were faced by the researcher, and ethical procedures that were followed prior to, and during the, duration of the research. Discourse analysis is used for data analysis and some concepts from the theoretical framework are used to understand the teachers' and parents' rhetoric about teachers' work.

Part Four: Working with the data

This section walks the reader through the rhetoric about teachers' work by presenting firstly; the teachers' rhetoric and its analysis, secondly; the presentation of parents' rhetoric and an analysis thereof, and lastly; the presentation of the nature of the rhetoric derived from the teachers' and parents' group conversations. Part four consists of the f three chapters discussed next.

Chapter Five presents findings from five teachers derived from semi-structured interviews. Five teachers share their understanding of what teachers' work is all about. Two broad themes; the rhetoric related directly to teaching and learning and the rhetoric

related to parents and department of education / district officials, are explored. Ten sub-themes: the rhetoric of monitoring of teachers' work, the rhetoric of the laziness of teachers, the rhetoric of teaching and learning resources, the rhetoric of leadership and management, the rhetoric of administrative work, the rhetoric of dedication or caring, the rhetoric of overwork / work overload, the rhetoric of teachers' and children's rights, the rhetoric of parents' involvement and attitudes, as well as the rhetoric of interference by the district officials, are considered. Analysis of each theme concludes with an extended discussion of the findings and the connection of all sub-themes to the literature.

Chapter Six presents an analysis of parents' rhetoric about teachers' work. Four parents describe (through one-on-one interviews) what they understand teachers' work to be about. Two broad themes; the rhetoric directly linked to teaching and learning processes and the rhetoric of goodness, dedication and expertise as characterising teachers' work, are considered. Eight sub-themes; the rhetoric of monitoring and evaluation of teachers' work and teaching programmes, the rhetoric of stressful work, the rhetoric of the laziness of teachers and the rhetoric of un/professionalism, the rhetoric of a good teacher, the rhetoric of dedication or passion and the rhetoric of expertise, are explored. Each theme ends with an elaborated discussion, showing how the sub-themes are connected to the literature.

Chapter Seven presents findings from the data emanating from two focus group discussions which were a follow-up on the one-on-one interviews. The analysis of the focus group discussions was unthemed but was guided by the focus questions. The focus was on: teacher professionalism and unprofessionalism, unappreciation or appreciation, teacher dissatisfaction and satisfaction, discipline or ill-discipline, corporal punishment or none, leadership and management and work overload. The teachers' conversation and its analysis is presented before the parents' conversation and analysis. The analysis ends with an extended discussion and connection of all focal items to the literature.

Part Five: The Thesis

The final chapter, **Chapter Eight** presents a synthesis of the findings from the previous three chapters to bring out the *thesis* of the study.

1.8 CONCLUSION

This chapter presented an introduction and overview of the study on teachers' and parents' rhetoric about teachers' work. I purposefully chose to do this study in one district (Pinetown) in the KwaZulu-Natal province of South Africa. Having few participants in the study allowed for an in-depth analysis of the taken-for-granted rhetoric about teachers' work. The review of selected literature is presented in the next chapter which forms part two of the Thesis.

CHAPTER TWO
Review of Literature

Introduction

The previous chapter gave a detailed description and background of the study and outlined the research problem and the rationale for the study. This chapter aims to contextualise the study and explores the everyday talk of teachers and parents, about teachers' work. It is divided into four sections. The first section introduces the concept 'discourse' and its varied conceptualisations. It is informed by Yang and Sun's (2010) idea that the positioning of discourse within a wide spectrum of disciplines results in its varied conceptions, which may contribute to the non-consensus in the understanding of what 'discourse' means. The second section presents reviewed literature on discourse analysis. The focus is on exploring the various ways and contexts in which other scholars have used discourse analysis. The third section is the review of literature on rhetoric. The rhetoric, its different forms and characteristics, is important to explore in order to explicate its foundations. The last section unpacks various aspects of teachers' work, based on other scholarly work in the field. Therefore, this chapter brings insights on the rhetoric (unit of analysis for this study), discourse and discourse analysis (as an analytical tool) and on debates about teachers' work (phenomenon being studied) as captured in the reviewed literature.

2.1 Discourse

The literature reviewed indicates that there is no consensus among scholars of discourse (and discourse analysis) as to what the term means. This lack of consensus has resulted in the varied definitions of this concept commensurate with the diverse viewpoints (Yang & Sun, 2010). The diverse viewpoints can be attributed to the positioning of discourse and, by implication, of discourse analysis in multiple disciplines, that are, not only used as intradisciplinary modes, but also as multidisciplinary and, at times, interdisciplinary entities as well. In broad terms, discourse is primarily associated with language. However, scholars of language (Linguists) tend to make explicit differentiations between written and spoken language forms (Alba-Juez, 2009). Furthermore, the various sub-fields within Linguistics tend to differ slightly in the way discourse is conceived and defined.

Yang and Sun (2010) distinguish between the varied conceptions of discourse within the Linguistics discipline. For example, they posit that the Linguistic field is wide and it comprises anthropological linguistics, systemic functional linguistics, sociolinguistics and cognitive linguistics, to name a few. Whilst anthropological linguistics, sociolinguistics and systemic functional linguistics seem to share a view of discourse as being focused on language in use, they also differ on other essential elements (Yang & Sun, 2010). Suurmond (2005) suggests that the anthropological linguistics view of discourse encompasses, not only the social but also historical events and is, therefore, prone to ideological influences. This conception of discourse takes into consideration people's cultural and contextual factors. On the one hand, the systemic functional linguistics' view of discourse straddles between two trajectories: a particular order or arrangement (an ordered system) and practical aspects of things (how the system functions), hence they frequently use the terms, "text and discourse" interchangeably (Yang & Sun, 2010, p. 129). On the other hand, Parker (1992) views discourse, not only as language in use, but also as being inclusive of all social factors due to its interactional and social characteristics, which in turn allow people to create and reflect their realities. On the contrary, cognitive linguistics' view discourse as something that emanates from cognition. This view seems to imply that before an individual can articulate in a language, they first have to engage in thinking, and thereafter form mental structures (schema). This view implies that discourse is not haphazard, but a "cognitive phenomena" which can be illuminated as a result of thinking about both the "linguistic and non-linguistic factors" (Yang & Sun, 2010, p. 129).

The above discussion illustrates the illusive nature of discourse, and presents discourse as a phenomenon which extends beyond the Linguistics field and encroaches into the non-Linguistic fields, such as philosophical and interdisciplinary studies. For example, Foucault (1972) and Burr (1995) refer to discourse as a frame of reference. Whilst Van Dijk (1997) highlights discourse as a form of social interaction, Knights and Morgan (1991) view discourse as a set of ideas and practices relating to a particular phenomenon. In addition, Stahl (2004) suggests that discourse is a communicative action while Laclau and Mouffe (2001) argue that it is a temporary fixing of meaning.

While for Foucault's (1972), frame of reference meant the manner in which people interpret and give meaning to the world or objects; for Burr (1995), it meant a conceptual

background for interpreting people's utterances. Foucault's definition of discourse highlights the power relations that are inherent in social hierarchy and how those power relations function to "shape discourses, social practices, subjects, objects, knowledge, history—in short, almost everything" (Kopytko, 2001, p. 1640). Burr's definition and conception of discourse seems to be premised on social constructionism – socially constructed meaning of people's speeches – hence, the focus on language (Burr, 1995). Van Dijk's (1997) conception of discourse as 'social interaction' focuses on the idea of discourse as an ongoing process irrespective of the context in which it occurs, e.g. interactions can occur in professional, informal or institutional spaces. Moreover, Stahl's (2004) notion of discourse as a 'communicative action' appears to bring to bear the moral aspect to discourse. He states that "truth, (normative) rightness, and authenticity" (Stahl, 2004, p. 4331) are always implied whenever one delivers a speech. For this reason, the content of the statement is usually regarded as true, as if it readily adapts to the normative, ethical rules. Discourses are seen to be illuminating such contentious claims. As asserted by Habermas (1983), discourses are not meant to normalise speeches, but rather to check the validity of existing norms.

Furthermore, in his analysis of Foucault, Ball (1990) asserts that discourse is not only about

> what can be said and thought, but also about who can speak, when, and with what authority. Discourses embody meaning and social relationships, they constitute both subjectivity and power relations…In so far as discourses are constituted by exclusions as well as inclusions, by what cannot as well as what can be said, they stand in antagonistic relationship to other discourses (p. 2).

In this quotation, the implication seems to be about power relations inherent in discourses, which, in turn, reflect a system of capabilities rather than just utterances. Likewise, these systems, as suggested by Howarth (2006), are about practices that are, not only meaningful, but also constituted partially by "discursive exteriors" (p. 23). They therefore, have the potential of being subverted by the same discourse they constitute. The idea that a discourse can be subverted by discursive exteriors is in line with Laclau and Mouffe's (2001) definition of discourse as lacking permanence and rendering meaning-making temporarily fixed by the social actors.

In this section, I have attempted to show the different conceptions of 'discourse' which perhaps result from the theoretical inclinations of researchers as influenced by their respective research fields or disciplines. These different understandings of discourse are highly likely to influence the way the study analysis (discourse analysis) is executed. A discussion on discourse analysis follows below.

2.2 Discourse Analysis

The literature reviewed on discourse analysis shows a wide variation on how it is conceptualised and used by various researchers in different fields. Trappes-Lomax (n.d.) defines discourse analysis as the "study of language viewed communicatively and/or of communication viewed linguistically" (p. 134). This definition suggests that discourse analysis is not merely concerned with the language *in use* by a single individual, but is inclusive of the interaction that occurs between two or more individuals during communication. Discourse analysis is also viewed by Van den Brink and Metze (2006) to be concerned about the importance of "meaning and arguments" (p. 13) in what is being articulated. They suggest that the analysis of meaning is likely to reveal even the hidden meanings. Similarly, Wang (2012) points out that when analysing the unsaid or what has been excluded in the text, it is possible to reveal the inherent ideological stance in the text.

Wodak (2008) believes that discourse analysis allows for multiple perspectives to be formulated about the object being researched because of its interdisciplinary characteristic. This multi-perspective form of discourse analysis is endorsed by Phillips and Jørgensen (2006) who hold the view that a broader understanding of any phenomenon can be reached from the different forms of knowledge which may be inherent in the different perspectives. This understanding can allow one to incorporate one's own views into other perspectives without losing one's distinct perspective. Furthermore, in Jansen's (2008) view, the multi-disciplinary nature of discourse analysis provides a way of treating "other beliefs with respect" and taking them "seriously and [allows one] to be able to prove and question one's own beliefs as well" (p. 111). However, some scholars seem to suggest that, because of its interdisciplinary and multi-perspective nature, discourse analysis tends to be flooded with ambiguity (Alba-Juez, 2009) in terms of how it is conceived and defined. In this study, multiple perspectives from the participants (teachers and parents) were equally respected and accommodated, especially during the focus

group discussions. The ambiguities that Alba-Juez cautions about, are essential aspects for this study as they show the permeable and unstable (discursive) nature of discourse.

Discourse analysis seems to be well suited as it is often used as either a theoretical or methodological approach rather than a method of data production (Phillips & Hardy, 2002; Seibold, 2006). This view is based on the premise that discourse analysis is usually employed as an analytical tool, hence its close alignment to the theory or methodology. Again, in the opinion of Burman, Kottler, Levett and Parker (1997), discourse analysis is sometimes perceived to be too abstract, not easily accessible to some individuals, and thus, is labelled as being too theoretical. However, as a methodology, discourse analysis is seen by Bondarouk and Ruël (2004) to be flexible, allowing for the use of a variety of methods which are known to facilitate the investigation of interrelationships between different texts. Similarly, discourse analysis is further considered by Wodak (2001), to apply the widest array of text. On the contrary, van den Brink and Metze (2006) observe that discourse analysis has been criticised for being too methodologically relativistic in nature, and not being grounded in any particular field. However, they further argue that there has been a plethora of research articles and books from discourse analysis scholars (Howarth & Torfing, 2005; Potter, 2002; Wood & Kroger, 2000) in an attempt to address this concern (van den Brink & Metze, 2006).

In this study, discourse analysis was used as an analytical tool leaning on Laclau and Mouffe's discourse theory. The analysis was done in an attempt to interpret and make meaning of the language used by teachers and parents, whether it tweaked in the direction of either denigrating or explicitly / implicitly supporting or empowering what teachers are doing in their work. The silences inherent in the teachers' and parents' discourses about teachers' work, as well as the non-verbal gestures exhibited by the participants in this study, are highlighted in the data analysis section. Discourse analysis was therefore, used in this study to deconstruct the parents' and teachers' discourses which were often rhetorical about teachers' work.

Despite the diversity in the discourse analysis conceptions and uses, there needs to be some common aspects that hold the enterprise together, argues Nikander (2008). She maintains that there are possible aspects of commonality regardless of the heterogeneous nature of discourse analysis. She therefore, proposes that firstly, every discourse analysis

(irrespective of the form or discipline affiliation) be concerned with interrogating, not only the text (language), but also the context (social action). This view is shared by other scholars (Alba-Juez, 2009; Howarth, 2006; Yang & Sun, 2010) who acknowledge that discourse analysis seems to pay attention to other issues which are external to language, for example, culture, politics and other social issues. Secondly, Nikander (2008) suggests that, because the everyday language always seems to be action-oriented, the analysis perhaps needs to take into consideration the interplay of talk, text and interaction. This interaction is also supported by Holmes (2003) who suggests that small-talk, particularly in the workplace, is known to promote collegiality amongst colleagues. Lastly, Nikander (2008) maintains that the seemingly rhetorical nature of discourse pushes for the discourse analyst to be attentive to contrasting arguments or utterances inherent in the text (written or spoken).

The reviewed literature revealed scarcity in the discourse or discourse analysis studies conducted in South Africa, particularly about teachers' work. The discourse work seems to be more populated in some disciplines, for example, History (Maposa, 2015), Theology / Religion (Du Toit, 2008), Politics (Dedaic & Hunt, 2015; de la Rey, 1997), Media Studies (Buiten, 2009; Nothling, 2012) and Gender and Sexuality Studies (Blumberg & Soal, 1997; Kantor, 2006; Potgieter, 1997; Hunt, 2015) to mention a few. Furthermore, most of these studies tend to use Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as opposed to pure discourse analysis (DA). From the literature reviewed, there were very few studies of discourse analysis in the education sector, and these few were mostly in the higher education and not the basic[6] education sector. This study attempts to fill that gap by making a contribution in the discourse analysis field, in the basic education sector since its focus is on teachers' work (high school teachers). The rhetoric, which is a form of discourse as enacted by teachers and parents through interviews and group discussions was the unit of analysis. In addition, by adopting and adapting the existing discourse theory of Laclau and Mouffe (2001), this study sought to contribute towards understanding the nuances of teachers' work using a less common tool (discourse analysis). A discussion of rhetoric follows in the next section.

[6] In South Africa, basic education sector comprises of the primary and secondary / high school education

2.3 Rhetoric

2.3.1 The Historical Background of Rhetoric

This section is a presentation of the historical overview of rhetoric, to map out how rhetoric was understood, has been understood and is presently understood. This overview focuses on ancient and contemporary understanding of rhetoric.

2.3.1.1 The Ancient Rhetoric

The review of literature revealed that, from as early as the Ancient times to date, rhetoric has been, and is still, considered an art of persuasion (IJsseling, 1976) and an art of dialogue or discourse (McKay & McKay, 2010). Likewise, Hyde and Smith (1979) assert that the persuasive nature of rhetoric allows one to make meaning known, not only to self, but also to others. Hence, it appears that from ancient Greece extending to at least the late 19th Century, rhetoric (as a subject or a discipline) was part of the curriculum in Western education (McKay & McKay, 2010; Pauw, 2005) because it was highly regarded as a necessary component in the training of students to become good public speakers (orators) and writers; if they were to be expected to make moving and active arguments. For this reason, rhetoric, and by implication discourse, was associated with "political and moral behaviour" (Pauw, 2005, p. 210).

In their brief outline of the history of rhetoric, McKay and McKay (2010) argue that influential scholars of rhetoric such as Plato (the Greek philosopher), Aristotle [reason alone] (Greek philosopher and Plato's student), Cicero [liberal education] (the Roman politician), Quintilian (the Roman orator) are known to have contributed to the understanding and development of rhetoric in the ancient or classical times. They maintain that some of these scholars' views were not in agreement, but their contributions were nevertheless recognised. Furthermore, Compier (1999) notes that in the era of the Middle ages (5th to 15th Centuries), the focus of rhetoric moved away from politics to religious discourses, and in these instances rhetoric was used by the clergy, St Augustine in particular, to preach about the gospel. On the one hand, the advent of modernism (which was marked by the political shifts from monarchies to democracies) seems to have been characterised by the re-emergence of rhetoric in the political discourses, where it (rhetoric) was used to either persuade or educate people about freedom (McKay & McKay, 2010). On the other hand, in the 20th century (postmodern era), the view of rhetoric was believed by McKay and McKay (2010) to embody, not only formal speeches or oral texts, but also social practices including the mass media. This view of rhetoric is

'multi-sensory' or multifaceted and therefore, positions rhetoricians as people whose aim is to change people's perceptions in terms of how they hear, see, feel think or say in relation to the issue under discussion (Bonanno, 2007).

The possibility of changed perceptions because of rhetoric have been alluded to by other researchers who have claimed rhetoric to be performative (Austin, 1979); responsive (Bakhtin, 1986); and productive of action (Pauw, 2005). Whereas Austin refers to the statements or utterances (rhetoric) made by an individual to highlight the actual act they are performing at that moment, Bakhtin and Pauw seem to be referring to the action that the rhetoric, made by an individual, is likely to produce from the listeners or readers in response to the text. This kind of responsiveness is seen by Shotter (2014) as emanating from the fact that "listeners are also co-'speakers', while speakers are co-'listeners'" (p. 64) in any dialogue or discussion.

2.3.2 The Contemporary Rhetoric

The dialogic nature of rhetoric as presented above shows a 'two-sided' notion of rhetoric which Shotter (2014) claims challenges the traditional or classical view of rhetoric as merely focused on persuasion. In his extended review of Michael Billig's book *Arguing and thinking: A rhetorical approach to social psychology*, Shotter (2014) problematises the monologic view of rhetoric as was purported by the classical rhetoricians. He argues that such a view prioritises the persuasion aspect or the narrator whilst ignoring the agency of the listeners. Therefore, he maintains that the two-sidedness of the rhetoric is formed by two dimensions of 'thinking' (about what one wants to say) and 'arguing' (presenting the argument) which are fundamental to human thought (Shotter, 2014). Similarly, Pauw (2005) states that rhetoric is constituted by, not only the symbolic forms of language, but also by the "social-historical contexts within which they are employed" (p. 216). This kind of rhetoric is multi-perspectival (porous to meanings), that is, it considers what is opposite to it.

The dual nature of rhetoric suggests that in order to understand the meaning of the rhetoric being presented, one should not

> examine merely the words within that discourse or the images in the speaker's mind at the moment of utterance. One should also consider the positions which are being criticized, or against which a justification is

> being mounted. Without knowing these counter-positions, the argumentative meaning will be lost," (Billig, 1987, p. 91).

What Billig (1987) seems to be suggesting is that, when analysing or interpreting rhetoric, one should also identify what is not being said as well as the justifications given for particular positions.

Tracing the timeline trajectory of the rhetoric was necessary to contextualise this study. Understanding the shifting nature and purpose of rhetoric is essential, and is informed by the assumption that rhetoric is defined and conceived differently by various people (McKay & McKay, 2010). This shift in understanding what rhetoric denotes is essential in understanding this study's focus, which is teachers' and parents' rhetoric about teachers' work; the rhetoric which is part of our daily conversations formally or informally (Shotter, 2014). Therefore, studying the rhetoric that is inherent in the teachers' and parents' understandings and discussions about teachers' work is likely to contribute to the body of knowledge, not only on rhetoric, but also on teachers' work. From the South African literature that I reviewed, I identified a gap in the studies analysing rhetoric, particularly about teachers' work. In fact, most studies were concerned with the analysis of discourse in fields other than education. This study on teachers' and parents' rhetoric about teachers' work has a potential to fill this gap since it attempts to understand and analyse the discourses about teachers' work.

2.4 Literature on Teachers' work

National and international literature on teachers, teaching and teachers' work covers a wide spectrum of issues ranging from teacher professionalism (Craig & Fieschi, 2007; Day & Sachs, 2004; Douglas, 2005; Goodson, 2003; Stefanides-Savva, 2012; Tuinamuana, 2011; Villegas-Reimers, 2003) which is closely aligned with committed or passionate teachers (Alsup, 2006; Bukor, 2013; Crosswell & Elliot, 2004; Day, 2004; Kelchtermans & Ballet, 2002), good or caring teachers (Chikoko, 2015; Darby, 2008; Zembylas, 2003), to issues which are rather negative, such as the intensification of teachers' work (Ballet & Kelchtermans, 2008; Ballet, Kelchtermans & Loughran, 2006; Crump, 2005; Hargreaves, 1992; Penrice, 2011; Wiebe, 2014; Wotherspoon, 2008) which is closely aligned to accountability (Comber & Nixon, 2009; Datnow, 2011; Elliott, 2004), teacher dissatisfaction (Fisher, 2011; Zembylas & Papanastasiou, 2006; Zengele, 2013), disciplinary issues (Lochan, 2010; Moloi, 2002; Rossouw, 2003; Simuforosa &

Ngara, 2014; Smit, 2013; Surty, 2011), stress and burnout (Ferguson, Frost & Hall, 2012; Fisher, 2011; Kyriacou, 2001; Musyoki, 2015; Rockoff, Jacob, Kane & Staiger, 2011). Issues of leadership and management (Berry, Smylie & Fuller, 2008; Leithwood, Day, Sammons, Harris & Hopkins, 2006; Lieberman & Miller, 2005) and home-school partnerships (Arnold, 2011; Avvisati, Besbas & Guyon, 2010; Emerson, Fear, Fox & Sander, 2012; Epstein, 1996; Ng, 2013) also form part of the literature. These issues emerging from the literature, were not discussed in isolation but in some instances inter-connections were explicit whilst in others, they were implied. These themes are discussed below.

2.4.1 Understanding Teacher Professionalism

The notion of teacher professionalism as presented in the literature is complex and contested in nature. The contested nature of professionalism in general, or teacher professionalism in particular, arises from the diverse interpretations or meanings that are associated with it. This contestation indicates a strong opposition to a monolithic view of professionalism (Duhn, 2010). The diverse interpretations of what professionalism means emanate from various historical and social contexts (Wang, 2012), which often provide the basis for its seemingly changing nature. In a paper presentation, Whitty (2006) traces the debates on the nature of professionalism back to the 1950s where professionalism was more aligned to the profession (group of people) as opposed to an individual. When professionalism is understood in the context of a profession, it is judged against pre-defined 'hallmarks' of a profession such as; specialised theoretical knowledge, length of training, organisation of a profession and a code of ethics that members of a group adhere to (Heystek & Lethoko, 2001; Whitty, 2006). In this way, professionalism was a means of granting teachers some level of authority, despite lacking the accountability processes. This type of professionalism is referred to by Whitty (2006) as the traditional type as it conforms to the criteria set out for other professions such as law and medicine. This form of professionalism allows the professions significant control of their work, and is referred to by Gamble (2010) as a form of 'pure professionalism'. For this reason, Heystek and Lethoko (2001) argue that the teaching profession does not fit into the category of traditional or pure professionalism because of the nature of teachers' employment which is largely bureaucratic.

The involvement of the state in various countries in the employment of teachers, and to some extent in the control of their work, is about professional mandate (Whitty, 2006); bureaucratic professionalism (Gamble, 2010), demanded professionalism (Wang, 2012), managerial professionalism (Stefanides-Savva, 2012). These forms of professionalism focus on teacher accountability while limiting teacher autonomy, and are therefore, regarded as inverses of traditional professionalism (Whitty, 2006). Such a focus on accountability would then mean that the individual teacher is, not only responsible for monitoring his or her work, but also for being accountable for learners' progress even though the decisions of 'what needs to be taught and how' (curriculum issues) are made at national level and not by the individual teacher (Stefanides-Savva, 2012). Sachs (2001), however, proposes an alternative; a democratic professionalism, which she claims is characterised by cooperation and collaboration among all education stakeholders.

Writing from the United Kingdom perspective and focusing on policy texts from different eras, Whitty (2006) observes that in the 1990s, the states in many countries became prominent in determining, not only the employment, but also the regulation of teachers. This increased involvement of the state saw changes in terms of how teacher professionalism was conceived and defined in national policies. Whitty (2006) notes that teachers were expected by the state to operate within specific parameters with the aim of fulfilling a particular 'professional mandate' which was in line with the educational reform/s in public schools. This professional mandate is closely aligned to demanded and bureaucratic professionalism.

In an extended explanation of bureaucratic professionalism, Gamble (2010) posits that this form of professionalism is fraught with issues of standardisation; the state's way of ensuring that teachers maintain and adhere to specific standards. Seemingly, what Gamble (2010) meant was that bureaucratic professionalism is about the technical issues that teachers ought to be accountable for, as stated in various policies. Likewise, Wang (2012) describes the demanded professionalism to be all about the expectations that the government/s have from teachers. Because in most countries governments seem to have more power in the design of educational policies, they play a huge role in 'imposing' the kind of professional standards that they want from teachers (Wang, 2012). Through policy document analysis of state or educational policies, Wang's (2012) study found that in China, teacher professionalism is strictly understood as a matter of toeing the line drawn

by the authorities. Additionally, because of the historical-cultural context of China, teacher professionalism in the policies emphasises the moral qualities that teachers should aspire to. Therefore, the underlying assumptions of 'professional mandate', 'bureaucratic professionalism' and 'demanded professionalism' seem to be about raising the professional status of teaching (Tuinamuana, 2011).

Raising the professional status of teaching also appears to be aligned with the ideas purported by advocates of managerial professionalism (Evetts, 2012). Managerial professionalism is seen by Evetts (2012) to be about employees who are socialised into responding to rather universalistic demands or standards, and in the process, serving the public interest or the state. This observation is premised on the ideas of managerial control, under which the 'professional value' of teachers is usually determined by the competencies that the employer/state or the public expect from teachers. These expectations are burdensome on teachers who often feel the pressure to perform at particular levels and fulfil responsibilities as per public/state expectations (Craig & Fieschi, 2007). In this way, professionalism is seen as merely concerned about whether teachers (professionals) achieve the prescribed standards which are often externally-set, in a bid for increased accountability (Tuinamuana, 2011), which is often characterised by high competitiveness and individualism (Evetts, 2012). Those who support managerial professionalism claim that it is usually linked to "effectiveness, efficiency and compliance with policy" (Wang, 2012, p. 20). Being compliant with the policies, which are usually deigned by the state, and ensuring that they are effectively and efficiently implemented, is arguably the focus of the bureaucratic, demanded and managerial professionalism respectively.

Alternatively, democratic professionalism functions in opposing ways to the three forms of professionalism discussed above. This form of professionalism is seen by Sachs (2001) to encourage cooperation and collaboration among teachers and other stakeholders in education, as opposed to experiencing teaching in an individualised manner. When engaging in this form of professionalism, teachers do not only promote democratic values of fairness and equality but are involved in the transformation of education (Thomas, 2012). Therefore, argues Thomas (2012), the kind of professionalism that is proposed by Sachs (2001) is, not only democratic, but also 'activist'. Through cooperation and collaboration, teachers are granted opportunities to engage in decision-making about

issues pertaining to their profession – a distribution of responsibilities which is claimed by Stefanides-Savva (2012) to create a system of checks and balances which serve to minimise disparities between theory and practice. In this way, Stefanides-Savva (2012) argues, teachers may feel a sense of responsibility and personal commitment in enacting policies whose drafting they would have contributed to. Hence, teachers' identification as knowledge and pedagogy specialists (Thomas, 2012).

The above review of the different conceptions of professionalism seeks to highlight how they differ in their foci and functions which is likely to have profound influences on how professionalism was understood by teachers and parents in this study. As also indicated in the literature reviewed by Johnston (2015), the use of the term professionalism is shifting and therefore prone to conflation. These diverse understandings may have contributed profoundly to the kind of rhetoric that the teachers and parents have about teachers' work. The review of literature on teacher professionalism showed a close relationship between professionalism and commitment and caring. There is therefore, need to briefly review literature on committed or passionate and caring teachers to show the connections to professionalism.

2.4.2 Teacher Commitment and Caring

The review of literature indicates that teachers who are regarded as professionals in their work, are often also viewed as committed or passionate teachers (Alsup, 2006; Bukor, 2013; Crosswell & Elliot, 2004; Day, 2004; Kelchtermans & Ballet, 2002) and good or caring teachers (Chikoko, 2015; Darby, 2008; Zembylas, 2003). How teachers negotiate their professional roles is largely dependent upon, not only the decisions (reasoning or rationality) they make, but also on their emotional choices. Bukor (2013) mentions that teacher emotions are largely interconnected with, and affected by, the social context and teacher biographies. Therefore, the understanding that for some teachers, teaching does not only involve the engagement with other stakeholders in education, but also about interaction with the self (Day, 2004) through reflective and reflexive practices, is pertinent. Such teachers always seek to make a difference in the learning and lives of learners because they are, not only "committed, enthusiastic, and intellectually and emotionally energetic in their work" (Day, 2004, p. 2), but also passionate.

The review of literature identified five areas of commitment that teachers are known to focus on, namely: students (Biklen, 1995), the teaching profession (Day, 2004), the school organisation (Tsui & Cheng, 1999), career continuance (Yong, 1999) and professional knowledge base (Tyree, 1996); all of which seem to be externally-located. Therefore, teachers behave differently towards any of these areas of focus depending on their levels of commitment and their personal emotional investment as well (Day, 2008). However, teachers in Crosswell and Elliott's (2004) study revealed six ways in which they perceived or understood the concept of teacher commitment. They understood teacher commitment as: a passion; investing extra time with students after hours of work; engaging with school community; attending to individual needs of students; responsibility to convey knowledge, beliefs, values and attitudes; and as upholding professional knowledge. These understandings indicate essential connections between the personal passions and commitment to the externally-situated centres (Croswell & Elliott, 2004), which, in a way, influenced how these teachers performed their work.

The notion of commitment is closely aligned to effectiveness, which results from being a good and caring teacher who has a positive influence on students' achievement (Day, 2008), since students are often aware of their teachers' emotions (Bukor, 2013). How teachers choose to approach their work is, according to O'Connor (2008), influenced by their political and personal beliefs as well. In other words, teachers get to understand their professional 'selves' by first understanding their personal 'selves'. This understanding is important if teachers are to connect with their students in a warm and nurturing manner (O'Connor, 2008). In this way, good teaching and caring intersect, and are integral to teachers' work (Darby, 2008; Zembylas, 2003). This kind of connection is also viewed by Hattie (2003) as having "exceptional effects" (p. 3) which are, not only mediated when teachers and students interact within the classroom confines, but also go beyond the classroom. In Miller's (2012) reflection about good teachers, she notes that good teachers are usually influenced by their ethic of care to remain committed to their work. She characterises good teachers as being enthusiastic, creative, patient, interested in students, knowledgeable, and emotionally mature (Miller, 2012). What this review indicates is the emotional dimension of teachers' work where the personal works in tandem with the political and the professional attributes.

2.4.3 Intensification of Teachers' Work

The literature reviewed revealed a substantial number of studies (theoretical and empirical) that have been conducted on the phenomenon of intensification of teachers; work (Ballet & Kelchtermans, 2008; Ballet, Kelchtermans & Loughran, 2006; Crump, 2005; Hargreaves, 1992; Penrice, 2011; Wiebe, 2014; Wotherspoon, 2008). A shift in the nature of teachers' work to cater for industry goals has been labelled as a 'process of intensification'. The concept of intensification originated in the late 1970s through to the 1990s, what was known as the era of educational reforms (Ballet, Kelchtermans & Loughran, 2006). Hargreaves (1994) suggests that intensification of teachers' work emanates from the increasing pressures that are often exerted by the states in the guise of 'expectations' of what teachers should do as a way of responding to societal needs. Likewise, Wotherspoon (2008) asserts that teachers' work is intensified by the expansion of duties and responsibilities that teachers as professionals are expected to perform. The common themes of intensification as expounded by various scholars include, but are not limited to, inadequacy of teaching time, inflexible work overload, and decline in quality of results (Ballet, Kelchtermans & Loughran, 2006; Chisholm, Hoadley, waKivulu, Brookes, Prinsloo, Kgobe, Mosia, Narsee, & Rule, 2005; Easthope & Easthope, 2000; Hargreaves, 1994). These themes and others, suggest that there are numerous sources that cause intensification in teachers' work. These sources are briefly discussed in the next section.

2.4.3.1 Experience of Intensified Teaching Work

Teachers' work intensifies with the mounting pressure for quality teaching and learning as well as the demands for effectiveness by the states or education departments. This intensification makes teachers to be in a rush or race to meet the required targets, sometimes at the expense of the very same quality that is being sought after (Thomas, 2008; Tuinamuana, 2011).

Ballet, Kelchtermans and Loughran (2006) observe that intensification is, not only created by external forces at macro level, but also mediated and differentiated. Whilst at a macro level intensification comes through the numerous state policies that impose various standards on teachers, some characteristics of the school (working conditions) may also serve as sources of intensification. The authors also argue that teachers can also impose pressure on themselves when they strive for excellency in their work (Ballet,

Kelchtermans & Loughran, 2006). The fact that teachers must read, interpret (make sense of) and implement policies (the professional self) renders them active decision-makers, who use their personal philosophies or ideologies to enact the policies, hence their diverse responses to the state demands. These diverse responses indicate that different teachers experience the intensification of work differently (Easthope & Easthope, 2000; Ballet & Kelchtermans, 2008).

Workload matters or work overload is presented in the literature as closely aligned to issues of time as teachers are given more responsibilities and sometimes new roles which created by the externally imposed demands (Crump, 2005; Wotherspoon, 2008). From the American perspective, teachers complain about the extensive content that they are expected to cover in a short space of time (Clarke, 1994) and, as such, they are more concerned about covering the curriculum than about mediating learning through scaffolding (Whittaker & Young, 2002). On the contrary, from the New Zealand perspective, teachers who participated in Wylie's (1999) study remark about having less time to spend on individual students because of additional time spent on assessment.

The performativity agenda has placed teachers under a lot of pressure because of the raised and imposed standards that should be achieved by both teachers and students (Nagan, 2013). This agenda operates within the discourse of managerialism which prioritises professional accountability in the form "teacher appraisal…national testing and publication of examination results" (Nagan, 2013, p. 46). These standardised external (national) controls are aimed at accountability at individual teacher level, as well as school-wide accountability (Figlio & Loeb, 2011). Maphosa, Mutekwe, Machingambi, Wadesango and Ndofirepi (2012) state that it is necessary for teachers to be held accountable for the manner in which teaching and learning occurs because they impact on children's learning. Therefore, teachers should be responsible for offering support to facilitate learners' academic and personal development through quality instruction (Maphosa et al., 2012).

Penrice (2011) conducted a study in New Zealand using in-depth interviews and reflective journals from six rural teachers with the purpose of understanding the effects of intensification on these teachers. The findings of Penrice's study suggest that when intensification manifests itself as increased accountability, it gets misinterpreted by

teachers as professionalism, and they therefore, tend to take on the extra responsibilities voluntarily with the aim of meeting the professional standards. The findings further suggest that the technical aspects of 'doing teaching' and caring tend to be emphasised over teachers' pedagogical practice. Therefore, Penrice's study provides important insights from the context of New Zealand.

2.4.4 Teacher Stress and Burnout

Generally, throughout the literature that was reviewed in this study, stress is associated with negative feelings and emotions. Kyriacou (2001) maintains that teacher stress results from a concoction of indicators such as "anger, anxiety, tension, frustration or depression" (p. 28), usually triggered by some aspect/s of teachers' work. At the same time, Wilson (2002) cautions that many studies seemingly conflate stress with its symptoms or effects and how they could be measured. She highlights three different models that can be used to understand what stress is all about. Whereas the 'engineering model' perceives teachers as passive subjects on whom excessive demands (which are beyond their limit) are imposed, the medical model focuses on the psychological and physiological indications, which, unfortunately are not peculiar to stress (Wilson, 2002, p. 5). Additionally, the interactive model is seen by Wilson to be situational and interactive, and therefore, portraying teachers as playing an important and active. What Wilson (2002) seems to be suggesting about the interactive model is that teachers may produce different stress indicators even though they are exposed to similar stress predictors. Consequently, burnout is considered to be more severe than stress, and in most cases, may require interventions that are therapeutic in nature (Chan, 2010), or may become chronic and result in complete hostility towards work (Fisher, 2011; Whitehead, 2001).

Various studies (Ferguson, Frost & Hall, 2012; Fisher, 2011; Froese-Germain, 2014; Kyriacou & Chien, 2004; Reese, 2003) indicate that stress predictors often include, but are not limited to, workload issues (class size, work-home balance), time pressures, student misbehaviour (disruptive students), poor working conditions [lack of resources, lack of support (principal, parents, learners)]. The reaction of teachers to these stress predictors often results in stress indicators like anxiety, fatigue, depletion of energy, exhaustion, edginess, inadequacy, being overwhelmed, depression, tension, helplessness and frustration.

A study by Kyriacou and Chien (2004) provides insight on teacher stress and how teachers in Taiwanese primary schools cope with stress. A questionnaire method was used to collect data, and a total of 203 questionnaires were analysed. They found that in Taiwan, as elsewhere in the western countries, teacher stress was a problem even in primary schools. Teachers in Kyriacou and Chien's study highlighted heavy workload and attempts to cope with educational reforms as the major predictors of stress. Their study revealed that teacher stress is also prevalent in the primary school context and not only in the secondary schools which are widely researched.

Froese-Germain's (2014) report on work-life balance among Canadian teachers suggests that teachers in the Northern parts of Canada identified 'time' (or lack of it) as the major stressor in their work. This lack of time impacted negatively on the teachers' home life as teachers struggled to find sufficient time for "marking and grading student work" (Froese-Germain, 2014, p. 6) or even to prepare for the lessons. The report also highlights the lack of resources (material and human) to support teaching and learning as one of the stressors for teachers.

Findings from Zembylas and Papanastasiou's (2006) study reveal that sources of job dissatisfaction have a high potential to contribute to teacher stress. They conducted research on teachers and administrators in Cyprus and found that teachers' work was affected by various social problems, deterioration in teachers' status and respect (from parents and students), student failure and bad behaviour, all of which create negative feelings, which in turn may lead to teacher stress. However, Zembylas and Papanastasiou's study also revealed sources of satisfaction which promote positive feelings on teachers. When teachers work collaboratively with their colleagues, or when they feel that they are making a good contribution to the society, they tend to be satisfied with their work. An interesting finding in their study is that teachers mentioned 'salaries' as one of the sources of satisfaction which, is contrary to views of most teachers in many countries.

A study by Okeke and Dlamini (2013) used a questionnaire to examine whether secondary school teachers from Swaziland experience work-related stress. The findings from their study revealed two major aspects; the nature of employment and the nature of teachers' work were as the main stressors for teachers. Okeke and Dlamini (2013) further observed

that qualifications, gender and work relationships had very nominal link to causing work stress.

A review by Reese (2003) provides a critique of studies conducted on teacher stress, particularly studies which use what she calls “one-time, self-report questionnaire” (p. 4), which she claims to be problematic as it assumes stress to be unchanging, and often gathers isolated information unrelated to any theory. Therefore, she advocates multiple methods of data collection as preferable to reliance on one method (survey/questionnaire).

A South African study by Milner and Khoza (2008) investigated the relationship between teacher stress and the school climate of schools with different matric success rates despite similar settings. Using quantitative methods of data collection, various indices (mean intensity test, stress questionnaire and ANOVA) were used to measure teacher stress and the school climate. Findings indicated that teachers from both the high-achieving schools and low-performing schools equally experienced heightened stress levels. However, they found out that the schools’ organisational climates vastly differed in all four schools that were studied which suggested a correlation between a positive school climate and high school performance (Milner & Khoza, 2008, p. 170).

Ferguson, Frost and Hall (2012) studied ‘predictors of anxiety, depression and job satisfaction’ in teachers in the context of Ontario (Canada). The rationale for their research was firstly, to identify stress factors that cause teacher anxiety and depression, and secondly, to identify factors that lead to teacher satisfaction (Ferguson, Frost & Hall, 2012, p. 29). Using data from ‘self-report questionnaires’ from 274 teachers, their analysis revealed that student behaviour and workload were major predictors of teacher depression whilst employment conditions, workload and student behaviour were predictors of anxiety. Furthermore, they found that stress and depression (burnout) impacted negatively on job satisfaction.

Another study by Fisher (2011) used surveys to find out the factors influencing stress, burnout and retention of secondary school teachers. The findings of Fisher’s study indicated that there is a mutual relationship between stress and burnout. The study further noted that the novice teachers usually have higher levels of burnout than experienced teachers. Fisher (2011) argues that the relationship between burnout and job satisfaction

is often reversed. The suggestion is that teachers who often suffer from burnout are those who are usually committed to responding to all students' needs.

2.5 Literature on Parents

The literature on parents in relation to education, schooling, teachers and their work mostly centres on the issue of parental involvement (Emerson, Fear, Fox & Sanders, 2012; Maluleke, 2014; Mereoiu, Abercrombie & Murray, 2016), which often includes parent-teacher communication (Ellis, 2017; Hill & Taylor, 2004; Lau, 2014; Pekel, Roehlkepartain, Syvertsen & Scales, 2015); which may yield positive or negative results (May, Johnson, Chen, Hutchison & Ricketts (2010).

2.5.1 Parental Involvement in Education Matters

Broadly defined, a parent is a person who legally brings up and takes care for the minor (Emerson et al, 2012). This person may be a biological or a foster parent. In this study, a parent refers to any person who is a parent figure to a high school-going child. Whereas some scholars suggest that parental involvement refers to the inclusion of parents in the day-to-day running of the school, such as, issues of governance (Lau, 2014; Mncube, 2009), participation in extra-curricular activities (Hill & Taylor, 2004); and often lead to positive social outcomes. Other scholars seem to prefer the term, parental engagement, which they claim to be more concerned about improving students' academic achievement (Emerson et al, 2012).

For parental involvement to be effective, it requires frequent teacher-parent communication and collaboration from both parties, argue Mereoiu, Abercrombie and Murray (2016). Findings from their study revealed that there was a disconnection between parents and teachers of students with special needs, hence they advocate for collaborative partnerships between teachers/schools and families/parents (Mereoiu et al, 2016). From their study, Turnbull, Turnbull, Erwin, Soodak and Shogren, (2015) found that collaboration between parents and teachers works best if it is built on trust. They further found that when parents trust teachers with their children, parents tend to willingly participate and constantly support teachers with the aim of helping children improve their learning.

Whilst the above studies reveal a positive parental involvement, an American study by May et al (2010) revealed that some parental involvement may put teachers under a lot of stress and strain when parents display aggressive behaviours and attitudes towards teachers. They argue that novice teachers as well as older teachers are mostly at the receiving end of the parents' verbal abuse, and this often results in highly charged interactions, which often leave teachers despondent (May et al, 2010). In fact, this dilemma of dealing with aggressive behaviour from parents has also been mentioned by Phillips (2005) as one of the major factors which contribute to novice teachers leaving the teaching profession.

Whether parental involvement yields positive or negative outcome, it is often dependent on the type of communication that occurs between teachers and parents and perhaps may be aggravated by the unarticulated expectations that both parties have of each other. Ellis (2017) argue that parent-teacher communication may be viewed as a "cause and effect of parent involvement" (p. 30). What Ellis is suggesting is that when communication is two-way, frequent and respectful, parents may be encouraged to become part of school life and therefore maintain healthy relations with the teachers and the school in general. On the contrary, when communication is not based on respect, it may cause disengagement, discomfort, conflict and stress (May et al, 2010).

The reviewed literature about parents seemed to focus more on the relationships that are created through the interaction between parents and teachers or lack thereof, mostly from the teachers' perspectives. There is a shortage of empirical studies on parents' perspectives about educational or schooling issues, let alone teachers' work. Hence, this study contributes empirically to knowledge about parents' views on teachers and specifically teachers' work.

2.6 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, a review of literature that contextualises and brings insights about discourse, discourse analysis, rhetoric and issues related to teachers' work was presented. Several arguments emerged from the literature reviewed in relation to these phenomena. It was argued that discourse is illusive and trans-disciplinary in nature. Literature on how discourse is conceptualised in various fields was also presented. This review highlighted the various notions of discourse.

Literature reviewed showed the heterogeneity of discourse analysis. This heterogeneity offers diverse uses of discourse analysis intra-disciplinary or inter-disciplinary either as a theory or a methodology. Discourse analysis has been portrayed as an interplay of language, context, and interaction. In addition, a review of literature on rhetoric, highlighting the essential characteristics and uses of rhetoric in ancient and contemporary times, was presented.

The reviewed literature on teachers' work showed contested notions of teacher professionalism, that is, the traditional, the managerial and the democratic; and the expectations that come with how these kinds of professionalism are conceived. Furthermore, issues of intensification, its factors and effects, and how they relate to managerial professionalism were presented. How intensification impacts on teachers, resulting in stress and burnout was also discussed.

The literature reviewed on teachers' work emanated from different countries, for example, United States of America (USA), Australia, New Zealand, United Kingdom, China and South Africa. However, there seems to be paucity of South African studies which study rhetoric. Most studies explored teachers' work from the teachers' perspectives only. For this reason, the present study seeks to fill this gap, and to understand, not only teachers' rhetoric, but also parents' rhetoric about teachers' work. The next chapter presents the theoretical framework which guided the understanding and analysis of data in this study.

CHAPTER THREE
Theoretical Framework

Introduction

The preceding chapter reviewed literature to contextualise the study within the phenomenon of discourse, discourse analysis and teachers' work. The literature reveals contentions in the understanding of discourse and discourse analysis. This chapter presents the theoretical orientation of the study. The recurring explanation by some researchers about discourse analysis is that it is understood and carried out differently depending largely on one's understanding of 'discourse' either within or across disciplines (Wetherell, 2001; Wodak, 2006). This view is also in line with Radley and Billig's (1996) argument that trying to fit discourse analysis into a particular field is impossible as it cuts across disciplines and academic boundaries; hence the multiple understandings of discourse analysis by various scholars.

Torfing (2005) traces the different strands of discourse analysis and their prominent proponents through three generations. He suggests that the first generation of discourse analysis has a narrow focus which is based on the socio-linguistics of the text whilst underplaying the ideas of power and ideology. The proponents for this generation of discourse analysis include theorists such as Porter (2002), Wetherell (2001) and others. Whilst the second generation seems to go beyond the language confines to include social practices, it is more focused on power relations between the social agents, and is referred to as Critical Discourse Analysis (Torfing, 2005), with proponents such as Fairclough (1995), Van Dijk (1995), Habermas (1983) and others. This form of discourse analysis "clearly demonstrates the power effects of discourse" (Torfing, 2005, p. 7) at various levels and institutions. For the third generation of discourse analysis, discourse is understood to encompass "all social phenomena" (Torfing, 2005, p. 8) coexisting in the social arena. In essence, what the third generation of discourse analysis implies is that, meaning has the potential to change because of its non-permanence ('partially fixed') within a discourse. Proponents of this generation of discourse analysis include Derrida (2001), Laclau and Mouffe (2001), among others.

This study adopts Laclau and Mouffe's (2001) discourse theory as a theoretical and analytical framework to understand teachers' discourse about their work and also to understand the parents' discourses about teachers' work. The study is premised on the understanding that discourse is not language in a neutral sense, but is language insofar as meaning serves and promotes power.

This chapter begins with the general discussion of discourse analysis and moves to a specific discussion about Laclau and Mouffe's discourse theory and the justification of its use in this study. Firstly, a brief discussion on the various strands of discourse analysis is explicated. Then the discourse theory of Laclau and Mouffe and its influence on this study is presented.

3.1 Historical and Philosophical Exposition of Discourse Analysis and Discourse Theory

This section presents a brief discussion on the evolution of discourse analysis and discourse theory in order to foreground the theoretical frame for this study.

3.1.1 Discourse Analysis

The discipline of Philosophy in the twentieth century saw the blurring of pure critical philosophy as most branches of philosophy became permeable to linguistics and language analysis (Gralewski, 2011), which at that time was also known as discourse analysis. This era in philosophy was termed 'the linguistic turn' because some philosophers, in particular Wittgenstein, made a remarkable contribution in developing "analytic linguistic philosophy" (Debrix, 2003, p. 79); which focused on how language was used to respond ontologically and epistemologically to the world rather than on the philosophical analysis per se. Because this analytic mode had an adverse effect on the status of philosophy, Gralewski (2011) argued that the analytical tool developed by Wittgenstein was taking into account the contexts (the social space) in which the language was used, because he understood that "meaning is located in social patterns of use, which are an integral part of social life" (p. 159). In essence, Gralewski suggestion was that Wittgenstein wanted to acknowledge the humanistic aspect of language and the meaning-making that went with it, which he termed the "language game" (Gralewski, 2011, p.158). This terminology was based on the notion that the social world is constituted by various types of language activities which operate within a set of rules, hence, reference to the 'game'.

3.1.2 Discourse Analysis in Hermeneutics Philosophy

The new traditions of philosophy on which discourse analysis is situated include, but are not limited to hermeneutics, social constructionism and poststructuralism. Hermeneutics (art of interpretation) is a branch of phenomenology that was founded by Husserl (1970) because of his discontent with objective science and its reductionist view. His critique of psychologism was based on its application of scientific methods when attempting to resolve human issues (Moran, 2000). For this reason, Husserl may be said to have developed 'phenomenology' which was used in the understanding of the life-world. For Husserl, this understanding had to be authentic; and therefore, was neither based on any "prefabricated conceptions" (Moran, 2000, p. 181) of any grand theory nor his own views.

Phenomenology was further developed by Husserl's student, Heidegger whose interpretations highlighted the importance of the use of language and prior knowledge for human understanding; hence the birth of hermeneutical phenomenology (Craig, 2005) which allowed for interpretation of all aspects of life and not just the text. This hermeneutic version of phenomenology was elaborated on in the1970s by Gadamer who seems to have transformed hermeneutics to be more reflective and philosophical – hence philosophical hermeneutics (Gralewski, 2011). The Gadamerian version of hermeneutics therefore, situated human knowledge within particular histories and human understanding with language as the ontological 'horizon' of human existence. For this reason, the Gadamerian hermeneutic philosophy goes beyond text interpretation (language) and is inclusive of the social insofar as it is registered in language. That is why it is regarded as one of the major influences on discourse theories. While hermeneutics seems to acknowledge differences between contextual, cultural and linguistic, it is not evaluative of these aspects.

3.1.3 Social Constructionist and Poststructuralist Discourse Theories

The positioning of the social constructionist and poststructuralist discourse theories and how they relate to each other is captured in Figure 3.1 below.

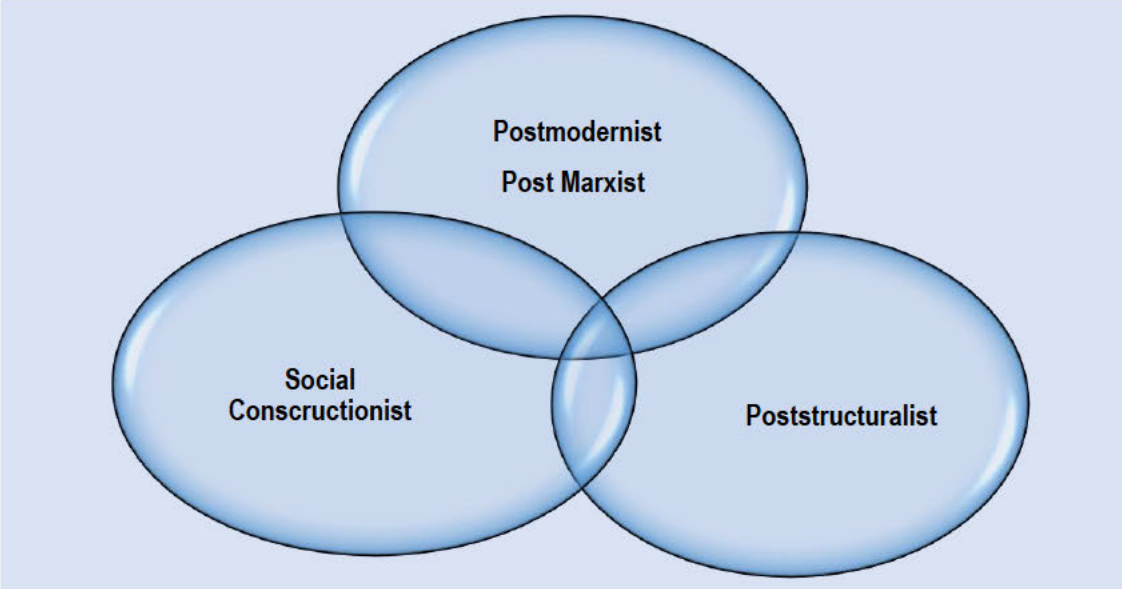

Figure 3.1 A diagram positioning the social constructionist, postmodernist and poststructural discourse theories

Figure 3.1 above depicts social constructionist theory as belonging in a broader category of social constructionism within which different philosophical traditions are found. Social constructionism's roots can be traced back to the 1960s to Berger and Luckmann whose ideas of social constructionism centred on 'objectivation' (Gergen, 1985). Objectivation can be understood as a process by which people (the society) use language to 'objectify' their subjective meanings and pass them on (through various socialisation processes) as 'real' (Keller, 2012). What Berger and Luckmann (1966) suggest in their explanation of social constructionism is that whenever people attempt to normalise any socially constructed meaning or symbol, they are actually trying to elevate its status so that it acquires a permanent status as if it is reality. By the same token, Keller (2012) gives clarification on the 'reality' as suggested by Berger and Luckmann. He points out that through interactions, people derive a "shared social reality" which often becomes "socially objectified in differing processes of institutionalisation" (Keller, 2012, p. 55), thus legitimising particular knowledges over others. This legitimisation of some knowledges whilst undermining others is the foundation of what constitutes discourses.

Embedded within the broader category of social constructionism is the poststructuralist discourse theory (as shown in Fig 3.1 above). Poststructuralism, with its own subcategories in philosophy, emerged near the end of the twentieth century (late 1960s) as a corrective theory to structuralism (Gralewski, 2011). Structuralism's emphasis on the

coherent structure (a system), universalisation, and the functionality of a system as a whole (objectivity), renders its principles open to criticism by proponents of poststructuralism who seem to be more concerned about, not only the differences (subjectivity and relationality), but also the similarities inherent in the parts of the system (Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002). For the poststructuralists who do not believe in the totalising unit (system), the parts of a system (subjects and objects) are more important than the system since they constitute both the discursive and non-discursive parts of the social world (Torfing, 2005). How people perceive themselves and their social surroundings, as reflected in language, is the focus of discourse theory.

Historically, discourse theory has been used in the understanding of political and social sciences from way back in the 1960s and has been "influenced by the intellectual currents of British post-Marxist, French poststructuralist and Anglo-American debates about postmodernity" (Torfing, 2005, p. 10). The intellectual currents identified by Torfing included, but were not limited to, Gramsci who was vehemently opposed to a Marxist deterministic view of the state (political) and the civil society (social), which seemed to underestimate the people's capability to resist the dominant ideologies (economics and class structure). In Gramsci's (1971) view, there seemed to be underlying hegemonic struggles which were highly likely to create possibilities for the state to be challenged or altered by the very subordinate structures that it was suppressing. At the same time, Derrida (1981) was involved in the deconstruction of the hierarchical binaries created by structuralism (through the use of language) which often served an exclusionary purpose for some. Nietzsche and Heidegger worked on weakening the "modernist ontology and epistemology" (Torfing, 2005, p. 12) by strategically revealing the limitations of modernists' claims and aspirations. For these reasons, discourse theory can be seen as a theory that is in line with a postmodernist, poststructuralist and post-Marxist agenda.

As Figure 3.1 indicates, the three types of discourses form intersections with one another. These intersections represent the discursive formations, or the permeability or contingency of these discourses. Hence the partial fixing of meanings due to various subjectivities. An explication of Laclau and Mouffe's (2001) discourse theory used to frame this study is offered in the next section.

3.2 Laclau and Mouffe's Discourse Theory

Laclau and Mouffe (2001) elaborated on, and combined, Marxism and structuralism in the construction of their discourse theory (Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002; Keller, 2012; Torfing, 2005). Jorgensen and Phillips (2002, p. 25) posit that Laclau and Mouffe departed from the structuralism's "theory of meaning" as well as Marxism's "thinking about the social" in their effort to produce a poststructuralist theory. This combination is seen by Keller (2012, p. 51) to result in an "extensive definition of discourse". This extended definition of discourse was noted earlier by Torfing (2005, p. 9) in his explanation of Laclau and Mouffe's conception of discourse as being "co-extensive with the social".

I used a concept map (as shown in Fig. 3.2 below) as a visual representation of my interpretation and understanding of Laclau and Mouffe's discourse theory and what I consider to be the major focus points (although not exhaustive) of analysis for this study.

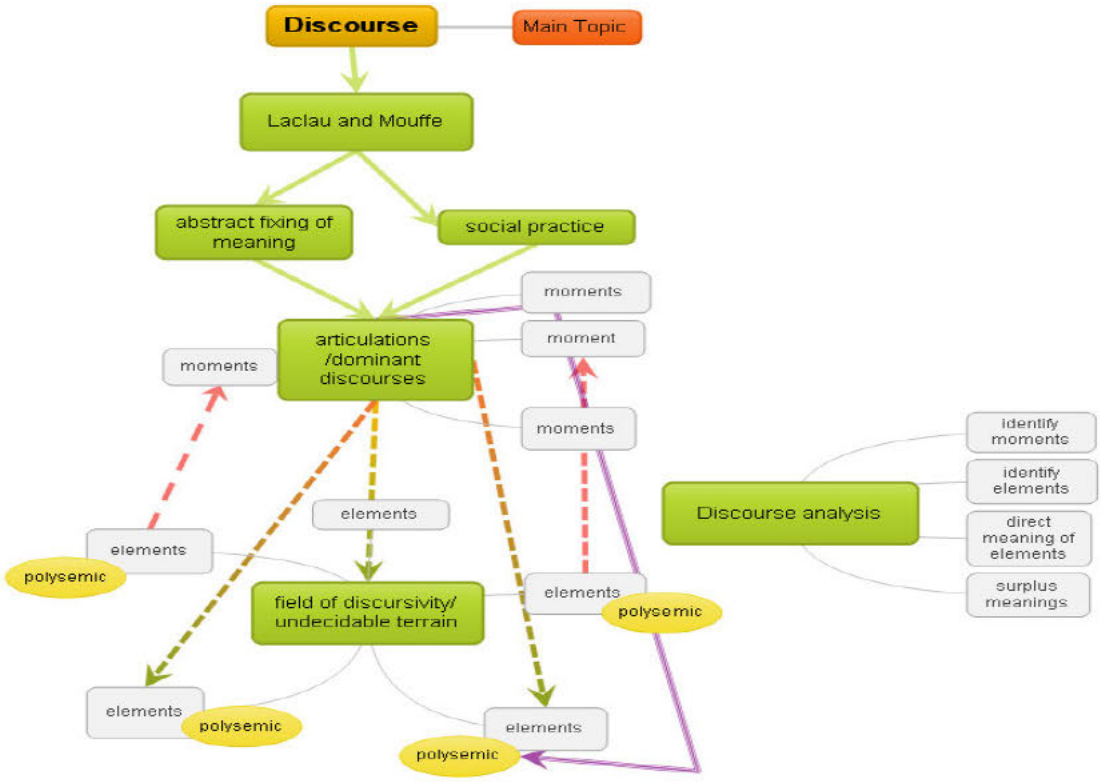

Figure 3.2 A diagrammatic illustration (mind-map) of Laclau and Mouffe's discourse theory [personal construction]

The above diagram (Fig. 3.2) is my personal interpretation of Laclau and Mouffe's discourse theory. This representation may not capture all the aspects or concepts as explicated in the discourse theory of Laclau and Mouffe, but it certainly captures those aspects that are important for the analysis of data in this study. Laclau and Mouffe's (2001) discourse theory deals with the social arena as a net where the creation ('fixing') of meanings arises. This creation of meanings does not occur in a vacuum, but results from social actors involved in calculated attempts to contextually and temporarily fix these meanings (moments) into a particular discourse. These social actors, in turn, as Jørgensen and Phillips (2002) posit, are capable of changing any previously fixed meanings, depending on the positions they occupy at any given time. As Keller (2012, p. 62) aptly puts it, "the social actors are related to discourse in two ways: …as the holders of the *speaker position*, or *statement producers*, who speak within a discourse" or as "*addressees of the statement practice*". What Keller (2012) suggests is that the social actors, also known as subjects or participants, are often involved in a constant struggle (field of discursivity) to situate their claims or statements as valid, so that they can be included in the creation of meaning (discourse). This struggle, Laclau and Mouffe (2001) argue, does not allow for permanent attributes to be allocated to any structure of discourse. Hence, it is referred to as a "discursive struggle" (Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002, p.6). This means that there are always alternative (polysemic) meanings that need to be considered for any given meaning. Therefore, it can be argued that Laclau and Mouffe's discourse theory offers no closure. Instead, Howarth (2000) claims that any given meaning is likely to be reproduced or altered because discourse does not operate within time constraints.

3.2.1 Components of Laclau and Mouffe's Discourse Theory

Laclau and Mouffe (2001) define discourse as "[t]he structured totality resulting from the articulatory practice" (p.105). The totality referred to in this definition should not be understood to mean the cohesiveness of a discourse, but rather, denotes that Laclau and Mouffe's conception of discourse is inclusive of both the language use (linguistic expressions) and social practices of social actors (Dabirimehr & Fatmi, 2014; Torfing, 2005). This understanding is also depicted in the mind-map in Fig. 3.2 where the social practice and the abstract fixing of meanings converge to constitute dominant discourses. Articulations are viewed by Laclau and Mouffe (2001, p. 105) to be "any practice establishing a relation among elements such that their identity is modified as a result of

the articulatory practice". What Laclau and Mouffe seem to be suggesting is that, any meanings people ascribe to various situations have the potential of forming and shaping particular discourse. However, there are always possibilities that some meanings could be transformed by alternative understandings or meanings (Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002).

Discourses, in Laclau and Mouffe's (2001) theory are made up of **signs** which are located at different positions in relation to one another as they struggle with the fixing of meanings within a specific field (Rear, 2013). Such signs are called '**moments'**, and each moment's positionality within a discourse is dependent upon its assigned meaning in relation to other moments. As a result of the struggle to fix meanings into moments / discourse (even if temporarily), some signs are highly likely to become excluded from this process. These excluded signs (which often present alternative meanings to those of the moments) are referred to as **elements** (as shown in Fig. 3.2). Jorgensen and Phillips (2002) assert that the multiplicity of meanings or the polysemic nature presented by these elements increase their chances of being filtered out of a discourse since it is difficult to fix them within the dominant discourses. Hence, they are labelled "**floating signifiers**" (Dabirimehr & Fatmi, 2014, p. 1284) as they are floating outside the dominant discourses. The very same dominant discourses are, however, known to be 'unstable' since they are potentially competing against one another in an attempt to fix the multiple meanings that are presented by the elements; in order to reduce their possibilities (Rear & Jones, 2013). These alternative, multiple meanings that occur outside and around discourses, form what Laclau and Mouffe (2001) refer to as a **field of discursivity**, which is discussed in the following section.

3.2.1.2 The Field of Discursivity

The field of discursivity is described by Laclau and Mouffe (2001) as a **terrain** of surplus meanings that comprise a discourse. Whilst a discourse is known to be organised in relation to what it omits (field of discursivity), it is not clear whether this field of discursivity consists of unstructured meanings or structured meanings of contending discourses. Therefore, any discourse can be viewed as being at risk of being disrupted by the elements that are situated outside of it. Phillips and Jørgensen (2006) note that these **elements** are "signs that have multiple, potential meanings (i.e. they are polysemic)" (p. 27). For this reason, the teachers' and parents' rhetorics in this study were used to see what meanings were outside of normal understanding of what teachers and parents said

about teachers' work. Furthermore, Phillips and Jørgensen (2006) contend that Laclau and Mouffe's discourse theory creates a temporary closure to the variations in the meaning of the signs. Based on Phillips and Jørgensen's (2006) interpretation, the polysemic nature of the elements creates possibilities for the discourses to be challenged as well as to be transformed by the diverse meanings which make up the field of discursivity.

The diverse meanings that occur in the field of discursivity are an indication that discourses can be regarded as incomplete (not fixed) structures that exist in an **undecidable terrain** (which I call a 'field of uncertainty'). For this reason, there is always a **struggle** over the structure of discourse, "what it should look like, what discourses should prevail, and how meaning should be ascribed to the individual signs" (Phillips & Jørgensen, 2006, p. 29). In a way, the discourses of teachers and parents can be regarded as incomplete structures that exist in an undecidable terrain. This undecidable terrain results from the different 'subject positions' and articulations that the various actors (teachers and parents) occupy, and make within a particular discourse.

Laclau and Mouffe's (2001) discourse theory is concerned with scrutinising *how* discourse (structure) is constituted and transformed. This scrutiny can be done by looking at how utterances and articulations persistently replicate, question or transform discourses. Laclau and Mouffe's discourse theory is relevant for this study because it allowed me to identify the dominant teachers' rhetoric (a particular use of language which highlights its discursive function, particularly regarding the power relations that are involved) as well as the parents' rhetoric about teachers' work; along with the nature of the rhetoric. Using discourse analysis as an analytical tool, therefore, assisted in examining the various kinds of rhetoric that shaped teachers' and parents' understandings of teachers' work, and how these kinds of rhetoric influenced ways of thinking, doing or being of teachers and parents, i.e. the discourses.

3.3 Empirical Analytical Tools

Laclau and Mouffe's discourse theory operates at an elevated level of abstraction and uses specific concepts in a manner that attempts to make the theory understandable. A glossary of the concepts and their conceptualisations is provided in Table 3.1 below, followed by their discussion.

Table 3.1 Central terms used in Laclau and Mouffe's discourse theory. Adapted from Agrandir Original (png, 66k) in (Műller, 2011, p. 10)

	Concept	Conceptualisation
Discourse	Elements	Signifiers with polysemic meanings which are not yet fixed in any discourse
	Moments	Partially fixed elements (through articulation) within a discourse
	Nodal points	Privileged or central signifiers which shape the discourse
	Articulations	Social practices which partially fix the meanings of elements into moments to become part of a discourse
	Closure	When a signifier becomes fixed within a discourse
	Floating/empty signifiers	Openness of signifiers to different articulations – with a potential of becoming nodal points
	Field of discursivity	Field outside of discourse – with a surplus of meanings
	Chains of equivalence	Structured signification of moments within a discourse which assumes similarities
	Chains of difference	Structured signification of moments within a discourse which presents differences to other moments within or in various discourses

When analysing discourse using Laclau and Mouffe's theory, the analysis is expected to highlight, from the text, ***nodal points*** also known as privileged signs (Iuul, 2008) and are signifiers that capture or organise particular discourses. At the same time, ***moments*** (key signifiers) within the organised discourses (Rear & Jones, 2013) also need to be identified. The manner in which the moments are positioned in relation to one another is dependent upon the various interpretations and meanings (***articulations)*** that the ***social actors*** (participants) tend to make about the identified nodal points and moments (Laclau &

Mouffe, 2001). The diverse interpretations or meanings render the constituted discourse unstable and therefore, the signifiers are regarded as '***floating***' or '***empty***' due to their polysemic nature (Phillips & Jørgensen, 2006). They are also known as '***elements***'. The way in which the signifiers are structured in relation to one another forms *a* ***chain(s) of equivalence*** (bearing the similar meaning) or a ***chain(s) of difference*** depending on the type of the discourse that they produce.

Inherent within the perceived chains of equivalence is the continuous struggle of particular discourses which are constantly trying to break free from the "unmediated universality" (Laclau, 2001, p. 4) in an attempt to situate themselves by revealing their particularities. This struggle is indicative that the discourses (moments) that are regarded as universal (equivalent), are not as universal as they are perceived to be. Instead, they are always threatened by the opposing discourses which have the potential to be separated from the chain(s) of equivalence (Rear & Jones, 2013), and thus form elements in the field of discursivity. So, in essence, there is no discourse that can be rendered a totalising or universal entity because the universality presented in the chain of equivalence "will always be a universality contaminated by particularity" (Laclau, 2000, p. 304). What Laclau is suggesting is that, there is no signifier that can be permanently empty or permanently fixed. Instead, signifiers are temporarily empty or fixed (***temporary closure***), until diverse or opposing meanings/interpretations are ascribed to them.

It should be noted that discourse (and by implication, rhetoric) does not exist in reality (i.e. it is not tangible) – it is rather identified by the researcher as an attempt to frame the study. It is, therefore, a researcher construct. Consequently, in this study, I was able to give meaning to the data that I was interpreting and analysing by constructing various forms of rhetoric based on the literature. This exercise allowed me to identify the themes and sub-themes from teachers' and parents' data deriving from one-on-one interviews as well as the main points of discussion in the focus group discussions. These sub-themes may be regarded as nodal points since they were the concepts around which the rhetoric was organised. The statements or interpretations that the teachers and parents (social actors) made in relation to the identified nodal points formed the chains of equivalence or chains of difference because of the attempts they made to situate their varied perspectives in the production of the rhetoric.

Identifying what the different dominant rhetorics seemed to be about, was, in a way, an attempt to also highlight the elements that were not included in the dominant rhetorics. The dominant discourses are known to reveal the 'taken-for-granted' or common-sensical ideas embedded in the articulations of social actors. However, these common-sense ideas are seen by Belsey (2001, p. 3) to be flooded with "incoherences…contradictions and…silences". Belsey (2001) further critiques what she calls the 'illusional' idea that language is a universal transparent medium used to communicate messages to one another. Instead, she claims that dominant ideologies are passed on through the use of language in our everyday communication, that is, through discourses.

The articulations that the social actors make about their social reality reveals who they are and their beliefs about the world. Laclau and Mouffe (2001) therefore, suggest that the social actors' identities are usually difficult to fix. Instead, they form part of the political discursive struggle. What they seem to be suggesting is that identities can be regarded as "contextual, relational and emotional, shifting and multiple" (Chikoko, 2015, p. 65). This multiplicity and shifting nature of identities arises from the variety of text or articulations that the social actors make in relation to various discourses that are created around various nodal points. This nature of identities (multiple and shifting) further allows for social actors or subjects to be positioned differently within various discourses (Muller, 2011).

3.4 CONCLUSION

This chapter presented a theoretical framework which guided the interpretation, analysis and understanding of the teachers' and parents' rhetoric. The discourse theory of Laclau and Mouffe (2001) provided the theoretical field of this study. This discourse theory allows for the distinction between the dominant discourses (which are dependent upon the positioning of the moments – the taken-for-granted), from the excluded discourses (which are formed by the elements). Through identifying the moments and elements from the social actors' articulations, lenses to understand the different kinds of discourses being constituted by the social actors were provided. At the same time, this identification further provides understanding of the different and shifting positions that are occupied by social actors within the different discourses.

Laclau and Mouffe's (2001) discourse theory was essential for this study as it provided direction on how the teachers' and parents' rhetoric was to be researched, analysed, interpreted and understood. This understanding is in line with the type of methods that were used in the production of data for this study. The following chapter is going to discuss the methodology that was used in this study.

CHAPTER FOUR

Research Design and Methodology

Introduction

The previous chapter provided the theoretical underpinnings and the analytical frame used in this study. This chapter's aim is to present the methodology, that is, the data generation process that was followed in this study. Methodology has been identified by Punch (2008) as a way of positioning the researcher within the empirical sphere where the connection between research questions and the data is made. This study sought to understand teachers' and parents' rhetoric about teachers' work by answering three critical questions:

1. What is the teachers' rhetoric about teachers' work? Why?
2. What is the parents' rhetoric about teachers' work? Why?
3. What is the nature of teachers' and parents' rhetoric about teachers' work? Why?

In order to answer these questions, a qualitative approach using a case study was adopted for this study. Semi-structured personal interviews and focus group interviews were used to generate data.

The first of the three parts of this chapter commences with a discussion of the philosophical underpinnings which locate the study within the qualitative approach and its alignment to the chosen paradigm, as well as ontological and epistemological foundations. In the second part, the methodology adopted in this study, that is, a case study; and the processes of gaining access to the participants, as well as methods of data generation (semi-structured personal interviews and focus group interviews) are also discussed and justified. Reflexivity, which is underpinned by ethical considerations, trustworthiness and data analysis, form part of, and are discussed in the third part. Key limitations and the attempts to overcome them are also discussed, followed by the conclusion which summarise the central aspects of this chapter.

4.1 The Philosophical Underpinnings of Qualitative Research

This section provides the theoretical and philosophical understanding of the approach adopted. Human behaviour is quite individualistic. It is not the same as, perhaps, hydrogen which is made of one proton and one electron irrespective of where it is found in the world. Human beings, whether they come from the same family and have the same

genetic makeup, they are quite different. Our attitudes, interests, perspectives and perceptions are highly individualistic. This is why qualitative research is appropriate for this study, which does not seek to fit participants and their articulations into the same box. Using a qualitative approach does not diminish the rigour of the research. The qualitative approach is discussed in the next section.

4.1.1 The Qualitative Approach to the Study

In the literature, there seems to be copious definitions of what qualitative research is about. Generally-speaking, qualitative research values the context in which meaning-making occurs. Getting to understand the meaning that people construct about their experiences and about their world, is one of qualitative research's purpose (Merriam 2009, Yin, 2011). Hossain (2011) posits that a qualitative researcher seeks to understand people's (participants) behaviours by attempting to address the rationale behind, not only people's beliefs, but also their attitudes and fears. For this reason, the qualitative study's main purpose would be to capture the participants' perspectives and represent "the meanings given to real-life events by the people who live them, not the values, preconceptions, or meanings held by researchers" (Yin, 2011, p. 8). The meanings that researchers may hold emanate from the researchers' disciplines, orientations and philosophical assumptions. Therefore, argues Vasilachis de Gialdino (2009), there cannot be a single genuine way of conducting qualitative research. However, there are distinctive features which characterise qualitative research, irrespective of the discipline it falls under. These characteristics are mentioned by various scholars in their writings and they may be based on 'what' or 'who' is studied, under qualitative research. For instance, qualitative research is interested, among other things, in social context forces (Mason 2006; Maxwell, 2004), language in social interaction (Silverman, 2000), "participants' knowledge and practices" (Flick, 2009, p. 16), as well as meaning and signification of participants' thinking (Morse, 2002). Qualitative research is further characterised by its particularities.

Furthermore, qualitative researchers embrace subjectivity of reality, truth and knowledge in their studies and therefore seek to understand phenomena within their contexts. As argued by Firestone (1987), the qualitative researcher "becomes '*immersed*' in the phenomenon" (p. 17) because of their heightened interest or curiosity. One may argue that the view of a researcher as 'immersed' has an influence on the type of methods that

are used and ultimately, on the type of data that are produced in the research process. Guba and Lincoln (1994) state that qualitative researchers are linked to constructionism which is underpinned by subjectivity, and therefore, produce textual data usually from a variety of sources. For this reason, qualitative research is fluid as it allows inclusion of a wide spectrum of research techniques and perspectives (theoretical, ontological and epistemological). An attempt to understand the rhetoric about teachers' work from the teachers' and parents' subjective perspectives was made in this study. Such an understanding was rendered possible through the interpretations that were given to the participants' interpretation of "their own actions and actions of others" (Given, 2008, p. 461). Interpretations and understandings are what characterise the interpretive paradigm which is discussed in the next section.

4.1.2 The Interpretive Paradigm

Paradigms are artificial constructions for social scientists to understand their positionality. An interpretive paradigm is one of many paradigms within the qualitative approach to research (Given, 2008). In the interpretivist paradigm, the participants' meanings of the social world are explored. In other words, interpretive research tends to focus on people's experiences (Briggs & Coleman, 2007), which are usually socially and subjectively constructed. This focus is in line with the qualitative research's focus on the social actors within particular contexts. Vasilachis de Gialdino (2009) argues that, it is not easy to understand social actors separately from their situations; hence the difficulty of separating understanding from interpretation as also noted by Given (2008). Likewise, Kincheloe (2004) highlights the centrality of the context and discourse when positioned within the interpretive paradigm. For this reason, when the rhetoric on teachers' work was analysed, the focus was on the meanings that teachers make for their experiences, or the meanings the parents make for their understanding of teachers' work. Meaning-making was on-going and the researcher was able to interact with the participants through dialogue, resulting from the techniques of data production that were used in this study; that is, semi-structured interviews and focus groups.

Researchers approach their research from ontological, epistemological, axiological and methodological conventions. *Ontology* is a philosophical belief about the nature of reality and raises a fundamental question about what can be known and how (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Vasilachis de Gialdino, 2009). In other words, what can be regarded as real and

whether this reality has an influence on what is studied. The strategies used to conduct the research are also important and have a bearing on the kind of reality that is constructed.

For this study, the techniques used to get to the known were one-on-one personal interviews and focus groups discussions. Understanding that interviews are characterised as spoken or oral reality, I premised the study on the understanding that the 'real' cannot be fully captured, and that any information gathered will be from the participants' subjective experiences. Therefore, as a researcher, one is not sure if what is communicated by the participant is actually happening. The study, therefore, does not claim to capture the 'real', but presents an interpretation of the 'real'. This idea is in line with Kincheloe's (2004) observation that when empirical data are viewed from a different perspective, they have a likelihood to produce interpretations that are different from the original perspective. Similarly, Flick (2009) asserts that "the reality studied by qualitative research is not a given reality, but is constructed by different 'actors'" (p. 66). The participants' multiple perspectives (in this study) were also captured through focus groups which were composed of members with varied perspectives, projecting different forms of reality. Consensual or complementary, contradictory or conflictual forms of reality have been produced through focus group interactions, depicting "different ontological statuses" (Kincheloe, 2004, p. 7). Thus, the use of the interpretive paradigm was appropriate in trying to understand the participants' experiences and the meanings they made about their social world (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011)

In addition to ontology**,** *epistemology* is the study of knowledge production. It examines the relationship between the researcher and the participants (knower and the known), the power differentials, what data was possible, and all the factors that impede or enhance the relationship. It is about the way participants are positioned (marginal, sources, equals etc.). In this way, epistemology can question the authority of the knower.

Asking questions such as "what knowledge is of most worth?" (Kincheloe, 2004, p. 13), usually empowers researchers with decision-making in relation to the appropriate or potential participants, as well as the suitable methods of data production. It also allows the researcher to be reflective and reflexive about her or his own biases. The positioning of individuals as knowers is understood to be 'fluid', in the sense that both the researcher

and the researched can, at any given moment, gain the status of being the knower, based on what "the speakers [use] to describe social reality" (Vasichilas de Gialdino, 2009, p. 5). I argue that when teacher participants talked about their lived experiences in relation to their work, they were sharing a particular type of knowledge that might not have been known to the researcher and therefore, they became positioned as 'knowers'; because they are the ones who were best able to interpret the actualities of their work. The same can be said about the parent participants who shared their realities about teachers' work based on the knowledge they had as a result of their direct or indirect interactions with the teachers who taught their children, or with teachers in general.

In deciding on worthwhile knowledge, researchers would have to deal with the issues of power that are inherent in various contexts. In addition, Flyvbjerg (2001) suggests that issues of power, ethics, politics, as well as the researcher's values are often indivisible from knowledge production. Therefore, as a researcher, when engaging with participants both during the one-on-one interviews and focus groups, I operated from the understanding that they (participants) were playing an "active part in the cooperative construction of knowledge and, a totally respected, neither shadowed nor denied, presence in knowledge transmission processes" (Vasilachis de Gialdino, 2009, p. 7). In essence, participants' (teachers and participants) accounts of their experiences, beliefs or ideas were [in the terms of Blaikie (2007)], 'abducted' into the formation of categories and themes.

Philosophically, the understanding that knowledge is veracious seems to be premised on the idea that worthwhile knowledge should contain some validity. This idea suggests that participants' articulations were understood and accepted under the assumption that they had inherent truth, which is what Ormston, Spencer, Barnard and Snape (2014) call the *nature of truth*. Various researchers have written widely about different notions of truth which, although named differently, seem to represent similar ideas. Whereas Prado (2010) argued for Foucault's notions of truth to be criterial, constructivist, perspectival and experiential; the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa - Volume 1 (n.d.) advocated notions of truth to be "factual or forensic, personal or narrative, social or dialogue[ic] and healing and restorative" (p. 110). Similarly, Ormston et al. (2014) argued for truth to be foundational, 'value-mediated', coherent and pragmatic. Whilst the notion of truth that is regarded as criterial, factual or foundational is assumed to produce

objective knowledge; the truth which is claimed to be constructivist, personal or value-mediated produces knowledge which is dependent upon the subjective understanding of individuals, accommodating their multi-layered experiences. In this notion of truth (criterial), participants get to tell their stories as they are known to them. For this study, during the one-on-one interviews, the constructivist or personal or value-mediated notions of truth were dominant since the participants may were voicing their personal views, constructed based on their own understanding of the topics that were under discussion.

The perspectival, **s**ocio-dialogic, or coherent truth emanates from interaction between and among individuals. This notion of truth (socio-dialogic) is often characterised by multiplicity since it tends to consider a wide range of possibilities and views of an individual; whether they cohere or disagree with the views of others, instead of being focused on objective or subjective dimensions (Ormston et al, 2014). In addition, what is considered as experiential, healing and restorative or pragmatic truth is based largely on negotiations that exist between individuals, the facts (as stated by them) and the meaning they make from those statements or discussions and whether their views are acknowledged by others (Prado, 2010; TRC, Vol 1, n.d.). For this study, both notions of truth (pragmatic truth and healing and restorative truth) were evident during the focus group discussions where participants narrated their subjective perspectives on specific issues that were being discussed within social contexts. This allowed for multiplicity of meaning-making among the participants as they tried to understand one another's views and either tried to build on, or refute those views in an attempt to situate their own. From the literature and from the findings of this study, it is evident that there is more than one truth about teachers' work.

4.2 Part Two: Research Methodology and Data Generation

In this section, a discussion on the methodology chosen for the study is presented.

4.2.1 Case Study Approach

Within the qualitative approach, I used a case study. This methodology allowed me to gain deeper understanding about the teachers' and parents' rhetoric about the work that teachers do. Various scholars (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2009; Henning, 2004; Maree, 2007; Toma, 2006) advocate for a case study for bringing to bear a deeper understanding of people's real situations and the different meanings they attach to those situations.

Likewise, Yin (2009) has written extensively about case study methodology. He notes that a case study uses multiple sources of data in order to allow for triangulation. For these reasons, that is, depth of understanding, perspectival meaning-making and multiple methods, the case study approach was identified as the most relevant for this study.

Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2009) assert that case studies usually focus on participants individually or in groups whilst seeking to fully comprehend their insight of events. Similarly, Johnson and Christensen (2012) suggest that case studies allow for thick descriptions which emanate from the participants' knowledge, thoughts, reasoning or feelings about specific events or topics. In this study, both the teacher and parent participants were interviewed individually and as a group of either teachers or parents. The use of semi-structured interviews was to allow for instances of probing and prompting for elaborations or clarifications, with the purpose of gaining deeper understanding of the participants' insights on teachers' work. In addition, the use of focus groups allowed for, not only diverse responses, but also multi-layered meaning-making by the participants, which allowed for better insight on the participants' understanding of the phenomenon.

Furthermore, a case study is defined by Gerring (2004) as a study characterised by the 'boundedness' of the phenomenon being studied and the extent of the analysis that the study seeks to apply. In other words, Gerring observes that a researcher using a case study methodology is often faced with the dilemma of making decisions about the number of participants to engage; whether the researcher prefers "knowing more about less" or "knowing less about more" (Gerring, 2004, p. 348). For this study, the case study was not used in a sense whereby researchers immerse themselves in real situations by observing participants (ethnographically), but it was used in a manner which allowed the participants to reflect on their situations and to report on them as well, based on their own perceptions and understanding. Because the focus was on in-depth understanding of the rhetoric surrounding teachers' work, fewer participants (five teachers and four parents) within the Pinetown district, in the KwaZulu-Natal province of South Africa, were chosen. Therefore, the case in this case study, is the teachers' and the parents' rhetoric.

Case studies are not without limitations and have been critiqued by several scholars based on a) their lack of generalisation (Dogan & Pelassy, 1990), b) biasness – used to verify

researcher's predetermined ideas (Diamond, 1996) c) being too narrative and therefore, not being scientific enough (Mitchell & Charmaz, 1996). However, these criticisms are nullified by Flyvbjerg (2001) who notes that they are merely misunderstandings aimed at undervaluing case study research which is more context-dependent and thus; maintains a close researcher-researched relationship. In addition, case studies have been criticised for being too subjective (full of bias). Simons (2009) however, suggests that this view is nothing but a myth since all research (even that which is positivistic in nature), in one way or another, has some elements of subjectivity, particularly at the proposal or brainstorming stages, or even when designing the research tools. In fact, Simons (2009) argues that case studies are "studies documenting and analysing phenomena appealing to subjective ways of knowing to gain insight and understanding" (p. 162). Therefore, for this study, the focus was on rhetoric; that is, the subjective understanding of teachers and parents (participants) about teachers' work. The idea was not to form generalisations, but to have a deeper understanding of the participants' understanding about the phenomenon being studied. The focus of the study always informs the sampling techniques or the choice of participants.

4.2.2 Selection of Participants for the Study

In this section, a discussion of how the participants in the study were selected, is made. Selecting participants purposefully is considered by many researchers (Flick, 2008; Keele, 2011; Marshall & Rossman, 2001; Oliver, 2013) to involve conscious decision-making regarding the suitable participants for a proposed study. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2009) also suggest that researchers often use purposive selection of participants when they try to access people with specific qualities that match the purpose of what is being studied. Likewise, Oliver (2011) notes that the participants are usually selected on the basis of their capacity and appropriateness for the study, as well as their potential to provide deep understanding about the phenomenon being studied. For these reasons, purposive selection of teacher participants was used in this study. Using this sampling form allowed for informed decisions and careful choices of teacher participants (Tongco, 2007).

Initially, six teacher participants were identified and purposefully selected on the basis that they were high school teachers within the Pinetown district. Efforts were made to maintain the balance of participants in relation to gender and years of teaching, as an

attempt to have varied representation. However, one teacher could no longer participate at the time when the study was conducted and this tilted the numbers in favour of the female teachers. It also proved to be a mammoth task to convince the teachers with fewer years (three to six) of teaching to participate in the study. Thus, at the time of the study, four of the teacher participants had taught for twenty years and beyond, whilst one was in his third year of teaching. While some researchers critique purposive sampling on the basis that it is inherently biased since it is usually used to access a specific and small group of people, and that the interpretation of the findings is merely restricted to the people being studied (Tongco, 2007); others argue that the bias is intentional and meant to provide the researcher with credible and vigorous data (Lewis & Sheppard, 2006). In line with Lewis and Sheppards's argument, Creswell (2013) asserts that it is often useful to study small samples when doing qualitative research because the goal is not about generalisability.

In choosing the parent participants, convenience sampling was applied, because the idea was to select those parents who were willing to participate in the study (Latham, 2007; Leedy & Ormrod, 2010) and who could be easily accessed because of their close proximity to the researcher (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2009). It was important for this study to select parents who were going to avail themselves when needed. The convenience aspect in this form of sampling allowed me to identify and select parent participants from my own community of Pinetown district. However, this convenience sampling of parent participants was fraught with challenges. Initially, six parents of high school going children had promised to avail themselves for the study. However, at the time of the study, three parents pulled out, citing different issues or commitments as reasons for their unavailability. For this reason, snowball selection was further adopted. Snowball selection (sampling), which is usually dependent upon convenience, was then used to recruit other parents who were difficult to access (Heckathorn, 2011). Of the three potential participants that were identified by the parent participants, only one agreed and availed herself for the study. Hence, in total, four parents participated in the study and they were all females.

The fitness for purpose of both the purposive and convenience selection of participants in this study was that the sampling methods were both consistent with the methodology

(case study) adopted in this study. The participants of the study are presented in the section below.

4.2.3 The Participants

Presentation of the participants starts off with teachers, followed by parents.

4.2.3.1 Background of Participants

This section presents short, abbreviated biographies of participants as per their own descriptions during the one-on-one interviews, and the information they provided after they had engaged in focus groups as a reflection on their participation in the research process. These biographies are presented as mere descriptions with no intention to analyse the data. The purpose of these biographies is to introduce the participants as persons (human) and not just objects that were studied; thereby allowing the reader to make connections with the different participants' articulations presented as data excerpts in the analysis chapters. For ethical reasons, participants were given pseudonyms in order to protect them from being easily identified. Careful consideration was taken in choosing pseudonyms that were culturally unidentifiable. The five teacher participants' pseudonyms (in no particular order) are Faith, Noah, Kadesh, Mercy and Grace.

Faith: Faith identified herself as a female high school teacher between 40-50 years of age. As a matriculant, she was not sure what she wanted to study at tertiary level as a career. She therefore, she took a gap year[7] after her matriculation. She claimed that she did not choose teaching as a career but instead teaching chose her, because in the year following her gap year, she was taken by her mum (who was also a teacher) to one of the teachers' colleges and that is how she got into studying to become a teacher. Because teaching was not her choice, she did not have any expectations when she started her college studies. She completed her three-year course in teacher training with a Secondary Teachers' Diploma. Because she was the youngest at her home, there was no pressure for her to start working right away. She then registered at a university and pursued a Bachelor of Arts before starting work as a teacher. Whilst practising as a teacher, she enrolled and studied part-time in numerous courses and had since obtained a Bachelor of Technology in Business Administration.

[7] A year-break taken by a student between secondary schooling and higher education. During this time, the student tends to be travelling or working before continuing with their studies (Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary)

Her twenty-one-year teaching experience had exposed her to teaching, not only her major subjects (isiZulu Home Language and English First Additional[8] Language), but also other subjects which she had no pedagogical content knowledge for, for example 'Introduction to Criminology'. At the time of the research, she was teaching isiZulu Home Language to Grade 10 learners but she explained that she was capable of teaching this subject across all grades (8-10). She noted with concern, the decline in education in her country, and emphasised that her greatest wish was to see learners being taught reading and writing skills from the primary school level, since at high school level the emphasis is on concept analysis rather than on the phonics.

Her interest in academic literacy seemed to bring some misery to her teaching career as she witnessed children leaving school with minimal grammatical knowledge and unable to read and write academically. She believed that this minimal knowledge had profound effects on throughput rate at tertiary institutions since students may would not be able to decipher academic jargon when they did not understand the syntax behind the language itself.

Noah: The participant is a male high school teacher who falls in the 40-50 age category. He was trained as a teacher at a College of Education where he obtained a Secondary Education Diploma (STD) majoring in IsiZulu (Home Language) and Biblical Studies. He studied through distance learning for his Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Education (Honours) at a certain university. He further obtained a Master of Public Administration degree from another university. Because of the interesting findings of his study, the supervisor encouraged him to write a journal article which they co-authored and it was published in the Public Administration Journal.

At the time of this study, this participant had been permanently employed by the Department of Basic Education, and had served for twenty-four years and six months. During this time, he had taught a range of subjects such as IsiZulu (Home Language), Afrikaans and Business Economics. Afrikaans and Business Studies were not his major

[8] English used as an additional or second language; which is secondary to the mother tongue or home language (www.thefreedictionary.com).

subjects in his teacher education. His areas of interest included monitoring and evaluation, performance management, and service delivery.

It was interesting to note that Noah did not initially have his heart set out for teaching as he explained that it was just one of those courses he applied for. He explained that he had applied in various institutions and was accepted in the teaching sector. He emphasised that it was not a calling but it was just one of those things that he had to make a living out of, so that life could go on.

Kadesh: This participant is a male high school teacher who was in the 20-30 age category. When he started high school, Kadesh did not know what he wanted to study as a career, up until in his matric year when he got an inspiration from his registration teacher[9] who commended him for his good values and morals and encouraged him to consider teaching as a career. He studied for a Bachelor of Education degree at a certain university, majoring in English, Accounting and Economic Management Sciences (EMS). He later persuaded his Bachelor of Education (Honours) in the discipline of Education Leadership and Management, at the same university.

His teaching career started when he was still a student teacher and was noticed by the principal of the school he was doing his Practice Teaching at. The principal and the Head of Department (HoD) were impressed by his work ethic and they promised to create or reserve a teaching post for him when he had finished his degree. However, a teaching post was created prematurely whilst Kadesh was still studying as a final year student. Because of the lasting impression he had left at that school, and because of the confidence the school management team had on Kadesh's work, they considered him for the job. His teaching timetable was adjusted in order to accommodate his university timetable so that he could still attend his lectures. After he had graduated, he was then employed on a permanent basis.

At the time of research Kadesh had three years teaching experience, teaching Business Studies in Grades 10-12, Accounting in Grade 10 and EMS in Grades 8 and 9. Although

[9] A teacher that is responsible for checking a register (roll call) for a specific class, keeping records of all learners who are absent or present on a daily basis. In some schools, this teacher is referred to as a 'class teacher'. In South African schools, this checking is done twice a day; in the morning before the lessons start and in the afternoon, usually ten minutes before the end of school day.

he did not major in Business Studies at university, he was teaching it successfully and had produced ten distinctions in 2013.

He described his interest as being focused on academics. His passion in academics emanated from his belief that the academic field allowed one to advance in life. His interest in academic work is also shown through his interaction with the learners whom he encourages to work very hard in their academics. He had also taken the extra responsibility of conducting extra lessons after school to assist learners who were not doing well academically. His vision was to become an excellent teacher in the whole district and be honoured for his hard work. He believed that a teacher is a person who should provide direction to a learner's life.

Apart from the academic life, Kadesh had also developed an interest in sports. He was involved in the coaching of volleyball and basketball and wanted to expand his experiences in this field as well.

Mercy: This participant is a female high school teacher aged between 45-50 years. She has a Bachelor of Pedagogics (B. Paed) degree with English and History as major subjects. At the time of the study, she was teaching English in Grade 11. She had twenty-four years teaching. experience. When she passed her matric, Mercy was not sure which career to pursue. Together with her friends, they were persuaded by other students whom they knew from school, to choose teaching as a career which they regarded as an easy-to-pass career at university. By choosing teaching as a career, Mercy expected to earn enough money and to live a good life. Most importantly, she expected to be respected as a teacher.

Mercy's interests are in teaching English grammar to Grades 10-12. She wishes to see all learners, particularly at matric level, being able to achieve the results that would allow them to study courses that they are interested in. She described her vision as being able to see all her learners achieve at least above 50% in English.

Grace: This participant is a female high school teacher aged between 40-50 years. She indicated that the teaching career was not her first choice when she applied for tertiary education. Nursing was her first choice. Her reasons for choosing nursing were based on

the fact that she likes people and that caring for people comes naturally to her and augurs well with her personality. She thought that a career in nursing would have allowed her to care and be closer to people all the time. She wanted being close to people, not for the sake of getting respect from them because they would be vulnerable and probably expecting much from her as a nurse, but because patients were people she could give her all to, as opposed to being in the education sector. Teaching was her second option and she did not like teaching as much as she did nursing. However, because of some disappointments she encountered in her life, she ended up being a teacher.

By becoming a teacher, Grace had a lot of expectations for herself and teachers or the teaching career in general. She expected to have a growing career trajectory because of understanding that a teacher needs to be a life-long researcher. However, she was not happy about the progress of some teachers as they seemed not to becoming life-long researchers. She also thought that being a teacher would afford her good opportunities, decent salary, and a good life. She, however, realised that all of these expectations were not coming to fruition. She has been experiencing discontent with her career because of the lack of respect that teachers in general, are receiving, not only from learners, but also from the Department of Education and the community at large.

She is passionate about education and she has a string of qualifications such as Bachelor of Arts, Higher Education Diploma, Bachelor of Education, Advanced Certificate in Education, Human Rights and Healthy Lifestyle Certificate and Master of Arts. She has taught isiZulu Home Language which was her major subject at university for over twenty years. She has ambitions of pursuing a PhD in Languages. She also works part-time in the Skills Development Programmes as a facilitator and assessor.

The names of the four parents are Whitney, Zenith, Sharon and Barbara. Their brief backgrounds are discussed in the following section.

Whitney: This participant was a parent to a grade eight girl-child. She was happy with the ethos of the school that her daughter attended and thought that teachers were doing a wonderful job in the education of learners. She is passionate about education and she always encourages her children to learn so that they can attain tertiary education. Being

married to a spouse who did not support her education endeavours taught her to be strong, persevere and fight for what she wants in life.

Zenith: This participant was a parent to a grade 9 boy-child. She was not entirely happy with the ethos of the school that her son attended, as she felt that the teachers lacked in the aspect of communicating with the parents. However, she valued the work that teachers do and regarded it as a very difficult and demanding job, although she felt that they were unable to make suggestions for her son who was not doing well at school. Zenith was unfortunate to have not been able to go beyond high school education because she had children early in her life and therefore, had to start working in order to provide for the children whom she was raising on her own. She encourages her children to value education.

Sharon: This participant was a parent to a grade eleven boy. She expressed her concern about the behaviour of some male teachers in the school that her child attends. The teachers were not modelling good behaviour for the children, particularly the boys. Sharon values education and she loves the work that teachers do. She was even contemplating doing a postgraduate certificate in education in order to become a teacher because she thought that she would be a very good teacher.

4.2.4 The Piloting of Research Tools

Although qualitative approaches are more informal and less systematic, they also require rigorous testing of the research tools before using them, hence the piloting of the interview schedule. The piloting of the interview schedule was done in order to ensure that the participants would provide the kind of data that were needed, as well as to establish the kind of probes that would be required. As an attempt to check for the interview schedule's clarity and whether the interview questions were understandable, researchers usually perform a pilot study before they actually engage in the data generation process (Gill et al, 2008). Piloting the interview questions provided me with an opportunity to address ambiguities and repetitions of questions in the semi-structured interview schedules (see Appendices E1 and E2).

Setting the meeting for this session was easy because we were always communicating with the colleague (representing teachers) who was going to be a 'participant' for the pilot study. We met in my office at an agreed day and time that was convenient for her. The interview lasted for fifty-five minutes. All protocol was observed during this interview because the idea was not only to test the interview instrument but the proficiency of the whole interviewing process. Therefore, I introduced myself, thanked her for agreeing to participate and explained the purpose of the study and her rights as a participant, after which she signed the informed consent letter (see Appendix D).

In keeping with the research process as outlined in the informed consent, and as a way of checking the functionality of the recording device, the interview was recorded and later transcribed verbatim. Keeping a paper trail of the interview is regarded by Gill et al. (2008) as a way of keeping a permanent and traceable record. The interview questions for the parents were not piloted simply because it was difficult to find participants. However, most questions were similar to those that were in the interview schedule for teacher participants which was piloted.

Except for two questions that seemed to be addressing similar things in a different way, the participant's responses indicated that the sequencing of questions from general to specific issues was well received and yielded the right kind of answers to the question.
The interview instrument and my interviewing skills were tested in a pilot study which I conducted with my colleagues (other PhD students) who are teachers in schools.

For a parent participant, I asked my sister, who had a high school going child, to be part of a pilot study. Scheduling a meeting with her was easy because we live in the same neighbourhood. All research protocol was also observed, as was the case with the 'teacher participant'. Some of the questions were also explained in isiZulu, since the 'parent participant' frequently switched from conversing in English to conversing in her mother tongue (isiZulu).

4.2.5 Data Generation Procedures

Data production took place over fifteen months; that is, from October 2014 until January 2016. The challenges of participants pulling out of research and others being unavailable for scheduled meetings contributed to the prolonged period of data generation. However,

long periods of data production are in line with qualitative research, particularly case study methodology concerned with rich and thick data from fewer participants.

Using more than one source of data is aligned to case studies and allows researchers to use multiple methods when producing data (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010; Yin, 2009). For this study, using multiple sources of data (teachers and parents) and various methods (interviews and focus groups) of data production allowed for sufficient data to be explored in the interpretation and analysis, to explain the rhetoric about teachers' work by addressing the research questions. The three research questions that this study sought to answer were:

1. What is the teachers' rhetoric about teachers' work? Why?
2. What is the parents' rhetoric about teachers' work? Why?
3. What is the nature of the teachers' and parents' rhetoric about teachers' work? Why?

4.2.5.1 Data Generation Methods

The following two sections present the two data production methods that were used in this study, providing the justifications for the choices made.

4.2.5.2. The Semi-Structured Interview Method

Generally, interviews are a form of conversation through which data may be qualitatively produced (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011). Various researchers argue for various types of interviews to be used in line with the purpose of research, to produce different forms of data (Gill, Stewart, Treasure & Chadwick, 2008; Terre Blanche, Durrheim & Painter, 2006). The three most common types of interviews are structured, semi-structured and unstructured. Whilst structured interviews are characterised by a fixed structure of pre-determined questions (by the researcher), the unstructured interviews do not have any structure. They resemble an informal conversation with the focus on how the participants design their views about the phenomenon being studied (Gill et al., 2008). These two types of interviews can be regarded as being on two opposite ends. With the semi-structured interviews, researchers use some structured questions with a few questions that are open-ended, providing participants with opportunities to clarify their responses (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010), thereby providing deep and rich information.

For this study, semi-structured (one-on-one) interviews were used as one of the methods of data production because the researcher wanted to get information on the participants' knowledge, opinions, and beliefs about teachers' work, which required some structured (specific) questions. However, deeper understanding of participants' reasoning or meaning-making was also important, therefore, probing questions that were tailor-made for each participant were also used during the interviews (Terre Blanche et al., 2006). Although the focus of the semi-structured interviews was decided by the researcher, the advantage of this type of interview was that it was flexible and allowed participants to both respond to structured questions, and expand on their views and share their feelings in an informal manner. This enabled the researcher to gain deeper understanding of issues being discussed.

However, semi-structured interviews are not without limitations. One of the major criticisms of the semi-structured interviews is Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011) observation that it involves researcher (interviewer) bias and subjectivity. Participants can be influenced by things like the interviewer's persona, the tone of voice that the interviewer uses when asking questions which may lead to participants withholding some information. Therefore, to circumvent bias and subjectivity in this study, semi-structured interview schedules were prepared (see Appendices E1 and E2) based on the focus of the study, conversations with my supervisor and from reading the literature. The structuring of questions from the easy ones to more complex ones was a way of putting participants at ease so that they could gain confidence as the interview progressed. The manner in which I communicated with the participants before and during the interviews was non-intimidating, clear and informal as a way of guarding against influencing the participants' responses.

During the interviews, if any of the participants' responses were unclear, I used probing questions or simply asked for clarifications from the participants. In this way, participants were made to feel that their contributions were important and valued by the researcher (Marshall & Rossman, 2006).

The interviews were conducted at a time and place that was convenient for the participants. Appointments for the interviews were made through various modes of communication with the participants. Depending on the participant's preference,

communication for the purpose of securing appointments with the participants for interviews was done via email, cell-phone calls, text messaging (SMS) or through WhatsApp messaging. This process involved a lot of negotiations, scheduling and rescheduling the date, time and place where the participant wished to have the interview conducted. Four out of five teacher participants preferred to have their interviews in my office, which they thought had more privacy than other places. However, one teacher preferred to be interviewed at the comfort of her home since she also had a responsibility of looking after her school-going grandchild.

Data generation, through one-on one interviews, started in November 2014 with three teacher participants (Noah, Grace and Kadesh) within a short space of time. Because of the time of the year, teachers were busy with administering final examinations at schools, it proved to be difficult to secure appointments with the other participants. I used that time to transcribe all the three interviews that I had done. At the beginning of the following year (2015), I encountered some challenges trying to make appointments with the other participants for interviews. This time, teachers needed time to adjust to their new classes or grades for their first term of school. It wasn't up until in the second term of school (in June 2015), that I was able to secure another appointment with one teacher (Mercy). With one teacher withdrawing from the study, I conducted the last interview with the last teacher (Faith) in August 2015.

During the first half of 2015 when it was difficult to secure interviews with teachers, I was busy recruiting and negotiating with potential parent participants since two parents who had originally promised to participate in the study were no longer available for various reasons. I was able to secure an interview with one parent (Barbara) in May 2015. Upon explaining my dilemma with finding eligible participants, Barbara was able to refer me to two parents who fitted the study's criterion (being parents of high school-going children in the Pinetown district). The whole process of phoning, recruiting and negotiations started all over again with the new potential participants that I was referred to. It turned out to be a productive process as I was able to secure appointments and did interviews in August 2015 with Sharon and in October 2015 with Zenith. The break between the interviews was used for transcribing the audio recordings of the interviews. Details of all the interviews are found in the Table 4.1 below:

Table 4.1 Details of one-on-one interviews with teacher and parent participants

Participant	Teacher or Parent	Duration of interviews	Day, date and time	Venue
Noah	Teacher	01:50:56	Wednesday; 7/11/2014; 15:30	My office
Grace	Teacher	00:58:18	Thursday; 10/11/2014; 16:00	Her home
Kadesh	Teacher	01:04:56	Wednesday; 18/11/2014; 15:10	My office
Mercy	Teacher	00:50:12	Friday; 26/06/2015; 14:30	My office
Faith	Teacher	02:02:05	Tuesday; 25/08 2015; 15:20	My office
Barbara	Parent	00:48:20	Tuesday; 05/05/2015; 15:30	Her home
Sharon	Parent	00:58:12	Sunday; 23/08/2015; 12:10	My home
Zenith	Parent	00:55:50	Tuesday; 27/10/2015; 09:15	My home
Whitney	Parent	00:45:25	Wednesday; 16/12/2015; 10:30	Her home

Table 4.1 above shows the specifics about the interviews with all the participants (teachers and parents), dates, times and the venues in which the interviews occurred. As shown in the table, four out of five teacher participants preferred to have the interviews in my office (which was situated on the second floor of the building of the institution where I work) which they felt would be free from disturbances and provide privacy for them. This allowed them to feel free to engage in a conversation without fear of being heard or seen by their colleagues. One teacher preferred to have the interview at the comfort of her home because of her personal commitment. Likewise, two of the parents opted to be interviewed at their homes because that is where they felt more comfortable than anywhere else. However, the other two chose to be interviewed in my home because they felt that there would be less disturbances than at their homes or anywhere else.

For each interview, whether it was taking place at the office or in the homes, I first introduced myself and explained the purpose of the study and why the participant was chosen to participate. Then all ethical issues were explained, highlighting that the participants' involvement in the study was voluntary, that they could withdraw from the study at any point and that they could choose not to respond to any question which made them uncomfortable. When the participant indicated that she or he understood all the ethical issues, I then asked them to sign the informed consent letter before we commenced

with the interview. The interviews started off with generic questions as a way of getting participants to be relaxed, before moving to more structured questions which sought to elicit participants' beliefs, experiences and their understanding of teachers' work. Depending on the responses of individual participants, probing was done to obtain further elucidations. Apart from interviews, focus groups were also used to generate data.

4.2.5.3 The Focus Group Method

A focus group is described as a group of people who are put together to participate in a specific, interactive discussion in a non-threatening environment about any topic of interest to the researcher (De Vault, 2017). Focus groups have been used in different fields such as market research, psychological research and academic research (Liamputtong, 2011). The use of focus groups in diverse fields suggests that they accommodate various purposes and are therefore, likely to be designed differently to suit the purpose of the research. Morgan (2002) notes that there are two types of focus groups namely; structured (which are mainly used in market research) and less structured (which are employed more in the social sciences). The two differ in terms of how the discussions are approached. For example, the structured focus group allows for moderators (researchers) to play an active role in the discussion, sometimes to the risk of minimal "discussion between the participants" (Liamputtong, 2011, p. 2). However, in the less structured focus group, discussion among the participants is encouraged and the moderator is not at the centre of the discussions. In this way, focus groups are aimed at understanding the interpretations and meanings that participants make during their conversations (Morgan, 2002). For this study, two focus groups were used to understand the nature of the teachers' and parents' rhetoric about teachers' work. The focus group schedule followed a less structured approach (see Appendices F1 and F2). The first focus group comprised of teachers only while the second group consisted of parents only.

From the literature, there seems to be no consensus about the number of particpants that should make up a focus group. Whilst some researchers advocate six to eight (Creswell, 2009; Liamputtong, 2011), or eight to ten (Mack, Woodsong, MacQueen, Guest & Namey, 2005), others argue for mini focus groups which comprise three to four or three to six participants (Yin, 2011, p. 140) as the ideal number of participants to constitute a focus group. When the number of participants is manageable in a focus group, it allows

critical interaction between participants as they are involved in meaning making, and in generating discourses (Kamberelis & Dimitriadis, 2004).

The purpose of the focus groups was to probe further on the outcomes of the one-on-one interviews. Having done all the interview transcriptions, data categorisation and tentative themes, I then designed the focus group schedule of questions; since the focus group method was used to supplement the semi-structured interview. Doing focus groups after the interviews was influenced by the understanding that some participants would interact and articulate themselves well in a group as opposed to an individual interview. In this way, more information was generated and points of consensus or dissent among participants on specific issues were revealed, as well as contradictions from the same participant.

Like with the interviews, preparation for the focus group meeting was riddled with challenges. I had to repeatedly contact the participants and coordinate and keep track of their availability and locate a suitable date and time for most participants. This process was physically and emotionally draining as I had to spend most of the time on the phone negotiating with the participants trying to match their times. At the end of all this hectic process, only four teacher participants were available on the day scheduled for the focus group which took place on the 11th November 2015 at 13:00 for two hours and ten minutes. The focus group for parents occurred on Saturday, 23rd January 2016 at 14:00 after a long process of back and forth negotiations about the meeting date, time and place.

However, due to unforeseen circumstances, my computer (laptop) was stolen and therefore the data from the parents' focus group was lost. This loss meant that I had to phone, explain and renegotiate with the parent participants and try to secure another meeting to re-do the focus group. This process of renegotiations revealed the importance of building relationships when working with humans. I was surprised that the parents were very supportive and gave me the earliest date in March for a second seating of a focus group. However, with all their good intentions, the discussion was not as robust as the first one. The lack of robustness in the second focus group is characteristic of qualitative research where, depending on the time and place the person is interviewed, different data are likely to come through. Whilst this may be considered by some to be a limitation of qualitative research, it may also be considered to be its strength by others.

On the day of the focus groups, participants in the study were welcomed and reminded of the purpose of the study. In order to adhere to the confidentiality ethos, I opted not to introduce the participants by their real names, and they were told that they could share their real names or contact details after the focus group, if they wished to do so. When asked to choose any pseudonym they would want to use for the purpose of the discussion, they opted for not choosing any name and they rather referred to one another as 'colleagues' 'my brother' or 'my sister'. Although I personally knew all the participants, they did not know each other as they were meeting for the first time. Ground rules such as respect for each other (by listening to and giving each other a chance to speak) and each other's opinions (there are no excellent or wrong answers – there may be similar of different points of view) and the importance of confidentiality; that is, not sharing what happens during the focus group with the outsiders, were set and made explicit to the group members. My role as a moderator or facilitator was also explained, especially that I was not part of the conversation (i.e. I was not going to insert my views in the discussion), but instead, was there to listen, manage time and probe for clarifications.

The room where the focus group (for teachers) occurred was prepared beforehand. Comfortable chairs were arranged in a circle in order to allow for maximum interaction, maintain eye contact and give an informal atmosphere. However, the focus group for parents occurred at the home of one of the participants (Barbara) as she could not be away from home on that day for personal reasons. On both occasions, I tried to ensure that no one dominated the conversation by politely redirecting the conversation to other members of the group.

Focus groups have been acknowledged for their ability to generate robust discussions in which the participants reveal, not only the meanings they make about the topic/s of discussion, but also the negotiations involved through debates when presenting those meanings to the members of the group (Flick, 2009; Liamputtong 2011). Another advantage of using focus groups is identified by Lunt and Livingstone (1996) as the production of diverse data due to the involvement of different actors in a group. Furthermore, the purpose of using focus groups is not about reaching consensus among participants, but rather about encouraging greater interaction so that a range of responses which are likely to lead to deeper understanding of participants' views and attitudes about the researched phenomenon may be produced (Liamputtong, 2011). All these advantages

were considered when the focus groups were used in this study, where the idea was to see how the rhetoric (from teachers and parents) was influenced by the group context as opposed to when the participants were interviewed individually.

Palomba and Banta (1999) argue that small numbers in focus groups tend to limit the generalisation of results. These limitations were addressed by clearly explaining the ground rules of interaction at the beginning of the focus groups which highlighted that participants ought to respect each other's views, and politely redirecting the discussion to other members where I realised that one individual was taking too much time in talking about one issue. This study's focus was not on generalisation of the findings or the representativeness of group views, therefore the use of small number of focus group members did not impact on the study's credibility since the data that were produced assisted in providing a deeper rather than a wider understanding of the teachers' and parents' rhetoric about teachers' work. Furthermore, the focus group method was used in conjunction with follow-up one-on-one semi-structured interviews.

4.3 Part three: Ethical Considerations and Data Analysis Strategy

This section presents a discussion on all the ethics aspects that had to be taken care of regarding this study.

4.3.1 Ethical Considerations

The issue of ethics is of high consideration for qualitative researchers since their studies deal with people. Being ethical, according to Lichtman (2010), involves the researcher's compliance to certain professional and legal standards. This compliance is necessary since qualitative researchers are known to maintain a close interaction with their participants (Silverman, 2000) and therefore, ought to protect the rights of their participants in relation to, among other things, privacy (confidentiality and anonymity), informed consent (voluntary participation), and how the data are interpreted - honesty (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010).

4.3.1.1 The Legal Requirements for Research

Good research is, not only ethically bound, but also needs to meet the legal requirements of an institution or country. Therefore, prior to applying to the institution's research office for permission to conduct research, I had already identified and contacted the school principals of the schools where the potential participants were working. I made

appointments to visit the principals and explained the purpose and nature of my study and that it was not going to disturb any functioning of the school, or teachers for that matter. I gave them the letter in which I was seeking permission. When the principals were satisfied, permission was granted. They signed and stamped the letter with the school stamp (see Appendices C1, C2 and C3[10]). This initial exercise was necessary as one of the requirements from the research office that the researcher must provide evidence that she has obtained permission to conduct research from the gatekeepers of the potential participants. Although my study was not going to be conducted in any of the school premises, contacting and seeking permission from the school principals was also in line with the Department of Basic Education's rule which requires researchers to seek permission from the schools if they are to do research which involves teachers, regardless of where the research will occur.

In addition to the permission from the principals, I also sought permission from the Provincial Department of Basic Education; the gatekeeper for schools. I had to complete a standardised application form which required a brief description of all the elements of a research proposal, such as the rationale for the study, potential participants, methods of data production, ethical issues and the promise to submit the thesis to the Department of Education when the research is complete. Permission was granted (see Appendix B[11])

Obtaining permission to conduct research from the institution's research office was the next step undertaken. I had to complete an application form in which the purpose, nature and background of the study were explained, as well as my declaration that I understood the ethical requirements and expectations from me as a researcher. Although my study was not characterised as a sensitive study, I waited for over four months for the application to be approved and permission to be granted; protocol reference number: HSS/1427/014D (see Appendix A).

Once the permission was granted by the research office, I started to contact the potential participants for this study. In this initial contact, I had to explain briefly, what the study

[10] The names of schools were strategically blocked out (from the school stamp anywhere else in the letter) in order to keep to the promise of anonymity of participants.
[11] Names of schools purposefully blocked out from this permission letter in order to adhere to ethical expectations or rules.

was about and why I chose them as participants, and that participation was purely voluntary.

4.3.1.2 The Informed Consent

Informed consent is a requirement where the researcher recognises and shows respect for the prospective participant's autonomy and discretion to participate in the study. In essence, informed consent is about researchers giving participants the responsibility to make decisions of whether or not they want to participate in a study (Roache, 2014). For this study, both the teacher and parent participants were contacted either telephonically or through personal communication. Informing the participants about the study's purpose and the methods that were going to be used to conduct the study and the possible duration ensured that the participants were well-informed before they could make a decision whether they wanted to participate or not. Informed consent is considered by Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011) to be a well-calculated decision which is taken by individuals when they have considered all the facts about participating in a study. Informed consent letters (see Appendix D) were given to participants to read further and familiarise themselves with the study's information and their rights as participants. Once the participants had indicated their willingness to participate in the study, I then requested them to suggest the convenient day, time and place for the individual interviews. The informed consent letters were only signed on the day of the one-on-one interview after I had again reminded the participants about the purpose of the study and asked for permission to audio-record the conversations.

4.3.1.3 The Right to Privacy (Confidentiality and Anonymity)

Since this study was about individuals and not institutions, the concern was about the privacy of the individual. Lichtman (2013, p. 54) asserts that any "individual participating in a research study has a reasonable expectation that privacy will be guaranteed." The guaranteeing of privacy would mean that certain information about participants would be concealed, and pseudonyms used in the data presentation and analysis to identify the participants in this study in order to not reveal their identities (anonymity). In addition to anonymity, privacy entails confidentiality with the participants' personal information (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010). Participants tend to provide researchers with confidential information with the hope that it will remain as such. For this reason, participants were given the assurance that any information that was shared by the participants during

individual interviews would not be given to anyone. However, as a researcher, I could not guarantee the same confidentiality with the focus groups since they involved a number of people.

4.3.1.4 Data Interpretation - Honesty

Lichtman (2013) cautions against misinterpretation, over-interpretation or fraudulent analysis of data with an intention to channel the data into a different course. These false representations have also been labelled as 'fabrication' or 'falsification' of data, whereby data are either made-up or altered for the purpose of sloping the results (Office of Research Integrity, 2011). In this study, attempts were made to represent the data fairly and not to impose my own judgement of what the participants were saying. This process was done rigorously by transcribing the audio recordings verbatim. Printing out the transcripts and reading them, going back to the audio recordings when necessary, ensured accurate capture of participants' responses. The interview transcripts were then sent back to the participants through emails (mostly for teachers) and hard copies (mostly for parents) for the purpose of verifying (member checking) whether the text captured or represented the participants' views as they were intended.

4.3.1.5 Personal Orientation as a Researcher

Researchers are all bound by ethical rules to protect the participants in their studies from any form of harm. In addition, the participants enter into an agreement of participating in the study because of the trust they have in the researcher. This, therefore, called for integrity on my part in terms of how I interacted with the teacher and parent participants. I ensured that I showed and treated the participants with respect at all times. I understood that they were an important part of this study and that without them, the study would not exist. There was therefore, need for me to create an enabling environment built on trust. I treated all participants (teachers and parents) as valuable in the production of knowledge because I understood that because of their experiences they had a wealth of experience and knowledge in relation to the phenomenon that was studied. I opened the platform for them to share their stories while I listened attentively. A relationship of trust was built on the basis that whatever we discussed would stay between us. So much so that when the worst happened, and I lost the data on the parents' focus group, I was able to go back and plead with the parent participants to secure a day for another group discussion. They all empathised with me and what I was going through and hence, they were very willing to

help. Consequently, we had a second seating of a group discussion, although it was not as robust as the first one.

4.3.2 Trustworthiness of the Study

Issues of reliability, validity and generalisability are mostly attended to by quantitative researchers than qualitative researchers (Shenton, 2004; Tobin & Begley, 2004) in their quest to justify the robustness of their studies. In the 1980s, Lincoln and Guba introduced the concept of trustworthiness which encompassed four criteria of assessing the quality of research (Tobin & Begley, 2004). These criteria are identified by Shenton (2004) and Tobin and Begley (2004) as credibility (similar to internal validity), transferability (similar to external validity or generalisability), dependability (similar to reliability) and confirmability (similar to objectivity). In the following paragraphs, I discuss how these concepts were used in this study to ensure its trustworthiness.

Credibility addresses how the participants' views (their realities) were represented by the researcher (in the findings of the study) (Tobin & Begley, 2004). In my study, excerpts of participants' views (from interview and focus group transcripts) and how I interpreted and analysed those descriptions were included in the analysis chapters. The reader is then given an opportunity to decide whether the explanations given aligned with the description made by the participants. Credibility is also addressed through the use of a variety of research methods (within a single study) that are reputable (Shenton, 2004), and often used for the purpose of triangulation. In this study, individual semi-structured interviews and focus groups, which are both well recognised in the qualitative research field, were used. Using these two methods of data production potentially increased the richness of the data. Shenton (2004) further argues that credibility is increased by using strategies that help to encourage honesty in the participants' contribution, for instance by using "iterative questioning" (p. 67). By not coercing the people that were approached to participate in the study, and by ensuring that they knew and understood their rights as participants, especially that of withdrawing from the research at any point without any consequence, it increased the probability of honesty in the participants since they would have volunteered to participate. Again, the use of probes or prompting for more responses or asking for clarifications during the individual interviews and focus groups was a way of seeking deeper or richer information and also detecting inconsistencies in the participants' responses. Moreover, the transcribed interview scripts were given back to

the participants for verification whether what was discussed in the interviews was appropriately captured as intended by the participants.

Naturalistic or qualitative research is characterised by subjective multiple meanings generated by participants, and therefore does not conform to generalisability demands (Tobin & Begley, 2004). However, Shenton (2004) argues that if the phenomenon being studied is described intensively and extensively in the research reports, it allows readers to have clear understanding and is likely to be comparable to some instances occurring in other situations. These detailed descriptions allow for transferability or applicability of research to other contexts (Golafshani, 2003). As has been argued, this was a case study which was concerned with in-depth understanding of the phenomenon rather than generalisations.

Dependability refers to a detailed, clearly documented and traceable process of research (Schwandt, 2001) which can be audited. The detailed reporting allows for the reader to make informed decisions about the appropriateness of the methods used in the study or to determine if the study can be repeated (Shenton, 2004). Thomas (2013) argues that the audit trail is brought to bear through reflexivity which forms part of a researcher's internal and external dialogue. In this study, this chapter's purpose was to detail all the methodological aspects (theoretical and technical), that is, audio recording of interviews and focus groups, verbatim transcriptions and thematic analysis of data.

Confirmability (Shenton, 2004) or neutrality (Golafshani, 2003) in a qualitative research is the means of minimising researcher bias. The claim is that this minimisation of bias can occur if the presentation of the findings highlights participants' experiences as opposed to the researchers' imagination (Tobin & Begley, 2004). For this study, participants were given an opportunity to review the interview transcripts for the purpose of confirming whether the transcribed version corresponded with what the participants had discussed.

4.3.3 Data Analysis Process

This section provides details of how the process of analysing data was followed. Here the paradigmatic orientation of the study shifted from interpretivism to poststructural. The shift was necessitated by the need to move beyond the general analysis of the rhetoric, to a broader understanding guided by the theoretical framework of the study. Because in the

end, it does not matter how one got the data, what matters is what one does with the data in the analysis. For this study, I chose Laclau and Mouffe's (2001) discourse theory explained in detail in the previous chapter.

While the use of interpretivism for the field work and initial analysis of data allowed for the understanding of teachers' and parents' rhetoric, using a poststructural analysis highlighted how meaning gets obfuscated through the use of language. In addition, where interpretivism had revealed the dialogic nature of a discourse, poststructural analysis further revealed the contingency nature of a discourse, and its impossibility to be separated from its subjects.

The analysis of qualitative data is usually a rigorous ongoing process which usually happens concurrently with the production and interpretation of data (Creswell, 2009), and in some instances, with the writing of the research report as well. Identifying and organising patterns and themes which are then coded and categorised, is according to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011), a way of trying to understand the data in relation to the participants' definitions of their situations. Therefore, the steps that the researchers take as an attempt at understanding the data at their disposal, are referred to as data analysis.

Whilst some scholars suggest specific steps (Creswell, 2009; Marshall & Rossman, 2011) that researchers can take during the analysis of data, Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007, 2011) assert that qualitative researchers are not restricted to prescribed techniques. Instead, they are exposed to diverse ways of analysis and interpretation because of the nature of their research. Creswell (2014) argues that, not all the data in qualitative research can be used in the analysis phase because of their thickness and richness. Therefore, researchers using qualitative approach often focus on some data whilst overlooking others (Guest, MacQueen & Namey, 2012), and data are grouped into themes.

Thematic analysis is regarded by Clarke and Braun (2013) as an analytic method which is used to identify patterns when analysing qualitative data. These authors highlight that different researchers have different constructions of what thematic analysis is about and use it differently depending on the researcher's field or discipline. As such, there seems to be no consensus about what thematic analysis encompasses, even though it is widely

used in qualitative studies (Tuckett, 2005). Consequently, Clarke and Braun (2013) argue against the rigid construction (based on specific disciplines) of thematic analysis on the basis that the search for patterns or themes is not aligned to any specific theories. Therefore, they claim that thematic analysis can be used within a variety of theoretical (and by implication, epistemological) frameworks, whether they are aligned to the essentialist or constructionist approach (Clarke & Braun, 2013); hence its flexibility.

When using thematic analysis, researchers are able to provide, not only detailed, but also complex accounts of data emanating, either from interviews or focus groups, and reflecting on participants' realities (Rubin & Rubin, 2011). However, it is necessary for a study's theoretical positioning to be clarified because naturally, all theoretical frameworks have certain assumptions in relation to the data. For this study, whose pre-supposed analytical method is discourse analysis, thematic analysis was also employed on the basis of its flexibility (used across theories) and amenability to analysing different types of data. I argue that data analysis took different forms and was an ongoing process throughout the phase of data production, which extended from November of 2014 to January 2016 (as indicated in the data generation methods section). Some form of analysis occurred when focus group members were cross-checking with other members for further explanations of their utterances. The other form of analysis occurred during the one-on-one interviews when the researcher used probing questions to elicit further information or sought clarifications from the participants. The continuous analysis was based on the researcher's understanding that the production of knowledge about various phenomena occurs through interaction and conversation.

After the data had been verified by the participants, I had to familiarise myself with the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006) by reading all the transcripts and re-listening to the audio-recorded data when need arose in order to note any similarities or differences or points of contradictions. In order to take easy note of these aspects (similarities, differences and contradictions), codes were used to identify the participants and the sections of the interviews from which the compared utterances were extracted. I used the first letter of the participant's name and the letter 'T' or 'P' to indicate whether the participant was a teacher (T) or a parent (P), and numerically coded certain paragraphs (in each transcript) which contained specific rhetoric around the issue under discussion. Coding is seen by

Clarke and Braun (2013) as an analytic process because the codes capture, not only the conceptual reading but also the semantics of data.

Searching for themes involved careful reading of the coded-data in order to find similarities in the data sets (from teacher participants and parent participants). In addressing the first critical question, excerpts from teacher participants' interview transcripts were extracted and two broad themes were constructed, namely: the rhetoric related to teaching and learning; and the rhetoric related to parents and department of education or district officials. In answering the second critical question, extracts were drawn from the parents' interview transcripts and two broad themes were identified, namely: the rhetoric directly linked to teaching and learning processes; and the rhetoric of goodness, dedication and expertise as characterising teachers' work. The continuous reading and re-reading of coded-data and that of the full sets of data resulted in the identification of sub-themes for each of the broad themes. Theme one from the teachers' data set further yielded eight sub-themes, namely: the rhetoric of monitoring of teachers' work, the rhetoric of laziness of teachers, the rhetoric of teaching and learning resources, the rhetoric of leadership and management, the rhetoric of administrative work, the rhetoric of dedication or caring, the rhetoric of overwork or work overload, and the rhetoric of teachers' and children's rights. From theme two (teachers), two sub-themes were further created, namely: the rhetoric of parents' involvement and attitudes, and the rhetoric of interference by the district officials. Themes and sub-themes addressing critical questions are discussed in detail in chapter five.

Eight sub-themes were identified from the parents' data set. Five of the sub-themes were connected to theme one and these were: the rhetoric of monitoring and evaluation of teachers' work and teaching programmes, the rhetoric of difficult work, the rhetoric of stressful work; the rhetoric of laziness of teachers, and the rhetoric of unprofessionalism or professionalism. From theme two (of the parents' rhetoric), three sub-themes, namely: the rhetoric of a good teacher, the rhetoric of dedication or passion, and the rhetoric of expertise were identified. Therefore, I can also argue that inductive analysis was employed to identify the themes across the data sets. For the analysis to be inductive, it means that the themes were not pre-planned (prior to the production of data) or imposed, but they emerged (extracted) from the data (Thomas, 2006); that is, they were data-driven in line with interpretivism. However, deductive analysis was also employed when data

were read in relation to the concepts of the theoretical framework; in line with poststructural analysis.

Because the focus group questions were crafted from the issues that emanated from interviews with parents and teachers who participated in this study, these questions were regarded as themes themselves. Therefore, interactional analysis was prioritised in the analysis of focus group data because of its emphasis on the dialogue that occurs between the narrator and the listener (Riessman, 2005). For this study, during focus group discussions, when a member of a group was sharing her or his experiences (narrator), other members would listen and ask questions for clarifications (where necessary). In this way, all members of a group participated in conversations in which they collaboratively created meanings. Kvale and Brinkmann (2009, p. 53) posit that "knowledge is neither inside a person nor outside in the world, but exists in the relationship between persons and the world." This understanding of knowledge as relational highlights the multiplicity of meanings or interpretations that can be accorded to any talk, text or discourse. In this study, understanding the need to accommodate the multiplicity of meanings forced me to check and re-check the text for "alternative explanations and the degree of variability in the discourse" (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2009, p. 390). Although the transcripts may be said to have captured the complexity of the conversations; the transcripts could not represent the unspoken, that is, participants' gestures or the gaze, which were either embodied or enacted in the conversations. In addressing the third critical question, data excerpts were drawn from both focus groups (teachers only and parents only) on issues of: professionalism and unprofessionalism, unappreciation, satisfaction and dissatisfaction, ill-discipline, corporal punishment, leadership and management, as well as work overload. These focal points are discussed in detail in chapter seven to show the nature of the rhetoric that was inherent in the teachers' and parents' articulations about teachers' work.

The iterative process of data analysis occurred over twelve months (December 2014 to January 2016). The findings of the study are presented through text and images, in line with the qualitative approach and interpretive paradigm.

For this study, which is underpinned by discourse analysis, note should be taken that analysis of discourses (rhetoric) was more than just identification of themes. Instead, the

focus was on what the participants said, why they said it, how it was said and by whom. These aspects of a discourse are confirmed by Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2009) to be essential in understanding the meanings of utterances made in relation to their contexts. Therefore, the analysis of data took into consideration the various aspects of discourse by highlighting an array of focus-points.

4.4 Limitations and Delimitations of the Study

The limitations of this study were methodological due to the use of focus groups. Some strong-willed participants tended to dominate the discussion in a manner that intimidated other participants who seemed to shy away from voicing their honest opinions about the issues being discussed. While there may have been ways of avoiding this limitation, for example, by strategically setting up groups to minimise domination; it was not the purpose of this study to ignore such issues or limitations. Data produced through the focus groups were analysed in ways that highlighted these issues. Smithson (2000) argues that findings from focus groups cannot be invalidated because of the constraints presented in the discussions. She further emphasises that, “focus groups permit some insights into rhetorical processes, or 'practical ideologies'” (Smithson, 2000, p. 116). These rhetorical processes were what this study sought to bring to the fore. Therefore, this limitation did not compromise the study.

However, in the initial conceptualisations, and at the proposal stage of this study, I had indicated that the data would be generated using three focus groups, with the third group being a combination of teacher and parent participants as a way of establishing the nature of the rhetoric between the two groups. But as the study progressed, and having engaged with all the participants on one-on-one interviews, it became apparent that the combined focus group was unlikely to yield new or rich data because of the power relations between the two groups. Again, due to the difficulties encountered when arranging for the initial meetings with each group, participants had personal commitments which clashed with the set dates for the meetings and that led to quite a few cancellations.

This study cannot claim to have presented the rhetoric of all teachers and parents in the Pinetown district. It is a case of five high school teachers and four parents of high school-going children. On the premise of being a qualitative study, the emphasis of this study

was on quality as opposed to quantity. Therefore, the small number of participants was based on the depth of analysis that was needed in this study.

The parent participants were all females; therefore, the voices of male parents are not represented in this study.

4.5 CONCLUSION

This chapter outlined and presented the methodology and the research design adopted in this study. Positioned within a qualitative approach and interpretive paradigm, the study's epistemological and ontological underpinnings were discussed. A case study was used to study the rhetoric about teachers' work as articulated by five teacher participants who were purposively selected and four parent participants who were selected through convenience and snowball techniques. Semi structured one-on-one interviews and two focus groups (teachers' group and parents' group) were used to generate data to understand the taken for granted rhetoric about teachers' work as well as the nature of the rhetoric between the two groups of participants. Data were analysed using thematic analysis and interpreted using the concepts of the discourse theory of Laclau and Mouffe which is the theoretical framing for this study. The findings from the data that were generated through interviews and focus groups are presented in the three consecutive chapters that follow.

CHAPTER FIVE
Teachers' Rhetoric about Teachers' Work

Introduction

This chapter is an analysis of teachers' rhetoric. It presents the identified rhetoric that emerged from the data. The analysis is for data derived from the interviews on the teachers' accounts of what they understood their work to be about. The rhetoric is analysed based on two broad themes; rhetoric directly related to teaching and learning and rhetoric related to parents and department of education officials, also referred to as district officials. These two broad themes emanated from the prolonged period of reading and re-reading the data with the purpose of familiarising myself with the data. Therefore, the meaning that I make of the data is just one possible interpretation of the teachers' rhetoric about their work. Quotes (in italics) from teachers' one-on-one interviews were analysed and are presented using the pseudonyms for teacher participants and also alphanumerical codes at the end. Any "errors" in the participants' verbatim responses are attributed to them and not the researcher as their responses are quoted unedited. Each alphanumerical code is made up of the first letter of the name of the teacher, letter 'T' indicating teacher participant and the number indicating the paragraph from which the quotes are extracted. The rhetoric is connected, specifically to teachers' work, and the analysis tries to draw out the issues raised by the participants. Theme one is much longer than theme two.

How the analysis is organised and presented is captured in Table 5.1 below:

Table 5.1 Organisation and presentation of teachers' rhetoric

BROAD THEMES	SUB-THEMES
The rhetoric related directly to teaching and learning	The Rhetoric of monitoring of teachers' work
	The Rhetoric of the laziness of teachers
	The Rhetoric of teaching and learning resources
	The Rhetoric of leadership and management
	The Rhetoric of administrative work
	The Rhetoric of dedication or caring
	The Rhetoric of overwork / work overload
	The Rhetoric of teachers' and children's rights
The rhetoric related to parents and department of education / district officials	The Rhetoric of parents' involvement and attitudes
	The Rhetoric of interference by the district officials

5.1 THE RHETORIC DIRECTLY RELATED TO TEACHING AND LEARNING PROCESSES

This theme presents what teachers considered as the things that directly impact on the day to day activities in their classrooms. The theme is sub-divided into eight sub-themes (refer to Table 5.1) namely: the rhetoric of monitoring teachers' work, the rhetoric of the laziness of teachers, the rhetoric of the teaching and learning resources, the rhetoric of leadership and management, the rhetoric of administrative work, the rhetoric of dedication or caring, the rhetoric of overwork / work overload, as well as the rhetoric of teachers' and children's rights. These are the issues that were identified as having a direct impact (positively or negatively) on the teaching and learning processes. The eight sub-themes are discussed in the following sections.

5.1.1 The Rhetoric of Monitoring Teachers' Work

The rhetoric of monitoring is contested by teachers, parents, Heads of Department (HoDs), school management and the Department of Education (DoE). In this instance, monitoring is seen from the perspective of how teachers in this study viewed it. Grace's response was:

> ***Grace**: I'll be just doing whatever I can throughout the year and nobody will be monitoring if you really on track or you just doing whatever (**GT 7).***

Grace talked about how she has absolute autonomy in what goes on in the classroom and that there are no checks and balances to ensure that the right things happen in the classroom. She seems to suggest that she is free to do what she wants but with some responsibility. She seems to suggest that if a teacher is responsible, then s/he is usually left to his or her own devices to do as s/he wants; perhaps because they are trusted by the HoDs or the managers to be responsible persons who know what they are doing. The rhetoric in this case is that the responsible teacher does not need monitoring. In other words, in Laclau and Mouffe's (2001) terms, this teacher's actions are perceived by herself as being commensurate (compatible) with the dominant discourse that requires certain actions according to the expectations concerning responsibility as articulated in the hegemonic discursive web of fixed meanings. Grace's articulation[12] suggests that the dominant discourse on monitoring is represented by the HoD and other school managers. Her rhetoric (discourse) reflects the perspective that she is not, in this instance, in a marginal position.

The rhetoric around HoDs has to do mainly with their competence; whether they are able to monitor or not. Two of the teachers talked about where moderation of teachers' work becomes complicated. For instance, Noah talks about the HoD being derelict in the duty to moderate:

> ***Noah**: Sometimes monitoring is lacking on the HoDs side e.g. moderation is sometimes inadequately done i.e. in most cases only the question paper gets checked whether it is in the desired standard, but because of the workload marked scripts are hardly checked (**NT 23).***

Seemingly, Noah is suggesting that moderation requires a chain of checking which should start with the setting of questions. However, in this case, Noah is showing that the chain is incomplete because the marked exam scripts are usually not moderated. What seems to be noted is incompetence at just one level above the teacher, and teachers below are able to recognise it. Still moving within the dominant discourse (here, one of effective school

[12] This term is used in a way that is consonant with Laclau and Mouffe's discourse theory – therefore it should be understood to mean the linking together of words, in a manner that comprises a discourse.

administration regarding assessment), one notices here an interesting divergence of discursive assessment between those who judge a discursive agent's competence as being inadequate, and the agent's own actions in relation to the optimal performance of the assessment tasks prescribed by the dominant discourse in question. Another teacher participant talked about the HoDs who have not taught at a particular level and therefore, do not have the content knowledge of the subjects at the level s/he is supposed to monitor. This is indicated in Faith's comment:

> ***Faith**: If you are an HoD for maybe, of Science, but you do not teach at FET phase (grades 10 -12) and you always teach at a GET phase (grades 8 - 9) - how are you even going to moderate my work **(FT 49)?***

Faith assumed that one can be a moderator only if one is teaching within the particular grade or phase. She linked the ability to teach with the ability to be a good moderator. Furthermore, her articulation proceeds in terms of the (presumably hegemonic) discourse that stipulates that teaching is founded upon both didactic and subject-specific knowledge and competence; the latter of which she perceives not to apply to the HoD referred to.

So, what these teachers are saying about monitoring is that the monitor (HoD in this case) should be competent and should have experience in the grades or phases s/he is monitoring. These teachers also suggest that the monitors should do their work regularly. For Kadesh, when the HoD comes to observe or monitor, it is a way of finding out if the teacher is on the right track and doing the right thing or not.

> ***Kadesh**: Every term there is a report that an HoD must submit, so the HoD comes to the classroom and observes whilst you teach and at the same time they look at your file and at the end they ask you questions based on what is in the file and what you have taught. In that way, they are testing your knowledge based on what you would have presented both in the file and in the lesson. After that, they summarise their findings and submit them to the school principal. That's the norm **(KT 16).***

Kadesh reveals the process in which monitoring takes place in his school, which comprises of observation, inspection of the teacher's file and then questioning. Contrary to Faith's assumption about an HoD who is not familiar with the subject content knowledge of some subjects in specific grades or phase, Kadesh is showing what good monitoring entails, irrespective of the grade or phase that one teaches even if you are not teaching a particular grade or phase, you can be a good monitor if all of these things are done. The manner in which this comment is presented is almost as if Kadesh is not finding

fault with the process of monitoring that he is exposed to. He seems to see it as something good, when he says "*that's the norm*". Senior staff's actions are perceived by him as being in accordance with the requirements of the dominant discourse concerning teaching and monitoring. Furthermore, he suggests that the usefulness of the monitor who comes now and again informs the learners that the monitoring is not just located at the teacher level, but is also at the higher level of the school hierarchy. This suggestion is evident in his comment that:

> ***Kadesh**: She monitors me now and again to check if learners are doing their work because sometimes learners are lazy and we have to run after them to submit their tasks **(KT 24).***

However, it appears that through this comment, Kadesh is highlighting the difficulties that teachers may encounter during monitoring. The surveillance of teachers by inspecting their files as suggested by Kadesh would perhaps mean that the monitor is also looking for evidence of learners' work, which the teachers may not have, because of the lazy learners who do not submit their work. What manifests itself here is a widespread feature of a contemporary society, which one might describe as the discourse of surveillance. Needless to emphasise, it is integrated into the discursive fabric of the dominant teaching discourse.

Monitoring is seen as having a positive role when it assists the teacher to be successful in the classroom, but it can be negative when the monitors are unable to assist because they don't have the subject-content knowledge.

The rhetoric indicates indirectly, that the HoDs have to be smart, need to know the subject matter and they need to know the specifics of the grades/phases for which they are monitors. When all of these things come together, then monitoring is seen as positive, and the dominant teaching discourse is reinforced as being productive.

Another level of monitoring is where teachers recognise that parents can assist with their children's learning by monitoring the work that children do at home (which is a rhetorical move beyond the official discourse, but not one that necessarily undermines it).

> ***Noah:** Those few parents who are able to monitor or check their children's work, they are able to see if something is not right; for example, comparing*

> *the amount of written work in the child's exercise book with maybe the time of the year* ***(NT 44).***

While Noah recognised the role parents played in the monitoring of children's work, it was regrettable that these were in the minority as he indicated them to be few. The fact that he mentions that the few who take part in the monitoring of children's work are the ones able to do so, suggests that the majority of the parents, lack, not so much the willingness to assist in the monitoring of children's work, but the ability to do so. Even for the few who monitor, Noah suggests that it is normally the quantity and not the quality of work that they monitor. This comes when he notes the kind of monitoring to be that of comparing the quantity of written material versus the time already spent in the grade. That the focus is on quantity and not quality further buttresses the idea of lacking the academic ability to adequately monitor children's work even on the part of those who make an effort to monitor. The rhetoric is not that parents have to do this to help the teachers but teachers see parents as part of the essential team vested with the responsibility for children's academic development. In Grace's response, there is recognition that some teachers are not ensuring that learners return books which means that the next generation of learners may have less books especially, in these times of austerity where there is always shortage of money.

> ***Grace****: Kids don't return the books and teachers don't have the culture of collecting the books properly, so we lose books* ***(GT 45).***

In this case, Grace appears to be concerned about the lack of monitoring (from the teachers' part) the teaching and learning resources, which then contributes to the shortage of materials needed for the following year. On the contrary, Kadesh explained how he has to do not only self-monitoring, but monitoring the work of his other colleagues (within the commerce department) which goes hand in hand with HoD monitoring for this particular teacher and in this particular school.

> ***Kadesh****: So, I have to check that the assessments are up to standard. I have to check if everything is done according to the subject policy. I have to check and moderate before they go for printing* ***(KT 19).***

Maintaining particular standards is prioritised by Kadesh, therefore he suggests that he exercises precision in ensuring alignment of assessment with the stipulated requirements. There seems to be a coordination of quality of the assessment tasks and their coherence with the official policies guiding the various school subjects. Coordination and coherence, in a way, are good practice for monitoring.

There is an anomaly where, on the one hand, schools have structures for monitoring – either by the nameless person (management) or the named person (the HoD), and on the other hand, the accountability goes to the DoE. Faith seems to imply that the DoE fails to monitor some processes

> ***Faith**: Nobody comes back from the department to check whether the learners' reports are written as per the schedule that was altered by the department personnel – promoting learners for various reasons, because of age or because the learner cannot fail twice in one phase. So, in some cases, those promoted by the department actually repeat the grade because there is no checking **(FT 81).***

Here, it is about the responsibility of the DoE which makes changes to the learners' final examination marks, usually allowing learners to progress to the next grade. It is not only the responsibility of the DoE because the DoE delegates the managers in schools, so the school is supposed to be checking on behalf of the DoE. Now it appears that what the school does not do, it gets blamed to the DoE.

The above discussion shows that monitoring has both positive and negative connotations and in that sense, it can exist as, in Laclau and Mouffe's terms, an empty signifier because each participant puts their own meaning and spin it based on their experiences.

5.1.2 The Rhetoric of the Laziness of Teachers

The rhetoric of laziness as perceived by the teachers in this study can be grouped around issues of what is not being done, influence on other teachers (workers) who want to work, getting others to do the work that they should be doing, and absenteeism. In some cases, it involves being at school but literally behaving as if they were absent, and in other cases, going on leave. Against the background of Laclau and Mouffe's (2001) discourse theory, it appears evident that those teachers who are perceived by others as being "lazy" in all these different ways, are seen as acting in a way that is not consistent with the social or educational implications of the dominant educational discourse in question. Hence, it is not the discourse that is questioned rhetorically. Some teachers' behaviour is questioned against the normative background of the discourse.

When the teachers in this study were talking about laziness, they were mainly referring to what their colleagues are doing or not doing. On the one hand Mercy talked about teachers who absent themselves from work for long periods of time:

> ***Mercy**: There are teachers that are literally lazy. Teachers that do not do their work. Teachers who are forever on leave…. A teacher takes sick leave, only to find that they are at home doing nothing. Teachers do that sometimes. I know somebody who was on leave for six months for no reason. She was seen all over town but not at school (**MT 45).***

Mercy seems to suggest that teacher absenteeism may not be for legitimate reasons, but mainly driven by laziness. So, when a teacher is forever on leave, may have negative effects on those teachers who would be present in school because they would have to take on extra loads of work to cover for the one who is absent. Being absent from work for a very long time may have lasting effects on learners as well who are not getting the service from the teachers who are not at work. The rhetoric in this case is that some teachers show their laziness by taking unnecessary leave from work thereby escaping doing their work. On the other hand, Faith talked about teachers who would be present at school but not doing what they are supposed to do.

> ***Faith**: Those who give less are neither there to teach nor to educate. They are just there because they have to wake up and go to work so that they can get a pay cheque at the end of the month **(FT 44).***

What Faith is saying is that being present at school does not equate to work being done. The rhetoric is about teachers who are present but at the same time absent. Because the expectation is that when teachers are at school they are supposed to do their work which is mainly to teach the learners, so when that expectation is not met, it is viewed as laziness. Noah and Faith also commented:

> ***Noah**: Some teachers just do not want to go to class. They simply do not honour their teaching periods and practically leave learners unattended **(NT 3).***
>
> ***Faith:** Teachers not honouring their periods. Bodily they are there, but at the core they are not there. So, the vibe is transferred from them to those who want to do their work **(FT 4).***

Noah and Faith talk about how some teachers neglect to honour their teaching time in class. ‘Not honouring’ their time in class may be seen as lack of responsibility or lack of

care. The rhetoric seems to indicate that teachers who do not attend to learners in class lack honour and are not doing an honourable thing.

In the same vein, Grace talked about incidents of laziness that occur at her school:

> ***Grace**: Because there would be cases where a teacher doesn't go to class for weeks or a month but she will be in the premises. She will be sending some tasks through a learner to write on the board. She will be calling some learners to give work to the class, but she's not there (in the classroom) **(GT 31)**.*

What Grace is saying is that some teachers avoid doing their work even though they may be within the school premises and they shift their responsibilities to other people; in this case, the learners. Here the rhetoric is that teachers can camouflage laziness as delegation of work; because in this instance, the teacher is seen doing something, but not necessarily what she is supposed to be doing. The teacher's physical presence in the classroom is a necessity in schools. So, when a teacher fails to present herself in the classroom, it is viewed by Grace as an act of laziness. Therefore, this teacher, according to Grace, is:

> ***Grace**: Lazy, just lazy, utter lazy!!!... This particular teacher, it's not because she doesn't know. The teacher is just lazy or she has been consumed by the culture whereby you "get away with murder" **(GT 32).***

Here, there is a belief that laziness in some instances does not emanate from teachers not knowing what to do in class nor from lack of subject content knowledge. Instead, laziness is seen as doing nothing.

Two of the teachers talked about how these different forms of laziness as displayed by some teachers influence other colleagues who want to do their work effectively.

> ***Noah**: You know it's like you are in a packet of potatoes; the rotten ones rub on you and you slowly become rotten. It's only my conscience that pushes me to go to class (**NT 14).***
>
> ***Faith:** Teachers not honouring their periods. Bodily they are there, but at the core they are not there; so, the vibe is transferred from them to those who want to do their work **(FT 4).***

These teachers observed that witnessing acts of laziness has demoralising effects to teachers who are keen on working. The teachers also suggest that they have some fears

about being infected by the laziness 'virus', especially as indicated by the packet of potatoes metaphor.

Two other teachers viewed laziness as something that in one way or another has to do with race.

> ***Kadesh**: Teachers in Black schools they don't do their work. They sit in staffrooms and have their own conversations and do not go to class and teach. That is why they don't send their kids to these schools and rather send them to semi-private schools because teachers in those schools do work **(KT 26).***

Kadesh had family and friends who taught in Black schools and, based on their views, he now had an opinion that teachers in Black schools do not do their work. It is ironic that Kadesh is himself a Black teacher (who does not teach in a Black school) who used hearsay to make statements which seemed discriminatory to a particular group of teachers. He was not talking about something that happens in his school. The rhetoric in this case, is that those teachers who do not teach well, send their own children to better schools. Kadesh views laziness as being located within the people of a particular race. In this case, the rhetoric seems to be revealing this teacher's assumptions based on race. Similarly, Mercy seems to locate laziness on race and work.

> ***Mercy**: The White teachers usually seem to be working more, so much so that most of us (teachers) send our children to White schools because they seem to be doing much better than us **(MT 47).***

Mercy indicates that work ethic is linked to race. Here, Mercy's and Kadesh's articulations, when contrasted, are similar in linking work ethics to race but differ in that Kadesh sees poor work ethics in Black school contexts while Mercy sees better work ethics in White teachers. While one attributes work ethic to a racial context (Kadesh), another links it to a particular racial group (Mercy). It seems that Mercy was suggesting that even at a school where there are both Black and White teachers, the latter have better work ethics and Kadesh says even if White teachers are at a Black school, they will exhibit poor work ethics because work ethics are tied to context. One is about race in terms of context and the other is about race in terms of racial group. In Mercy's articulation, therefore, the rhetoric indicates that the race you belong to, determines how hard-working or how lazy you are.

Apart from race, some teachers suggested that laziness is occasioned by the fact that teachers normally do not teach their own children.

> ***Noah**: We fail to see learners as our own children because we take our children to former 'better' schools. It's very rare that a teacher would bring his/her child to learn in the same school that they teach in **(NT 13)**.*

Noah suggested that when teachers are not teaching their own children, they seem not to care whether they render quality education or not. The rhetoric of lack of care came through in the data on laziness.

Laziness was depicted as repulsive by all teachers based on their experiences in their schools, except for Kadesh whose views were based on hearsay; even though he did not condone it. For this reason, 'laziness' exists as an empty signifier because each teacher made their own meaning or understanding of it. At the same time, 'laziness' can be regarded as a nodal point around which the various discourses / rhetoric about 'lack of honour,' influence, absenteeism, race, and so on, revolve.

5.1.3 The Rhetoric of Teaching and Learning Resources

The rhetoric of resources seems to be located on a continuum. While some teacher participants talked about resources that were available, others talked about resources that were not available. Furthermore, there are those who talked about the resources that were available but insufficient. Here we have a situation where, depending on where the teacher's rhetoric is located on the continuum, the actions predicated on the dominant discourse of teaching were measured against its own discursive norms. These discursive norms, comprise a kind of chain of equivalences, in Laclau and Mouffe's (2001) terminology, and either found wanting or as satisfying the relevant discursive requirements regarding resources. Teachers seemed to have a positive experience at work when they had most resources they needed at their disposal.

> ***Kadesh**: All the resources that I need, I get them; and in school, we have data projectors in all classrooms, we have white boards, we have proper desks and chairs. I use those resources to teach; so it makes life very simple for me **(KT 5).***

According to Kadesh, teachers can fulfil their roles effectively when they can access the necessary teaching resources and use them to their advantage. Kadesh is implying that resources must be available and they should also be accessible to the teachers. The

rhetoric here is not so much about the use of resources to enhance the teaching and learning process, but about making the teacher's life simple.

However, some teachers had negative experiences where teaching and learning resources were not available.

> ***Faith:*** *What is even sad is that sometimes you cannot fulfil your role of teaching because a simple thing, like a piece of chalk, cannot be found. I can't even begin to talk about other things when we still battle for the basic needs like chalk* ***(FT 15).***
>
> ***Mercy****: Sometimes you even run out of chalk when you want to write something. Even the books; learners don't have books. Usually, we run short of the material that we need for teaching (****MT 5).***

Running out of or inability to find a basic resource may lead to teachers being depicted as incompetent or lazy even though the problems may emanate from managerial issues. By implication, not only are Faith and Mercy's needs not met, but the learners' needs as well. The rhetoric in this case is that teachers' work is compromised when teachers cannot access even the basic necessities for teaching and learning. Specifically, Mercy and Faith's focus was on the tangible resources that teachers need to effectively perform their work while at the same time enhancing the learning experience for the learners. So, for Faith and Mercy the rhetoric was about the failure of the management to provide teachers with the external resources they need for teaching.

Not all teachers' rhetoric on resources clearly fitted the two extremes. In fact, Grace and Noah talked about insufficient resources; which was a clear indication that these teachers had access to the resources but with some limitations.

> ***Grace****: The resources like the science lab; it has got no equipment. For the commerce teachers, especially for Accounting, they have to draw the lines on the board. There are not enough textbooks and so when you have to give learners work, you have to duplicate the pages that you need and give to learners* ***(GT 44).***
>
> ***Noah****: The problem is that there is a shortage of books. So, even if you try to make photocopies for a particular section that you want them to read at home, the next day, maybe half of the learners will not even know what*

> *happened to the hand-outs you gave them; and they will be searching their bags endlessly* ***(NT 26).***

Grace and Noah identified where the issue of resources becomes complicated. For instance, Grace talks about the resources which are not in an operational state, like the science lab. She also talks about difficulties experienced by teachers of specific subjects, for example Accounting. Both Noah and Grace talked about how the scarcity of resources (textbooks) affected, not only teachers' work, but also the learners' performance. They both indicated that the shortage of textbooks results in teachers engaging in laborious work of photocopying notes for learners. However, Noah also indicated that the challenge of resources is, not only about their unavailability, but also about the irresponsibility shown by learners who would lose the very same resources that the teachers would have given out to help in their learning. This loss of resources also speaks to the lack of monitoring children's work by parents that Noah suggested earlier. Therefore, the rhetoric seems to indicate that when the resources are insufficient; the experience tends to be negative for teachers, and it can be equally negative for learners as well.

5.1.4 The Rhetoric of Leadership and Management

Based on the teachers' perspectives, the rhetoric on leadership and, to a lesser extent, management, can be grouped around issues of weak or passive leadership and active leadership. The rhetoric on weak leadership ranges from lack of support, to lack of collaboration, to lack of trust.

Three of the teachers talked about the consequences of weak leadership.

> ***Noah:*** *The school has a disciplinary policy and procedures. Actually, all the policies that you may think of are "nicely" filed in cabinets; but they are not being used to discipline educators in our school. It is a brother-and-sister institution where the principal has been too soft to take decisive action against educators who do not want to honour their teaching periods. It just does not work* ***(NT 3).***
>
> ***Faith****: The problem of favouritism, where some teachers would do as they please and there would be no consequences, but when it's somebody else, there would be consequences. So what happens then? Nobody listens to the*

> *management. People do as they please and there are no consequences because there are those loopholes* ***(FT 48).***
>
> ***Mercy:*** *If the parent is a high society somebody and claims to be in a hurry to go to a parliament meeting or has to go to Pietermaritzburg; you are asked by the principal to "please leave those children, and give them anything to do; and attend to the parent immediately"* ***(MT 22).***

Noah talked about the situation where proper policies and procedures are not used to inform practice or not implemented properly. He implied that the ethos in his school is more family-like, whereby the principal is more like the father who refuses to punish his children (the teachers) when they are in the wrong. As far as Noah is concerned, this family approach to leadership and management does not work and encourages teachers to do as they want, even in an irresponsible way.

These three teachers observed how the administration indulges parents and shows leniency to teachers at the expense of the learners' education. They also noted how there is partiality in who get pandered. For parents, it is those with particular social standing, as articulated by Mercy.

What comes through from these teachers' utterances are the consequences of poor or weak leadership. In Noah's articulation, there is a lack of teaching that is going on. In Faith's articulation, there is no respect for the principal and people do as they want. In Mercy's articulation, there is some dissatisfaction about how some parents have more rights than others, and then learners. These teachers observed weakness in leadership which allowed decisions to be made on the basis of some partial criterion. In particular, Noah suggests that sometimes leaders may need to be autocratic in order to get things done. The rhetoric indicates that when leaders are not assertive, the experience tends to be negative for teachers.

Some teachers believed that the weak form of leadership manifests in various forms and has varying effects on teachers and their work.

> ***Faith****: At times when the learner is unruly and you report to the school management and they seem to* ***not*** *understand the difficulty that you are going through in class when you seem unable to control your class because*

> *of this unruly individual. They make it a joke… it crushes your spirit…and makes you feel unimportant* ***(FT19).***

For Faith who appeared challenged class management, the only recourse was to go to the school management for assistance. They, however, seemed to "*make it a joke"* and by implication suggested the teacher was incompetent. Faith notes that these reactions from the school management made the teacher to "*feel unimportant"*. What Faith is suggesting is that a teacher may undergo emotional or psychological strain resulting from the lack of support from the school leaders or managers. The rhetoric is that lack of support by the school management often has unpleasant outcomes for teachers.

Furthermore, Faith suggests that the relationship between teachers and the school management does not seem to be built on trust in her school:

> ***Faith****: You cannot question me on the mark list at the end of term when you have no interest in what I do during the course of the term… when there is no harmony between the teachers and the school management – when it's a question of 'us and them.' Then it doesn't work because we don't gel* ***(FT 32).***

In this case, Faith is talking about a situation in her school where there seems to be some kind of antagonism between the teachers and the management as she claims that "*there is no harmony"* and "*it's a question of us and them*." And the 'them' will only seem to interact with teachers when they are checking the mark list at the end of the term. Faith does not think that this is right when there has been no support or interest throughout the term. The rhetoric here is that if the managers or leaders want to see the mark lists, then they must be able to support teachers throughout the term and provide a collegial environment for both teachers and the management.

Leadership and management is seen to have a positive role when the leaders are actively involved and are ensuring positive experiences for the teachers.

> ***Kadesh****: There have been challenges though, but I do overcome those challenges with the help of the school governing body, the principal and other SMT members* ***(KT 7).***
>
> ***Noah****: The principal and his deputies are placed as 'foot soldiers' to run around and search for these teachers who bunk classes and they end up not doing their administrative jobs"* ***(NT16).***

Having support from all structures of the school enables the teacher to get through all the obstacles. Kadesh suggests that the working together of all the structures of school governance allows the teachers to have positive experiences in their work environments. However, Noah talks about the visibility of the leaders and managers as an attempt to ensure that teaching and learning processes run smoothly. When the leaders are seen to be active in their role, it may be experienced differently by teachers. For instance, the leaders or managers in Noah's school, whilst they were visibly active in some of the work, by physically searching or tracking the teachers' whereabouts, they were equally jeopardising their core administrative responsibilities. The rhetoric seems to indicate that active leadership to a large extent yields positive experiences for some teachers and that leaders and managers should lead by example and be accountable.

Leadership and management is seen to have a negative role when the people (leaders and managers) are unable to assist because they are hesitant to make unpopular decisions because they want to be loved by those whom they are leading. It can be positive when the people are vigilant and assertive in their decision-making.

Leadership can be identified as an empty signifier since it is explained differently depending on teachers' experiences in their schools. For example, for some teachers, 'leadership' refers to the principal while for other teachers, it refers to the nameless person, the 'management'.

5.1.5 The Rhetoric of Administrative Work

The rhetoric of administrative work can be categorised into two groups, namely: forced or unnecessary work and necessary or expected work. Forced work appears in three levels. In the one case, as imposed work and in the other case, as delegated work. Another issue is about added work.

> ***Mercy:*** *The principal gives a list of learners' names to the class teacher to make sure that all learners in your class have paid the school fees – so it becomes the class teacher's responsibility to remind and collect fees from learners* ***(MT 35).***

> ***Faith**: You find the post level one teacher being tasked to deal with registering grade 12. That is admin work, but the management delegate that work to class teachers. Why **(FT 53)?***

What these teachers are saying is that they do some kinds of work as a way of satisfying the power of the principal or the management, like "collection of fees" and "registering Grade 12" learners which are not part of the formal elements of teachers' work. On the one hand, Mercy talks about the collection of fees which becomes an administrative task which gets pulled out throughout the year if the learners are dwindling behind on their payments. On the other hand, Faith talks about the registration task which happens at the beginning of the year when the teachers would have just received their workloads and would want to start right away with the core business of teaching. Rather, they are burdened with administrative work.

Therefore, the rhetoric is that teachers are frustrated by the imposed or added administrative work which often detracts them from their work. What it implies as far as dominant and marginal discourses are concerned, is that one witnesses a marginal discourse of 'resistance' manifesting itself in these teachers' rhetoric. It is one that no longer merely measures the actions of teachers or management against the normative implications of the hegemonic discourse (although it includes this, in negative terms), but goes further insofar as, through the articulations of the teachers concerned, it betrays the activation of elements or floating signifiers located in the discursive field, thereby organising them into an emerging discourse of 'resistance'. Perhaps one should rather describe it as a discourse of 'dissatisfaction', which may or may not, develop into a full-fledged discourse of resistance.

Kadesh talks about a different aspect of administrative work such as documenting the incidents as they occur in school,

> ***Kadesh**: Admin is a nightmare.... If an incident takes place in a classroom, you have to do a report and you have to send it to the principal's office. Let's say that, maybe learners were fighting in class, a teacher has to write an incident report. That report has to be photocopied and kept in a learner's file and then a letter must be sent to the parents informing them of the incident that took place. So, all of this takes time. It takes away*

> *teaching and learning time because if you have to leave the classroom to write that report, it takes away teaching and learning time* ***(KT 32).***

Whilst on the one hand, it is necessary for teachers to do the incident reports if the school is to make follow-ups on the cases it has, on the other hand, it becomes frustrating for teachers who finds this to be an additional burden, that not only do they have to deal with discipline issues in the classroom but they also have to write these interim reports which have to be filed and kept for future references. Kadesh suggests that although the writing of the incident reports may not be a mammoth task, it takes a lot of time.

Kadesh seems to be suggesting that administrative work may cause anxiety for teachers because of all the procedures that they have to follow when reporting incidents, which teachers have to do right away at the expense of the teaching and learning processes which, in most cases, have to come to a halt. The rhetoric here is about the insidious way in which administrative work steals the teaching time which may not be possible to recover. The rhetoric seems to be about the professional aspect of teaching work which is compromised by the laborious administrative work.

Not all administrative work is forced work. Some administrative work such as assessing learners' work or capturing assessment marks is a necessary component of teaching work. However, sometimes some teachers may overlook this critical component of teaching. This is shown by Mercy in her comment below.

> ***Mercy****: There is a lot of paperwork. We are expected to prepare; we are expected to have a file. A file with everything e.g. registers and all other documents and we are also expected to mark* **(*MT 25).***

There is no way that teachers' work can be complete without marking learners' work or keeping important records or policy documents for reference when needed. Yet, in this case, Mercy presents her statement in a manner which suggests that doing the administrative work she enumerates is burdensome and maybe, not even necessary. The rhetoric is really about administrative work or paperwork adding to the many expectations that teachers already have. However, administrative work as a necessary component of teaching seems to be well understood by Kadesh, who explained that:

> ***Kadesh****: Teachers should teach at all times and they need to make sure that the files are up-to-date and lesson plans are in the files. They should have*

> *a daily journal where they record what they did in every lesson. They should have an IQMS file. There should be assessment files, there should be workshop files. So, they need to have those files. As a professional, you should always have paperwork because sometimes you need paperwork to protect yourself* ***(KT 14).***

In this case, there seems to be an understanding that teachers are expected to do administrative work as part of their work. The rhetoric indicates indirectly that a professional teacher has to be well-organised, be conscientious about keeping records, be well-prepared for lessons, and be enthusiastic about attending professional development workshops. When all of these are considered, then administrative work is seen as something positive and a necessity. However, considering the other participants' views on administrative work, there may be other issues which make administrative work seem onerous. Perhaps the issues are systemic rather than institutional and exert a lot of pressure on the teachers.

5.1.6 The Rhetoric of Dedication/ Caring

Dedication of teachers to their work or caring for the learners, as understood by teachers in this study, seems to range from doing what is right at all times, to working hard beyond officially stipulated hours, to volunteering work; even if it means stealing family or personal time, and doing unpaid work.

> ***Grace:*** *There are a few people who do their best in terms of honouring their teaching periods. Even when the days are really odd, they really have to. It's in them. Their principle is 'you do the right thing no matter what'. Even if the circumstances are against you* ***(GT 40).***

For this particular teacher, loyalty in doing one's work is essential. She observed that in her school, few teachers were driven by morals when doing their work. Such teachers were dedicated or caring and did not need to be reminded about going to class to do their work. The rhetoric was about self-driven teachers who are, not only competent, but also committed. Such commitment is also seen in teachers who worked hard beyond the stipulated hours. This is reflected in the observations of the two teachers below.

> ***Noah****: Some teachers would teach even during the school holidays trying to ensure that the learners achieve good results. That's working hard for me. Other teachers even start their school day as early as before 7:00 (having extra, morning classes). That's working hard* ***(NT 32).***

> ***Faith****: Come three in the afternoon, I am taking those assessments with me to mark at home until one o'clock in the morning. Sometimes I have to come to school early (for morning classes). The school starts at 7:30 but sometimes I come at 6:30 or 7:00 for morning classes so that I'm able to finish the syllabus on time* ***(FT 29).***

These teachers talked about how some teachers go beyond their call of duty. Noah talked about teachers who committed themselves to teaching extra classes for the benefit of learners, and Faith talked about teaching extra classes but highlighted some personal reasons, for instance, completing the prescribed work on time. So, what these teachers were saying about dedicated or caring teachers was that their work was not time bound, whether it was teaching or marking assessment tasks. The rhetoric was about how teachers dedicated themselves into working hard for the benefit of their learners. It seems that the extent of dedication was about time spent on duties outside the normal hours and not some other potential indicators such as, improvement of teaching strategies with the aim of reaching every learner. Noah and Faith's views of dedication seemed to follow a narrow view and reduced it to a single factor about the quantity of time.

Dedication or caring was also seen as a type of volunteering work. As Kadesh explained:

> ***Kadesh****: We have a teacher in our school who has just taken in a learner who is being abused by the grandmother. The grandmother beats up the child and there is a teacher in my school who volunteered to take care of the learner* ***(KT 26).***

In this case, teacher care extends to 'adopting' the learner informally. The teacher willingly wanted to protect a learner from physical abuse, whilst providing for all the other basic needs such shelter, food and emotional needs. What comes through about dedication is that it goes beyond taking care of learners' academic needs to meeting those needs which are not academic. The rhetoric was about teachers who were dedicated to holistic development of the child (taking care of all the aspects of child development).

When teachers are dedicated to this holistic development, their teaching creeps into their family time as indicated by Noah and Faith.

> ***Noah****: There is not much holidays because teachers work through the holidays doing the marking, especially mid-term and trial exams* ***(NT 51).***

> ***Faith:*** *I don't get paid for all the extra classes that I do. Whether I teach during school holidays, whether I come an hour earlier, whether I teach in the afternoon. Even for work that I do at home, I don't get paid for all the work that I do outside of school hours. When exams run through up to the last day of school, then it means that teachers can only mark during the holidays. So there are no holidays* ***(FT 30)****.*

These two teachers noted how the holidays were not really holidays as they were largely or generally understood to be. They observed that teachers' work continued over the holidays, which then implied that teachers have to steal their family time in order to dedicate some time to their teaching work. Faith talked about all the additional work that she has to do without any recognition. She suggested that there was no monetary value attached to caring. While Noah talked about how the marking of assessment tasks took over the 'holidays' or family time of teachers, Faith talked about how the teaching work invaded her family time (whether it is during the school terms or the holidays) because of all the extra work that she has to do without any remuneration.

Furthermore, Faith recognised that teachers were not the only ones who were dedicated to the children's education. She acknowledged that there were parents who were dedicated:

> ***Faith****: There are parents who are really passionate about their children's education. There are parents who would really worry you. They want to know how their kids are doing. They check their children's books so much so that I, as a teacher, am always on my toes because I know that so and so's parent always check…* ***(FT 41).***

By being dedicated, Faith meant those parents who wanted teachers to update them about their children's progress, when she indicated that parents would want to know *"how their kids are doing"*. She talks about parents who worked hand in hand with teachers for the benefit of their children, by checking the work that the children do at school. In this case, the rhetoric of dedication by parents tied in with the rhetoric of monitoring since the teacher felt that she was accountable to these parents.

Dedication or caring was a positive role when it assisted either the teacher or the learners to be successful in the classroom. However, it was also negative if teachers over-dedicated themselves to a point of burnout or when parents over-dedicated themselves in a manner that made teachers feel pressurised.

5.1.7 The Rhetoric of Overwork / Work Overload

Overwork or work overload can be seen from the perspectives of the teachers in this study. On the one hand, they talked about overwork or work overload as something that was located in a particular subject/s that one teaches. On the other hand, they viewed it to be a numbers game; especially the number of classes, grades or learners that one taught.

Mercy and Grace talked about the pressure they felt as language teachers. Specifically, Mercy talked about the pressure that emanated from curriculum and subject policies on assessment regarding the teaching of a language.

> ***Mercy**: I'm the only one who has five classes and the others have four and I'm teaching language which has three exam papers…There is a lot of marking that needs to be done and so there are no holidays for me because I have to do the marking throughout the holidays **(MT 33).***

However, Grace talked about being pressured by learners' expectations of the turnaround time:

> ***Grace:** I'm a language teacher. There is a lot of marking to do. So, when l have collected their books, they expect that I will bring their books back soon, and so I bunk their classes and continue marking (**GT 39**).*

Teachers suggested that overwork/ work overload emanated from the unequal distribution of workloads and that the teachers of languages often bore the brunt because of how the subjects were structured and therefore, they usually worked more than others. However, Grace revealed another dimension about the teacher who may be 'absent from class'; that in some instances this teacher might actually be busy with some aspect of teaching and not as a result of laziness. This act of bunking a class for the purpose of catching up with the marking was an outcome of being overloaded with work. Kadesh's view of being overloaded also had to do with the number of grades he was teaching, although he was not a language teacher:

> ***Kadesh**: I have a heavy workload. I teach grade 8 and 9 EMS[13], then I teach grade 10, 11 and 12 Business Studies (**KT 4).***

What Kadesh was suggesting was that, overwork or work overload, resulted from having to teach across all grades as well as teaching across the subjects (within the commerce department).

[13] EMS – Economic and Management Sciences is a school subject that gives learners in the Intermediate and Senior phase an introduction to the Economics, Accounting and Business Studies.

Overwork or work overload was seen as a negative experience for these teachers as Grace indicated that she had to disengage with the learners in order to finish some aspect of her work (marking learners' work). In fact, these teachers suggested that when they felt that they were overworked or felt work overload, they either stole from teaching time (GT39), or used their personal time to deal with the work overload (MT33). Therefore, the rhetoric was about how being overworked/ work overload compromised the teaching and learning time.

5.1.8 The Rhetoric of Teachers' and Children's Rights

The rhetoric of teachers' and children's rights can be grouped around issues of power struggle, loss of authority, and input of stakeholders. The children's rights are seen by the teachers in this study as having a negative role in teaching and learning processes. One teacher talked about how the system seemed to be failing teachers to the extent that there appeared to be a constant power struggle between teachers and learners, and between teachers and the department of education.

> ***Kadesh****: If you look at the laws that have been put into place in South Africa in terms of the teaching career, teachers' lives are at risk because they are not given rights. It's the learners who have power over us. So, a learner can do anything. The school cannot even expel the learner because the Department of Education will say 'take back that learner'* ***(KT 9).***

Kadesh talked about national laws and their impact on teaching. He seemed to be suggesting that the era of rights (emanating from the form of governance, i.e. democracy) is dangerous for a teacher because the learners know about all their rights and they want to have them enforced or granted fully, in some ways that seem to ignore the teachers' rights. What Kadesh is suggesting is that teachers are being disempowered, not only by the Department of Education, but also by the national laws on teaching which seem to prioritise learners over teachers. He is also suggesting that some issues of ill-discipline that occur in schools are a result of the Department of Education's lack of trust in some of the schools' decisions, particularly about disciplinary procedures.

Mercy talked about where the role of teachers seemed not to matter; for instance, when learners resisted fulfilling their responsibilities without any consequences.

> ***Mercy:*** *I think it's all because of democracy. Learners now have a lot of rights so they do as they wish at school. It's not easy now to work as a*

> *teacher and to deal with the learners…If a learner does not want to do the work, there is nothing much that you (a teacher) can do about it. Things have changed* ***(MT 7).***

Mercy noted that, whilst the rights are seen on one hand to be empowering learners (having the freedom to do as they please), they are equally seen to be disempowering the teachers (not knowing how to discipline the learners).

Another level was where teachers recognised that parents contributed to the problems they experienced with the learners in schools. The rhetoric here was that teachers saw parents as not helping with the academic development of their children.

> **Faith***: They know…they (learners) have rights. And the parents too know these requirements/ criteria and they are the ones who phone the District office first to say but so and so should have passed because of these conditions laid down by the Department. So now, who sabotages us? Our own Department – and then the same Department lashes out on us when the very same learners don't pass well in Grade 12* ***(FT 36).***

Faith asserted that those parents who knew the law or their rights were able to negotiate with the District office to have certain rules implemented regardless of the disruption that could be posed by those rules in the teaching and learning processes. The rhetoric was about how the Department of Education worked with the parents against teachers, how the Department "sabotaged" teachers even to the detriment of the learners.

Children's rights were seen to have a positive role when they assisted learners to be articulate in the classroom but they were seen to be negative when the learners seemed to abuse their rights by not fulfilling their responsibilities, thereby rendering teachers' work volatile.

5.2 EXTENDED DISCUSSION OF BROAD THEME ONE AND CONNECTION TO THE LITERATURE

The concepts that emerged from the teachers' rhetoric in relation to their work; that is, monitoring, laziness, resources, administrative work, overwork/work overload, leadership and management, dedication and human/children's rights, can all be regarded as 'nodal points' (Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002) or central privileged signifiers (Rear, 2013) around which a variety of meanings could be made. However, it should be noted that these concepts on their own are meaningless. They are what Žižek refers to as 'empty

signifiers' without the signified (Žižek, 1989), and so, only come alive through the teachers' interpretations and experience of them.

Monitoring and evaluation is one of the means of ensuring that teachers are accountable for the actions they take in relation to their work (GT7). Teachers are accountable for teaching, student learning, assessment and learner progression. The school management committee, is accountable for teachers' work performance which requires them to monitor teachers to ensure that quality of teaching and learning processes meet or exceed the required standards (KT16). Some participants felt that it is difficult, if not impossible, to meet the standards of the formal aspects of their work because of all the added responsibilities (which are often outside of their workloads) that they have to take on (MT35, FT53). Monitoring and evaluation is a means of ensuring that effective teaching and learning is effected consistently (Ndungu, Allan, & Emily, 2015), if high performance is to be realised. Alternatively, monitoring and evaluation may be viewed negatively as a control mechanism aimed at subjecting teachers to constant surveillance (George, 2009). These varying conceptions of monitoring and evaluation indicate the multiplicity of meanings (Rear, 2013) that can be attributed to any discourse at any given time. However, the teachers in this study had a positive view on monitoring and evaluation. In fact, some were concerned about the lack of, or insufficient practice of monitoring and evaluation in their schools.

Doing unnecessary administrative work is burdensome to teachers who often feel overwhelmed and unjustifiably overworked/overloaded with work (KT32). This work overload impacts negatively on the teaching and learning processes, and often forces the participants to find other ways (which can be said to be unfavourable for learners) to lessen the burden of their workload (GT39). Some of the ways that teachers use to lessen their load may be easily labelled as laziness (GT31) or classroom avoidance. The notion of laziness (specifically professional laziness in this regard) was seen as crippling teachers' work and compromising teachers' status in relation to other professionals. Some of the issues that were enumerated by teachers in this study as contributing to the discourse of laziness, are also referred by Oghuvbu (2007) as issues of 'indiscipline'. Because of its far-reaching consequences, laziness can be regarded as a form of indiscipline on the part of the teachers, irrespective of the reasoning behind it.

Most of the teachers' work involves the everyday interaction that happens in classroom spaces with the learners during the teaching and learning processes. For these processes to be effective and beneficial for learners, certain things have to be in order. Issues such as the availability and quality of resources (teaching and learning) as well as issues of leadership and management are said to impact directly on the teaching and learning. When the right kind of resources are accessible for both teachers and learners, the teaching and learning processes are likely to proceed smoothly with very minimal disruptions or frustrations on both the teachers and learners (KT5). When provided with the teaching and learning resources they need, teachers tend to be satisfied with their work and perform to the best of their abilities (Ware & Kitsantas, 2007), as was observed by Kadesh. In this way, the classroom space may become sociable and productive. In cases where resources are scarce or unavailable, teachers are often demotivated to perform at their best (FT15, MT5, GT44, NT26), and learners experience the teaching and learning in a compromised manner. This lack of instructional or learning resources contributes to teacher frustrations and demotivation (Berry, Smylie & Fuller, 2008).

Among other things, the lack of resources was linked to the issues of ineffective leaders and managers of the School Management Team[14]-SMT (NT3, FT48, MT22) or the lack of support from the Department of Education in providing the schools with the necessary tools. The school leadership and management plays a pivotal role in the success or failure of teachers' work. The style of leadership (good or bad) that the principal employs (regardless of the context) influences the kind of interactions that occur between teachers and school managers, teachers as colleagues, teachers and learners, and even among learners themselves. Leaders and managers who are supportive to teachers and their work are usually trustworthy people with high levels of competence who can produce greater employee satisfaction and motivation (Porter, Wrench, & Hoskinson, 2007). Most teachers in this study voiced their dissatisfaction with the leadership and managerial styles of either the principal or the school managers in general. Dissatisfaction emanates from the lack of communication and lack of trust between teachers and school managers (Berry, Smylie & Fuller, 2008). From this observation, it stands to reason that the relation

[14] This is a collective term for school principals, deputy principals and heads of departments – commonly known as the SMT

between teachers and school leaders and managers is critical on both personal and professional levels.

The lack of support from the Department of Education was also linked to the indiscipline of learners who were said to be accorded a vast array of human and children's rights which made them irresponsible and disrespectful towards the teachers (MT7). Whilst human rights are meant to be enjoyed and to protect all human beings, they were seen to render teachers vulnerable to learners, parents and Department of Education (FT36) as power shifted from teachers to learners; *"learners now have a lot of rights so they do as they wish at school"* (MT7).

However, some teachers seemed to rise above most of the challenges they faced in schools and remained dedicated to their work against all odds (GT40). These teachers' dedication to their work contributed positively to the teaching and learning processes and ultimately to the learners' development. These were teachers who worked for extended hours (NT32, FT29) or days, sacrificing their family times (NT51, FT30). Such teachers loved their work and cared about the learners whom they taught. However, teachers' work overload or intensification (Ballet & Kelchtermans, 2008) arises from multiple sources. It can emanate from ever-changing education policies (Ballet, Kelchtermans & Loughran, 2006), school contexts with varying working conditions, lack of time, increased administrative work (Penrice, 2011), or even self-imposed pressures, where teachers are so dedicated to their work that they always want to prove their excellency.

Overall, the teachers' rhetoric seemed to ignore the accountability of management; that management is accountable to somebody for the work that is done by everybody at school. So the teachers' rhetoric seemed to be self-centred. They did not see themselves as being part of the entire system being monitored and evaluated. It is not surprising because, to them, their work is overwhelming and they feel overworked and therefore, do not see that even the management is part of this system. In some instances, the teachers could not separate the school management from the Department of Education and they considered them together as very ineffective leadership and management. However, the school management might be feeling overwhelmed or unhappy and frustrated by the lack of resources.

There is a lot of negativity attached to some aspects of democracy. The aspect of children's rights and doing away with inhumane forms of discipline like corporal punishment (which are not part of a democracy) were resented strongly by teachers in this study because they felt that these were making the learners ill-disciplined. Therefore, the teachers felt that they had no control and power; when in fact it could just be that the entire system was under severe stress because the legacy of apartheid (which promoted inequalities and physical torture) was so prevalent. For example, many schools have not been rebuilt; some have no proper infrastructure or even toilets; resources are still few in some schools; and there are parents who still cannot afford school fees. All of these are seen as problems of democracy and rights (whereby the government is expected to provide all of these things) rather than of the entire system which is severely in need of being reformed and transformed for every child to get quality education.
What was interesting in all this was that, some teachers, even those who complained about democracy, were prepared to work hard, and continued to be dedicated to their work against all odds.

In some way, this theme addressed the core of teachers' work; which is teaching, which often results in learning, and also meant that teachers themselves should be learning. Teaching seemed to be very frustrating and teachers seemed to be learning more and more how unbearable the work was becoming within the spaces in which they found themselves. Theme two is discussed in the next section.

5.3 THE RHETORIC RELATED TO PARENTS AND DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION OFFICIALS

This theme emanates from the teachers' articulations about how their work was influenced by the involvement of the external stakeholders in education. The teachers' interviews identified two key stakeholders. Therefore, theme two has two sub-themes (as shown in Table 5.1) namely; the rhetoric of parents' involvement and attitudes, and the rhetoric of the interference of district officials on promotion of learners and disciplinary issues.

5.3.1 The Rhetoric of Parents' Involvement and Attitudes

From the perspectives of teachers in this study, the rhetoric of parents' involvement is seen as providing two positions placed on a continuum; that is, involvement and non-

involvement. These two positions are accompanied by various forms of attitudes which are positioned hierarchically across the continuum of involvement and non-involvement namely; dedication, appreciation, arrogant, demanding and uncaring.

On the one hand, two of the teachers (Noah and Grace) talked about parents' involvement as a good thing because of the positive attitudes that parents displayed towards teachers. These teachers noted that such parents were dedicated and appreciative of teachers and their work because of their active involvement in the school life. For instance, Noah talked about parents who were involved in the school governance but were not doing enough to attract other parents to be involved in the school. Grace talked about parents who worked hand-in-glove with their children's teachers and were therefore, able to know what goes on in the school.

> ***Noah**: It's only very few parents who are dedicated and concerned about their children's wellbeing, and some of them participate as governing body members; but they are also unable to fully mobilise more parents to be actively involved **(NT 30).***
>
> ***Grace**: For those parents who are involved, of course, they appreciate and they can know who is responsible for what. But for those that don't know, they always complain, whine and they also undermine us and they think we don't know what we are doing **(GT 30).***

From Noah's and Grace's articulations, it appears that there are two positions regarding parents; those that are **dedicated** to their children's schooling and often have positive contributions [therefore **appreciative** of teachers and their work (NT30, GT30)], and those who are on the **side-lines** with no specific contribution except **whining and complaining** about teachers (GT30). What these teachers seem to be suggesting about parents' involvement is that when parents are involved, they usually become well-informed about the school matters and the things that affect their children's education and welfare. Where they are not well-informed, they often undermine teachers and their work. Alternatively, those parents who whine and complain may also be regarded as partly involved parents although their contribution is not necessarily a positive one because of the negative attitudes that they bring with them.

On the other hand, there participants who believed that parents' involvement was a bad thing when parents displayed negative attitudes towards teachers. Whilst Mercy talked

about parents who came to school with an arrogant attitude and without any prior arrangements with the school or the teacher concerned; Kadesh talked about parents who demanded that teachers do things that are beyond their scope of work:

> ***Mercy:*** *At our school, parents do not make appointments. They just come any time they want to, and sometimes when you tell the parent to wait, they become very angry in such a way that you may be also* ***forced*** *to leave the class if the principal insists that you should attend to the parent. If the parent is cheeky, then you have to attend to the parent at that moment* ***(MT 20).***
>
> ***Kadesh****: They expect us to do everything. Some parents have actually said that "hey, I'm unable to discipline this child, please help me out". So if a parent is tired and is unable to discipline his/her own child, what am I expected to do as a teacher* ***(KT 28)?***

Mercy talked about the unbalanced power within the school where the parents seemed to come and go at any time and as they pleased. The expectation from teachers was that the principal would keep the parent away until a convenient time, which was not always the case. Where the parent was forceful, the principal would give in and command the teachers to leave the class unattended in order to attend to the parent. Such parents were **partly involved** in the education of their children although in terms of negative contribution as a result of their **arrogant** behaviours. Kadesh talked about the parents who shifted their responsibilities of disciplining their children and asked the teachers/school to help out. What these teachers are saying about parents' involvement is that if the involvement goes with negative attitudes from parents, then it becomes disruptive to teachers and their work. Therefore, the rhetoric here is that some parents' involvement and attitudes directly or indirectly undermine teachers and their work.

Parents' involvement was viewed as having a positive role where it contributed to the smooth functioning of the teachers and the school in general – where parents were team players. It was, however, seen as negative when it was used undesirably by the parents.

Some teachers believed that there are parents who were not involved in the education of their children. This non-involvement ranged from parents who were uncaring, to those who shifted their responsibilities, to those who were 'absent' altogether.

One teacher talked about uncaring attitude of parents towards their children's academic progress. He suggested that there was no correlation between the children's background and their parents' attitude or non-involvement in children's school life:

> ***Noah**: In my school, many children/ learners receive social grants. These children are now a generation of the people we have taught. We know their parents as former learners but we have never seen them come to school, not once, to enquire about their children's progress or whatever…. Parents just send their children to school and that's finish 'en klaar' (Afrikaans word meaning 'done and dusted'). As to what needs to happen for the child to perform better and achieve good results, it's not their concern* **(NT 28).**

Here the teacher referred to parents who were their former students. Because the parents also attended the school, the teachers seemed to think that they would have a relationship because the parents knew the school, the teachers and how the school operated. Based on the idea of familiarity, teachers expected much interaction with these parents and much of their presence in the school. As Noah noted that most learners in his school live in poverty, perhaps it would be understandable if their parents tried to avoid the school. Possibly it was not that these parents were not concerned but that poverty brought its own shame. But what was the outcome? That where there is much poverty and disadvantage, teachers bear the consequences and teach learners by themselves without the involvement of parents. Noah made the assumption that the parents were not concerned.

Another teacher talked about non-involvement of parents as resulting from their lack of responsibility. Faith observed that parents expected teachers to be 'super teachers' and excel where parents have failed with their own children:

> ***Faith**: Some parents don't want to be involved in the education of their children – it's all about teachers. I have heard it so many times that when children are disobedient, parents would ask 'is this what you are taught at school? This means that some parents just dump their children at school. Schools have become day-care centres. They often say 'you must see what you can do with that child – yoooh akeve ehlupha shame (s/he is a handful – troublesome!)* **(FT 28).**

Faith held the view that some parents do not want to be involved in the education of their children but still expect the school to discipline the children, hence she makes reference to schools as "day-care centres" for children because the children are too troublesome to

manage. Teachers have to be parents as well, which they seem to find burdensome. Teachers had added responsibilities because of parents who did not involve themselves in their children's education. Such parents **lacked responsibility** and had the attitude of being **unconcerned** about their children's education. Noah talked about parents who were '**absent**', and completely not involved in the education of their children.

> ***Noah**: We have to deal with the children who seem to have been 'thrown away' to us by their parents who are 'absent' **(NT 12).***

Noah observes that there are parents who did not have the ethic of care and love for their children, parents who did not care about what went on in their children's lives. According to Noah, such parents were not only **absent** in their children's lives, but also **uncaring**.

Teachers in this study understood parents' involvement to be operating on a logic of difference based on their explanations of both positive and negative experiences with parents. From what these teachers shared about parents' involvement, it seems that some parents shared the responsibility of educating the child, whereas other parents appeared to be involved only when there was a problem with the child.

5.3.2 The Rhetoric of Interference by District Officials on Promotion of Learners and Disciplinary Issues

The rhetoric of interference by district officials seemed to revolve around two issues namely; promotion of learners who have failed and who should be spending another year in the grade, and discipline matters. Three teachers talked about how the district officials interfered with the process of promoting learners.

> ***Noah**: Learners are not allowed to fail twice in one phase. If they are struggling, they are just condoned to the next grade (by the Department of Education). So this 'condonation' practice is a problem on its own **(NT 57).***
>
> ***Mercy:** When learners are not passing, you are told to…by the SMT to add some marks and move the learner to the next grade, because the department wants the learners to go to the next grade no matter how they get to the next grade (**MT 14).***

It seems that the Department of Education did not recognise the teacher as a professional capable of making decisions, judgements and evaluation of children's abilities or where they are in terms of their learning. Mercy's response indicates a situation where teachers

are left with no authority. The most palpable in the condonation process were learners who had failed and were just put through to the next grade. In a sense, what the department was doing was taking away the motivation to be a good teacher. The teachers were likely to think that they did not have to teach well or excel because even if learners failed, the department would just pass them. So, why should teachers work hard? What Noah and Mercy indicated were the inherent problems created by this practice of promoting learners who were not ready to progress to the next grade. In fact, one teacher (Faith) indicated that this practice had emotional effect on her.

> ***Faith**: The mark-schedules come back with a list of learners who were not supposed to progress, having been promoted by the managers at the district office who are not in the school, who are not teaching the learners, who do not know what is going on at school, particularly in class, particularly in the subject; and then they promote those learners. It drives me nuts… **(FT 33).***

Faith revealed how demoralising it was for teachers to know, after a year of teaching, setting tests, assignment tasks and any form of assessments activities, and marking rigorously and fairly, that the learners who had failed were just promoted to the next grade by the department officials at the district level. Teachers felt that they were being denied the power to decide who progresses and who has to repeat the grade, and power or authority had been taken away from the teacher. Teachers felt disempowered and totally displaced by the decisions made by district officials on teachers' behalf about which learners should be promoted. Faith talked about the difficulty of having to endorse the rules which were made by district officials who are not well-informed about the learners and their capabilities. In this case, the rhetoric was about how learners are made to hop from one grade to the next without meeting the academic competencies. This progression of learners, which was not a true reflection of their performance, interfered with teachers' work and had enduring consequences for teachers and learners as well. This comes through in Mercy's and Faith's responses.

> ***Mercy**: So you find that from grade 8, they would have been condoned from grade 7 and that person (learner) will progress in that manner up until grade 12 **(MT 16).***
>
> ***Faith**: Some learners have never really passed on their own. They have never!! They get condoned all the time, and then we expect them to do well in Grade 12. How can they **(FT 34)?***

Teachers were aware of the repercussions of the learners who are constantly condoned over the years and their fate when they reach the Grade 12 class. Faith indicated that such learners were highly unlikely to pass, which then tarnished teachers' reputation (teachers portrayed as having failed to make learners pass). What Mercy and Faith noted that when learners are promoted undeservedly, it usually contributed to learners' incompetence and under-preparedness. Therefore, learners were more likely to be frustrated and not do well in their studies because they continued to work on a deficit. What one detects here is a discourse that was characterised by what Laclau and Mouffe (2001) refer to as the chains of equivalence; whereby teachers' articulations revealed a systematically closed discourse or ideology about the of department officials' practices.

The promotion of learners by the district officials was seen as having a negative role on the teachers as it did not assist teachers or the learners to be effective in their work. So, the rhetoric in this case, indicated indirectly, that the imposing of hierarchically made decisions, and the expectation that teachers as employees should just implement what has been decided on their behalf, was highly problematic and detrimental to the teachers.

The teachers in this study also indicated that the interference by the district officials was evident in the disciplinary matters, as noted by Faith and Kadesh.

> ***Faith****: I really don't know where the disconnect is – when the school has decided that the learners deserve suspension and then the District office says 'NO' (emphasis)* ***(FT 18).***
>
> ***Kadesh****: I know that some parents go to the Department of Education and they plead with the Department of Education (when the learner has been expelled). The Department of Education plays a role that the learner is to go back to school and then the principal at the end looks like a person who is incompetent"* ***(KT 10).***

On the one hand, Kadesh noted that whilst parents were not really involved in the everyday processes of teaching and learning of their children, they were, however, much involved when the child got expelled from school. Principals were also not spared from the consequences of the parents' and Department of Education's involvement, and principals ended up being portrayed as incompetent. On the other hand, Faith notes how the school's decisions are questioned or undermined by the district office (Department of

Education). She observed that the district office did not seem to have trust in the school officials to make the right decisions on issues pertaining to the discipline of learners. Consequently, Kadesh talked about the Department of Education's decisions that indirectly makes the principals' competence questionable. Furthermore, Kadesh highlighted how sometimes the Department of Education seemed to be pressured by parents into making decisions which were contrary to the school's decision.

What one gets from Faith's and Kadesh's articulations is that, there is a disconnect between the discourse represented by the department officials and the discourses that teachers hold for their practice. This disconnect can be characterised as an interface between the dominant discourse of the department and a marginalised discourse, when it comes to the disciplining of the learners. Chains of difference are operational in so far as the department and the teachers' (or schools') perspectives on disciplinary issues are concerned.

It seems that for the teachers who participated in this study, the involvement of the district officials or the Department of Education has only a negative role on both levels (promotion of learners and disciplinary matters) because it does not contribute positively towards teachers' work. Therefore, the rhetoric indicates indirectly that the Department of Education or the district officials have to be knowledgeable about the specific issues faced by teachers in class (both academic and social) on a daily basis before they can make decisions that affect teachers and their work. Perhaps, when all of these things are considered, what is seen as interference can be considered as an intervention and may be experienced positively by teachers.

In this discussion about 'interference' some teachers referred to the Department of Education or simply the 'department' without specifying whether these terms referred to the national, provincial or local/ district level. For this reason, the 'Department of Education' or Department can exist, in Laclau and Mouffe's (2001) discourse theory terms, as an empty signifier because one can put their own meaning to it, as it is not clear which level is being referred to. Perhaps at this stage, a question that one can ask is: How can one facilitate the discursive effect of these discourses that have been identified among the teachers?

5.4 EXTENDED DISCUSSION OF THEME TWO AND CONNECTION TO THE LITERATURE

Teachers do not work in isolation in the quest to educate the young ones. Parents and the Department of Education are some of the stakeholders that are involved in the education of the learners. They have pertinent roles that they ought to play. Whilst the parents have a vested interest in education because of their children, the department's interest seems to be on the throughput rates and the success of the educational programmes that they would have designed and implemented.

Therefore, it is not surprising that teachers talk about how the parents' and the Department of Education's (also referred to as the district officials in this section) involvement impact on them personally, and on their work (professionally). It is clear from the teachers' articulations that the level of parents' involvement and parents' attitudes represent two sides of the same coin (parental involvement), whereby the kind of involvement and attitude/s that parents bring to school differ greatly (MT20, KT28). On the other hand, the kind of involvement and the attitude/s seem to be compatible irrespective of whether they produce a positive or negative outcome (NT30, GT30, NT28, FT28, NT12). For instance, some parents' involvement and attitudes in their children's education are applauded by teachers when the parents engage with teachers in a decent manner and have positive contribution. When parents approach teachers in this manner, the parent-teacher relations become reciprocal because of working towards a common goal (GT30, NT30). Home-school partnerships are valued by teachers, particularly when those partnerships operate on a mutual respect basis between parents and teachers, who can be "co-learners and co-teachers" (Ng, 2013, p. 972) for the benefit of the children. Effective involvement or engagement of parents in children's schooling or learning yields academic achievements (Emerson, Fear, Fox, & Sander, 2012; Epstein, 1996; Avvisati, Besbas & Guyon, 2010).

However, in some instances, parents' involvement may be viewed negatively when they challenge some of teachers' decisions regarding the children or teachers' work (May, Johnson, Chen, Hutchison & Ricketts, 2010). In such cases, parents' attitudes contradict parental involvement (which is usually seen as a good thing), and are likely to produce unpleasant outcomes (MT20, KT28). Parents are then seen as invading teachers'

professional space and setting bad examples for their children who may want to emulate their parents' unbecoming attitude or behaviour.

The kind of parental involvement and attitudes points to the kind of support teachers need from relevant stakeholders in order to do their work effectively. When placed on a continuum, the rhetoric on parents' non-involvement (no support) outweighs the rhetoric on involvement (support for teachers). This point is illustrated in the Figure 5.1 below:

Figure 5.1 A continuum illustrating parents' level of involvement and attitudes

This continuum depicts teachers' rhetoric about parents' involvement and attitudes. When parents are not involved in their children's education, they often display negative attitudes like uncaring [NT1], complaining [GT30] and being unconcerned [NT28, FT28]) towards teachers and their work, in varying degrees.

The input of the district officials is invaluable in the education sector as they are the immediate eyes and ears of the provincial and the national education department. Therefore, the involvement of the district officials in the school life is essential in order to better determine services that each school requires, and to make necessary recommendations and offer much needed support, timeously. However, in some instances, the involvement of district officials is perceived negatively by teachers who see it as a form of interference which causes a disruption in teachers' work. When teachers feel that the involvement of the district officials is not beneficial, it demotivates teachers, who are required to implement controversial policies (such as that of learner promotion) unquestioningly (M14), with far reaching consequences (MT16, FT34). Having no clear rules or protocol on either suspension or expulsion of learners renders schools chaotic and makes principals appear as not knowing the rules (KT10, FT18).

From this theme, it is apparent that learners are, not only problematic at school, but also at home. It seems both parents and teachers do not to know what to do with these children or learners. In some cases, the parents actually want the schools to assist with learner discipline but the schools also lack the skills. At the same time, the teachers want the parents to help but the parents also do not seem to have the skills. This speaks to the importance of school counsellors whose disappearance has left a vacuum, leaving the costly professional services as the only available option. Parents may need to meet those costs for their children. It appears that no-one can solve this problem of discipline. Because we always seem to be blaming but we are not recognising this moment or instant in which we are all so bereft of the power, the competencies and the skills to deal with children.

This theme addresses the importance of the relationships that the schools create with parents and the Department of Education or the district officials. It seems that this relationship becomes meaningful if and when the people involved understand and respect each other's roles. Teachers' work seems to be frustrating when teachers feel that their relationship with parents and Department of Education is condescending and demeaning for the teachers. When involvement is not perceived as yielding favourable results, it breeds negativity and is labelled as 'interference.' Hegemonic practices imposed on teachers by the district officials usually leave no, or very little, room for resistance, leaving teachers frustrated and despondent.

In the rhetoric of 'interference by the department', teachers in this study were aware of their powerlessness against the department, and so they tried to do their work or do both, that is, they moan *and* do their work. However, what seems to be a dominant discourse of 'powerlessness' remains largely unsaid in these teachers' articulations, but it can be argued that it is there, present through its omission. In Laclau and Mouffe's (2001) terms, the marginal discourse (in this case, teachers' rhetoric) demonstrates that the elements are gradually being activated to form a discourse of dissatisfaction which has a possibility of growing into resistance. If this resistance is taken into consideration by the department officials, then perhaps new channels of communication may be formed.

5.5 SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS ON TEACHERS' RHETORIC

Some of these findings, like the lack of monitoring of teachers' work are in line with the work by Ndungu, Allan and Emily (2015) which found that in the Githunguri District in Kenya, the processes of teaching and learning were not monitored by the principals or heads of departments. The finding on the rhetoric of parental involvement was similar to Ng's (2013) findings which indicated that teachers needed parents to be involved in the education of their children, which is what the teachers in this study also highlighted. The finding on the rhetoric of teacher laziness was in line with what Oghuvbu (2007) labelled as teacher indiscipline; whereby teachers did not show full commitment to their work and displayed unprofessional behaviour (e.g. bunking classes) as was indicated by Noah, Grace and Faith.

The one-on-one interviews revealed that teachers generally felt that there was a vacuum of authority in schools, which in their views, resulted in a high degree of indiscipline by learners. Because of this lack of authority, teachers in this study, found themselves not knowing what to do and it seemed that they blamed the Department of Education for such a state of affairs. It seemed that intergenerational connections had been eroded, thus creating, in Stiegler's (2013) terms, a 'suicidal society' which he claims to be characterised by rage and violent acts. When learners act disruptively or abusively toward teachers, it may be their way of seeking recognition which they may not be getting from their parents or homes or their lack of social symbols (better role models) from whom they can learn to be human. Perhaps for learners, or children in general, to feel that life is meaningful, they need significant or 'transitional' objects (Stiegler, 2013), also known as transitional phenomena (Olivier, 2016). These phenomena are defined as objects or non-objects from which children create meaning in their stages of transition from childhood to adulthood (Olivier, 2016), either in the presence or absence of a parent (usually a mother).

Stiegler (2013, p. 194) argues that the meaning children ascribe to these objects or non-objects allows them to create spaces of consistency (and not of existence) and a feeling that "life is worth living". This feeling often results from the children's knowledge and understanding that the transitional objects and non-objects provide extraordinary protection similar to what is expected of the adults under whose care the children are placed during their transition phase (Stiegler, 2013). With this understanding, the children

are able to deal with the absence of their parents when entering social spaces (for example, schools) in which they have to negotiate interpersonal relationships (Winnicott, 1971). The lack of authority (by teachers) and the lack of discipline (by learners), as noted by teachers in this study, point to what Olivier (2016) regards as the incompleteness or *complicatedness* [my emphasis] of understanding human nature, particularly when it comes to interpersonal relationships.

The dominant teaching or educational discourse which often portrays teachers as passive technicians who are uncritical of their contexts (Hodkinson, 2011; Tezgiden Cakcak, 2015), is challenged by this study's findings which indicate that the teacher participants are aware and critical of the technicist approach that the Department of Basic Education DoBE enforces in schools. For instance, teachers (Faith, Mercy and Noah) mentioned the vile ways in which they are forced to tamper with the learners' actual summative results with the intention of inflating the number of learners to be promoted for progression purposes. However, these teachers also expressed that they felt defeated by what seemed to be a hegemonic practice by the DoBE officials; simply because the meanings ascribed to promotion of learners by teachers is clearly in conflict with that of the Department of Basic Education. It can be argued that the teachers' discourse on promotion of learners was in contention with that of the Department of Education, but teachers had no recourse to challenge the contention. In essence, teachers gave up their agency and became docile bodies. This, resonates with Tezgiden Cakcak's (2015) study findings among teacher candidates not practicing teachers, that when teachers are treated as technicians, it results in the production of teachers who are docile bodies. It was, therefore, not surprising that Faith, Noah and Mercy became frustrated.

5.6 CONCLUSION

This chapter's aim was to answer one research question: What is the teachers' rhetoric about teachers' work? Why? The analysis indicated that the teachers' rhetoric about their work seemed to surface from their varied experiences of issues that a) are directly related to teaching and learning situations such as monitoring and evaluation, laziness, resources, leadership and management, administrative work, dedication/caring, overwork/work overload, and teachers' and children's rights; and b) are related to parents and the district officials. Four of the eight issues directly linked to teaching and learning (monitoring and evaluation, resources, leadership and management, and administrative work) revealed the

multi-layered interpretations which exposed, not only the positive, but also the negative influences that these issues had on teachers and their work. Monitoring and to a lesser extent evaluation, when done appropriately, are measures of quality of the teaching and learning processes, but when lacking, can pose problems for teachers and their as well as problems for the learners. The success of the teaching and learning process is also aligned to the availability or unavailability of the teaching and learning resources. When the resources are available and also accessible to both the teacher and the learners, the teaching and learning experience becomes positive for all. But when the resources are scarce or not available, it results in frustrated teachers and negative experience for learners. In schools with effective leaders and managers who are supportive, teachers are usually motivated to perform at their peak. On the contrary, when the leadership seems to be lax and unsupportive to its staff, teachers are often frustrated and demotivated. Administrative work is a necessary component of teachers' work which is essential for record-keeping. However, some teachers in this study indicated that some administrative work was unnecessary and it contributed to work overload.

The analysis of three of the four remaining issues directly related to teaching and learning (laziness, overwork/ work overload and human and children's rights) revealed unilateral perspectives based on negative experiences of teachers. It appears that laziness was viewed by teachers in this study as something repulsive. They understood that if laziness was left unchecked, it could creep in and infest many teachers and have adverse implications for learners. Teaching a particular number of classes, grades or learners was equated with overwork or work overload. Unequal distribution of workloads was cited by teachers as one of the factors that contributed to some teachers being overloaded with work. Teachers in this democratic era are faced with the proliferation of human and children's rights which they viewed as giving learners too many freedoms which, at times, were abused or exercised irresponsibly; thus leaving teachers uncertain of what to do.

The issues of parent and district officials' involvement and the nature of parents' involvement and the attitudes that accompanied it appeared excited divergent views. Teachers noted that some of the disciplinary and learner promotion policies that they are expected (by the DoE) to enact, were problematic. The feeling from the teachers was that these policies caused more harm than good as far as the learners were concerned. Teachers' authority seemed to be taken away by the Department.

What has been presented in this chapter are interpretations constructed from the teachers' interviews. Parents' rhetoric about teachers' work is presented in the next chapter.

CHAPTER SIX

Parents' Rhetoric about Teachers' Work

Introduction

The previous chapter presented data interpretation and analysis of teachers' rhetoric about their work. This chapter presents the analysis of parents' rhetoric about teachers' work. The findings emerged from the one-on-one interviews with the parents who participated in this study. The analysis of the parents' rhetoric produced eight themes, which were the result of lengthy engagement with the data as a means of acquainting myself with the data. Although, there are many possible interpretations that can be accorded to the data, this chapter presents just one likely interpretation of parents' rhetoric about teachers' work. It should be noted that there are multiple ways of interpreting data so my interpretation should not be taken as the only way. Each rhetoric is presented with the quotes (written in italics) from parents' one-on-one interviews. In addition, each quote is preceded by pseudonyms for parent participants and ends with an alphanumerical code which comprises the first letter from the name of the parent, letter 'P' signifying parent participant and the number indicating the paragraph from which the quotes are extracted. The analysis tries to draw out issues that are closely related to teachers' work. This analysis is organised asymmetrically into two broad themes comprising five and three sub-themes. The presentation and analysis of data is organised as depicted in Table 6.1 below.

Table 6.1 Organisation and presentation of parents' rhetoric

BROAD THEMES	SUB-THEMES
The rhetoric directly linked to teaching and learning processes	The rhetoric of Monitoring and evaluation of teachers' work and teaching programmes
	The rhetoric of difficult work
	The rhetoric of stressful work
	The rhetoric of laziness of teachers
	The rhetoric of professionalism and unprofessionalism
The rhetoric of goodness, dedication and expertise as characterising teachers' work	The rhetoric of a good teacher
	The rhetoric of dedication or passion
	The rhetoric of expertise

6.1 THE RHETORIC DIRECTLY LINKED TO THE TEACHING AND LEARNING PROCESSES

This theme presents what parents viewed as the things that have a direct bearing on the teaching and learning activities within classrooms. This theme is sub-divided into five sub-themes (see Table 6.1 above) namely; the rhetoric of monitoring and evaluation of teachers' work and teaching programmes, the rhetoric of difficult work, the rhetoric of stressful work, the rhetoric of the laziness of teachers, and the rhetoric of professionalism and unprofessionalism. These were the pertinent issues parent participants identified as having a direct impact (positively or negatively) on the teaching and learning processes. The five sub-themes are discussed in the following sections.

6.1.1 The Rhetoric of Monitoring and Evaluation of Teachers' Work and the Teaching Programmes

The rhetoric of monitoring and evaluation is uncertain (cannot be pinned down to a single understanding); and for the parent participants, it seemed to be situated at four levels of parents, teachers, Department of Education, and the government. The parents in this study viewed monitoring and evaluation as essentially about monitoring teachers' performance or competence, as well as the effectiveness of the programmes.

One parent (Barbara) talked about checking the children's workbooks as a way of monitoring the extent to which teachers were doing their work:

> ***Barbara:*** *Uyakwazi ukubona ukuthi kuyasetshenzwa la [you are able to see that work is being done here]...ngoba uyalibona ipeni elibomvu [because you see the red ink], which shows that the teacher has done his or her job, umakile [s/he has marked], wa comment [and commented] - kusho ukuthi umsebenzi wengane uwubonile [which means that s/he has seen the child's work] and washo [said] something about it* ***(BP 17).***

What this parent noted was that parents were able to monitor whether teachers were doing their work or not by looking out for various indicators in their children's workbooks. Barbara implied that the red ink carried a particular status, as a teacher's way of communication with both the learner and the parent. For her, the absence of red ink in the child's workbook was an indication that teachers were, either not doing their work or lacking in checking whether the learners were achieving their learning outcomes. It is possible that when Barbara was a learner, her teachers used to mark in red pens and,

therefore, that was the evidence she sought to find in her child's workbooks. The rhetoric in this case was that the monitor (parent) should have the ability to identify a teacher who does professional work by checking whether the teacher gives feedback to the learners' work. Moreover, the rhetoric was about the teacher's effectiveness in doing his or her work. So, a teacher's performance, in this case, was judged by what the parents saw in their children's books.

Another level of monitoring and evaluation was where parents saw the Department of Education as having an important role in ensuring that teachers comply with particular standards as set out in various educational policies (dominant teaching discourse). This perspective on monitoring is evident in Zenith's articulation:

> ***Zenith**: The Department of Education should do audits to check if teachers are doing exactly what they are supposed to do (**ZP 10**).*

This parent suggested that the visibility of the employer was essential in order to monitor whether teachers were doing their work accordingly. The rhetoric seemed to be about the employer's (department of education) active involvement in monitoring its employees (teachers) for the benefit of its clients (the learners). For Zenith, the involvement of the Department of Education in monitoring teachers' work could minimise the laziness of teachers and ensure that teachers are performing at the required standards. This parent understood that schools operate within the dominant discourse of the employer (the Department of Education), hence expectation that teachers' actions should be in accordance with the department's stipulated policies (fixed meanings). In Laclau and Mouffe's (2001) terms, Zenith's articulation suggests that the official discourse on monitoring of teachers' work is represented by the Department of Education.

There was also recognition by the same parent (Zenith) that the Department of Education was also responsible for monitoring teachers' work and evaluating any new curricular innovations that they introduced. She seems suggested that when evaluations were done properly, people (the public) would know about the probable effects of the innovations on teachers' work.

> ***Zenith:** So, whenever they (the department) make changes, they have to see to it (check beforehand) …like what exactly is going to be affected by the changes. It is a problem because some teachers who are teaching also do not comply with the system that they implement* (***ZP 23**).*

This parent observed that curricular changes or innovations were likely to bring some disruptions in the lives and work of teachers when teachers already had sound grounding on the subject content knowledge. Zenith noted that some teachers resist the implementation of new changes to their work, perhaps, as their way of not wanting to move out of their comfort zones; that is, not wanting to experience uncertainties regarding new strategies or learning subject-specific knowledge which is in line with the curricular innovations. According to her, the Department of Education needed to be proactive in ascertaining the kind of challenges that the new programmes likely brought. In her view, such proactivity was likely to lessen the disconnect between the programmes' goals and what teachers actually did in their classrooms. The rhetoric here was about the whole programme evaluation and how teachers responded to the introduction of new programmes or curricula as opposed to monitoring of individual teacher's work.

How teachers respond to the idea of being audited or monitored was perceived by Zenith as some kind of a linear path.

> ***Zenith:*** *If a person (teacher) knows that s/he will be audited, they encourage themselves to do better - they go an extra mile* (***ZP 10).***

Zenith notes that teachers have a fear of being exposed for any lack in their practice. This fear, according to Zenith, causes teachers to be self-motivated to improve their work. The rhetoric that was espoused here was about the 'cause-and-effect' principle; that is, the relationship between actions. In this case, this parent assumes that the awareness by teachers that they are going to be audited/ monitored causes them to be willing to work hard or even take up extra workload in order to show commitment to their work through optimal performance. In essence, Zenith is suggesting that teachers have the ability to monitor themselves and the work that they do, particularly if, and when, they know that their work will be further monitored by the authorities (as a way of judging their competence). For this reason, teachers are perceived by Zenith to perform their work accordingly (as required by the dominant discourses of the department) in order to fare well in the auditing processes. The question then remains, do teachers need ulterior motives in order to do their work better?

The role of the government was also questioned by one of the parents in this study when she asked:

Barbara: *Does the government make a follow-up to check if the teacher is a proper Maths teacher or just by name only* ***(BP 28)?***

This parent seemed concerned about the academic competence of teachers and whether or not the government had a strategy to monitor teachers' professionalism in relation to the subjects that they taught. What Barbara was suggesting was that there should not be a mismatch between teachers' qualifications and the subject/s that they are employed to teach. So, the rhetoric was really about the teachers' 'fitness' to teach, particularly the Maths subject, which was one of the scarce skills that South Africa has a long history of poor learner performance in.

Seemingly, for the parent participants, monitoring and evaluation operates at four levels namely; teachers need to be monitored by the Department of Education officials; that teachers' work needs to be ascertained by evidence in the children's book; that teachers themselves are capable of monitoring their work; and that the government needs to evaluate the impact of new programmes on teachers' work. What came out strongly in this rhetoric of monitoring was the need for surveillance as a way of ensuring compliance with the curriculum or the expectations by the DoE in order to increase productivity.

6.1.2 The Rhetoric of Difficult Work

The rhetoric of difficult work was seen to be largely located in two aspects; academic and social. For instance, one parent viewed teachers' work as difficult based on the different kinds of work that has to be done by teachers when teaching learners various skills.

Sharon: *They (teachers) do a difficult job because as a parent, I cannot teach my child to write her name. I can teach my children how to count from 1 to 10 or maybe a 100, but I cannot teach them how to write* ***(SP 7).***

This parent talked about the complexity of teachers' work, some of which can only be done by teachers because of the specific skills and knowledge they possess. Sharon suggested that parents entrust their children to teachers with the belief that the children will learn the skills that their parents are unable to teach. The rhetoric in this case was about teachers as knowledgeable people who had specialised skills and knowledge the parents lacked.

Another parent talked about how teachers' work is compromised by classroom management issues which involve the behaviour of learners like when teachers have difficulty in coping with ill-disciplined learners:

> ***Zenith:*** *I think that the work of teachers is the most difficult work because it involves the different kinds of children; some that know how to respect the elders and some children that are disrespectful. It's a difficult job that even I as a parent may not be able to cope with...yeah, very difficult* ***(ZP 7).***

Zenith observed that dealing with ill-disciplined children added to the load of work that teachers have and it often derailed the process of teaching and learning. This parent talked about ill-discipline as a struggle, not only for teachers, but also parents, who both have to deal with rebellious children. The parent revealed the way in which some parents have lost authority over their own children, and therefore, empathises with teachers who have to deal with quite a number of ill-disciplined children. The rhetoric was about the work of teachers being made difficult, not so much by the academic demands, but by the social issues that impact on teaching and learning.

Whilst Sharon believed that a teacher is a professional who knows their work and teaches the child to read and write, Zenith saw the difficulty of teachers' work centring more around children and how teachers are supposed to handle them than the teaching aspect. In the same vein, Barbara noted that:

> ***Barbara:*** *Othisha bathwele kanzima manje [teachers are having it hard nowadays… kukhona izingane ezidla amadrugs ezinye azihloniphi fanele uthisha (a)deal(e) nako [there are learners who use drugs, others are disrespectful and the teacher has to deal with all of this]* ***(BP 10).***

This parent talked about the intensity of teachers' work as being located in some sources which are external to the core business of teaching. She observed that the sources were multi-layered; that is, they may have emanated from social (ill-behaviour) or psychosocial (use of drugs) dimensions. The rhetoric was about external sources adding to the difficulty of teachers' work.

Teachers' work was seen as difficult in a positive way when it assisted learners to be successful in class by achieving or learning difficult skills. But teachers' work was seen as difficult in a negative way when it was disrupted by other issues which made teachers unable to successfully fulfil their teaching roles. In some way, these parents saw teachers' work being made more complex or difficult because of outside influence. In Laclau and Mouffe's (2001) discourse theory, these parents' articulations on teachers' work as being

difficult, formed chains of difference since they were all talking about the same issue, yet from different perspectives.

6.1.3 The Rhetoric of Stressful Work

The rhetoric of stressful work was largely centred on the issues of what teachers are unable to do, to curricular issues and, to a certain extent, to learners' behaviour or attitudes. It ranges from the inability of teachers to attend to learners' different needs, to being unprepared, to being put to the test by the learners. Other issues included parental non-involvement as well as the hectic nature of teachers' work.

Two of the parents talked about the teacher-learner ratio as contributing to the stressful nature of teachers' work:

> ***Zenith:*** *Because it gives them pressure - in teaching more than 40 pupils*[15] *in class* ***(ZP 21).***
>
> ***Barbara:*** *There are schools where learners are overcrowded in class. The teacher is frustrated if s/he is unable to get close to a child who may be having a problem because learners are just too many* ***(BP 26).***

What these parents noted was that if teachers were teaching large classes they became overwhelmed. In fact, Zenith talked about teachers being pressured, whilst Barbara talked about teachers being unable to attend to individual and diverse needs of learners. The rhetoric was about teachers not performing at their best because of institutional problems, such as overcrowding.

The stress in teachers' work was also seen as emanating from the introduction of new curriculum. As explained by Zenith:

> ***Zenith****: Also…this new syllabus*[16]*, some of the teachers are not familiar with it, so it's a pressure for them because at times they go to class unprepared. Sometimes learners asking them (teachers) questions that they don't have answers for (****ZP 21).***

What Zenith observed was that teacher unpreparedness could be a consequence of not having full understanding of new curricular innovations that teachers needed to adapt. She implied that teachers are pressured, not only to learn, but also to implement the new

[15] Used synonymously as learners or students
[16] Used synonymously to mean curriculum

curricular policies that they are not well-versed with; thus, causing their work to be stressful. Zenith further talked about how teachers are put to the test by some learners. She noted that teachers' competence is sometimes questioned and tested by learners who may have particular demands during teaching and learning.

Sharon talked about the stressful work of teachers being further compounded by the fact that some parents were not helpful or involved in their children's education.

> ***Sharon**: They don't encourage their children to learn. They don't help their children with their schoolwork. There is no schoolwork done by their children at home. This cause stress for teachers (**SP 5).***

This parent indicated that the non-involvement of parents in their children's education was stressful for teachers who expected parents to help the children with some aspects of their schoolwork, especially where teachers could not offer individual attention to all the learners. The rhetoric was that teachers' work was made stressful due to the lack of support from parents or as a result of a disconnection between the school and the home.

One of the parents indicated that:

> ***Whitney:** The daily teachers' work can be regarded as hectic (**WP 4).***

What Whitney observed was that teachers' work became stressful when it was chaotic or filled with confusion from various expectations or demands imposed on teachers by the DoE or parents, as further indicated by Whitney.

The nature of teachers' work was stressful when it imposed negative emotional state on teachers and hindered their effectiveness. Stressful work could be seen as a point around which varying parents' rhetoric was constructed.

6.1.4 The Rhetoric of the Laziness of Teachers

The rhetoric of laziness as described by parents in this study can be grouped into what was not being done, being present but absent, and incompetence of teachers. When the parents talked about laziness, they were referring to what the teachers were doing or not doing in schools. In relation to Laclau and Mouffe's (2001) discourse theory, teachers who were labelled as 'lazy' were those who were seen by the parents as deviating from the norm (dominant discourse) of what teachers ought to be doing in schools.

Two of the parents talked about the situations where teachers would be present at school but not doing what was expected of them:

> ***Sharon:*** *Teachers are there but there is no teaching going on ...* ***(SP 27).***
>
> ***Barbara:*** *Kukhona OTHISHA abayayo eskoleni -abe present, but absent emsebenzini (angayi kofundisa izingane) – there are TEACHERS (emphasis) who go to school and be present (in school) but absent from work (they do not go to teach the learners (in class)* ***(BP 19).***

What Sharon and Barbara were saying about some teachers was that they were not attending to learners in class during the teaching and learning time. The rhetoric was about being present but absent at the same time. Barbara's rhetoric was similar to that of some of the teacher participants (Faith – FT4, Noah – NT3 and to a lesser extent Grace – GT31 – see page 92) who also revealed this type of laziness as occurring in their schools.

The same parents also talked about what was not done by teachers.

> ***Barbara:*** *Kokunye kuphunywa early kungafundwa [sometimes there is no teaching and learning and they knock off early from school] …kokunye uthole ukuthi amaBooks wengane akamakiwe [sometimes learners' books are not marked], uma sekunjalo uvele ubone nawe njengomzali ukuthi othisha bayazihlalela nje abenzi lutho [when it's like that, as a parent you just see that teachers are just sitting and doing nothing]* ***(BP 12).***
>
> ***Sharon:*** *The children will tell you that 'we were not learning anything today at school, so I decided to come back home'* ***(SP 26).***

On the one hand, Barbara and Sharon felt that when there was no teaching, when teachers left school early, when the books were not marked and the teachers were sitting and doing nothing, and when the children were sent home early; these were indicators that teachers were lazy.

On the other hand, Zenith talked about teachers who did substandard work because of the lack of proper planning for the lessons.

> ***Zenith:*** *A teacher that comes to school not knowing what s/he is going to teach on that particular day but will just go to class and do whatever (****ZP 2).***

Zenith associated unpreparedness of teachers with laziness. Doing 'whatever' seemed to suggest that the lazy teachers did irrelevant work which was not beneficial to the learners. The rhetoric in this case was about the teacher's incompetence either emanating from the lack of subject content knowledge or unpreparedness. However, one of the teacher participants (Grace, GT7, on page 87) had indicated that when she does 'whatever' in class, it is based on the level of trust that exists between her and the management. These observations were clear examples of chains of difference which operate in various discourses.

Overall, the rhetoric on teachers' work by parents included the idea that some teachers were not working efficiently, were lazy and that they were doing nothing, which meant 'no teaching'. Parents expected all teachers to be hard working but did notice when they were not, therefore the rhetoric of teachers as lazy. This 'laziness' may be regarded in Laclau and Mouffe's (2001) terms, as floating signifiers open to different articulations.

6.1.5 The Rhetoric of Professionalism and Unprofessionalism

The rhetoric of professionalism leant more on unprofessionalism than on professionalism since the parents seemed to share only their negative experiences in this regard. This rhetoric focused on two broad issues namely; unbecoming behaviour of teachers and ethical or unethical issues.

Two of the parents talked about teachers' behaviour becoming questionable with demoralising effects, particularly on the learners. For instance, Sharon talked about teachers who conflated their personal and professional personae in their interaction with learners.

> ***Sharon:*** *Others can't wait for a day to end. If a school finishes at 2:30pm, they can't wait for that 2:30, and then the next thing you see them in the nearest tavern*[17]*; and then you think to yourself, 'what kind of a teacher does that? …Some, even drink with the learners. Because I think after school as a teacher maybe you should be looking at children's work or preparing for the next day or something* ***(SP 20).***

[17] A place where alcoholic beverages are sold or served

What this parent noted was that professionalism is compromised when teachers engage in activities that are contrary to expectations of the ideal teacher as understood by learners and parents. Sharon observed that professionalism was compromised when teachers' social lives intersected with the learners' social lives outside the school premises. From her articulation, teachers ought to be professional at all times and in all spaces. She positioned herself as someone who knows what teachers ought to be doing after school hours? The rhetoric was about the need for teachers to act professionally at all times, within and outside the school premises.

Barbara, however, talked about when teachers cross the boundaries and when they seem not to care about the consequences of their actions.

> ***Barbara:*** *Kunothisha besilisa ema high school abenza into yokujola nezingane, leyonto-ke is touching ngoba badlala ngezingane (there are male teachers in high schools who are dating school children. This issue is concerning because they are abusing these children) (**BP 21).***

Barbara observed that teachers in this case, were, not only involved in inappropriate behaviours, but also violated their own code of professional ethics. This parent also suggested that being romantically involved with the learners (who are usually minors), exposed learners to emotional abuse and, potentially, to sexual abuse as well. The rhetoric was about when professional ethics are disregarded by some male teachers who are seen to be dishonourable.

The issue of ethics was also suggested by another parent as playing an essential role in the rhetoric of unprofessionalism. Sharon talked about teachers who are not meticulous when doing their work who had unhealthy relations with colleagues.

> ***Sharon:*** *The teacher wouldn't mark the paper because he didn't like some of the children… because it turned out that the teacher had only marked three scripts and for the rest of the class they were not marked…and the principal was aware of that but s/he was doing nothing about it. It was just so bad. The teacher was not even in speaking terms with the principal **(SP18).***

Sharon suggested that some teachers treated some learners differently to others, displaying favouritism. She noted that the manner in which these teachers did their work was discriminatory to some learners and learners usually had no recourse from the school leaders and managers. In this case, Sharon seemed to suggest that lax leadership and

management contributed to, and perpetuated, unprofessional behaviour of teachers. The rhetoric in this case was that unprofessional behaviour did not only exist in the teacher-learner relations but in the teacher-teacher relations and it often went unchecked. Sharon also talked about how the lack of leadership and management in making sound decisions about teachers who did shoddy work led to some teachers behaving unethically.

Unprofessionalism was seen as having negative consequences as it contributed to dysfunctional classroom units and the school system as a whole. From these parents' rhetoric, parents expected teachers as professionals not to be looking at time and just rushing off at the end of a school day. They expected professionals who would not abuse children or be sexual predators. When parents were talking about professionalism, they considered the principal who was supposed to be a professional by taking action against teachers who did not do their work.

The parents' articulations on unprofessionalism revealed chains of equivalence since they all seemed to agree that some teachers landed themselves into compromising situations contrary to the dominant discourse of the professional teacher.

6.2 EXTENDED DISCUSSION OF BROAD THEME ONE

The parents' rhetoric directly linked with teaching and learning centred around some central signifiers, namely: monitoring and evaluation, difficult work, stressful work, laziness and unprofessionalism. These central signifiers can be regarded as the pillars from which different interpretations or meanings can be made (Rear, 2013). It is these meanings (how the concepts are understood by the participants) that give life to the signifiers. The central signifiers, also known as 'nodal points' do not hold any rich meaning, but as suggested by Žižek, they have the potential to attract and unify other surrounding signs in any field (Žižek, 1989) through articulation. In essence, without the meanings that parent participants attach to the concepts, the concepts remain meaningless.

When teachers' work is being monitored and evaluated, it suggests that teachers are being subjected to some form of accountability to and by various stakeholders such as the learners, parents and more specifically the Department of Education. For parents in this study, it appeared that they largely associated monitoring and evaluation with the

Department of Education or the Government (as parents tended to use the two interchangeably) because of it being the employer or the main stakeholder in education (ZP 10/23, BP28). For that reason, some participants felt that the Department of Education has the power and authority to make teachers accountable for their actions in relation to their work (ZP10). In other words, the monitoring of teachers was about ensuring that they are keeping to the rules or expected standards (Wu, 2004). The 'standards agenda' supposes a rather hierarchical implementation of, not only subject policies, but national educational policies in general (Hargreaves, 2000; Tuinamuana, 2011). In such instances, teachers merely respond to a regulatory structure or body which is externally positioned to control teachers' work (George, 2009). For this reason, some teachers are resistant to what seems as forced implementation of policies which puts their work, not only under persistent surveillance, but also makes "greater demands" (Morrow, 2007, p. 11). At the same time, Zenith feels that some teachers are partly to blame for failures of new programmes because they often resist the innovations (ZP23). However, it is not clear whether she was referring to a collective or individual resistance. Whereas a resistance that is collective in nature may occur at a national, provincial, district or even school level depending on the source of the resistance; the individual resistance usually occurs at a classroom level (George, 2009).

Both teacher and parent participants talked about the need to monitor, and to a lesser extent, to evaluate teachers' work. However, they differed in their reasoning of what constitutes these processes (monitoring and evaluation). On the one hand, parents understood monitoring and evaluation to be the processes that are mostly conducted by structures which are external and independent of teachers or school managers (BP28, ZP10/23) with the purpose of upholding the quality of teaching and professional standards (Ingvarson, 2010). On the other hand, teachers understood monitoring to be both an internal and external process which enforces accountability on their part (Weber, 2005).

The parents' rhetoric ignored the explicit role that teachers play in monitoring their own work (self-monitoring). It was not surprising because parents' understanding of teachers' work seemed to be largely based on hearsay (usually from their children and the media sources), what Amin (2008) refers to as 'unsolicited knowing', which is often based on inadequate information. Chains of difference were clearly at play.

Because of the seemingly increased accountability required from teachers, their work was seen by some parent participants as, not only difficult, but also stressful. The difficult nature of teachers' work mostly emanated from issues that were not even academic, but which were social; for example, learners who were disrespectful (ZP7, BP10), or had psychosocial issues, e.g. drug users (BP10), all of whom were placed under the care of teachers. When learners misbehaved in class, they made it difficult for teachers to provide enabling environment for teaching and learning (Simuforosa & Ngara, 2014). In addition, other issues of ill-discipline (such as drug use) emanated from the community/ies that learners came from and were likely to infiltrate the school premises (Lochan, 2010) and contribute negatively to teachers' work. Learners who use drugs tend to be disruptive and aggressive to both learners and teachers. With such learners, teachers' work may become extremely difficult (Surty, 2011) because teachers may be unable to ensure a safe teaching and learning environment for learners and for themselves. Therefore, it is not surprising that the issue of ill-discipline was enumerated by the parent participants as one of the factors that created difficult conditions for teachers to work in.

Perhaps the fact that high school learners are usually in their teen years (+/- 13 to 18-year-olds) or a little beyond (20-year-olds or even above), is indicative of the inherent struggles that learners may have in these critical stages of their lives (Fleming, 2004). Learners or the youth at these stages are known to be at a dilemma of trying to understand and identify themselves in relation to the world. The dilemma is often exacerbated by the parents and teachers who seem to have their own struggles in understanding the learners' shifting identities as they become adults. This lack of understanding can often lead to teachers being stressed.

Parents in this study understand the stressful nature of teachers' work to often result from the factors that are out of the teacher/s' control; for example, overcrowding (ZP21, BP26) and non-involvement of parents in their children's education (SP5). Their concern for teacher-learner ratio emanated from the idea that it becomes stressful and impossible for teachers to control learners in overcrowded classrooms as also indicated by Mokhele (2006). Barbara assumes that when teachers teach in overcrowded classes, the repercussions are often, not only frustrating for teachers (BP26); who often cannot attend to diverse learners' needs, but also detrimental for the learners when for example, teachers are unable to give meaningful feedback on learners' work timeously (Mestry & Khumalo,

2012). These participants observed that not receiving the right kind of assistance or guidance (from teachers) may be due to the lack of appropriate infrastructure (Oghuvbu, 2007), like the situation occasioned by overcrowded classrooms. This lack of infrastructure, coupled with other factors, impede on academic advancement of learners (ZP21). Sharon seemed to indicate that some parents add to the stressful work of teachers by not being actively involved in the learning of their children (SP5). Seemingly, Sharon's articulation does not refer to the surveillance kind of parental involvement (which is known to have rather detrimental effects), but to the supportive kind of parent involvement (Arnold, 2011), which is likely to yield positive academic achievement.

The persistent stressful nature of teachers' work leads teachers to find various ways to lessen the burdensome work. Parents usually get to know from their children that some teachers tend to absent themselves from classroom during teaching and learning time (SP27, BP19). It was observed that others lacked commitment to do their work (ZP2, BP12). Most of the information that parents get to know about teachers is the information volunteered by their children about teachers. Although parents recognised the difficult and stressful nature of teachers' work, they nevertheless still expected teachers to perform at their best when interacting with learners in class. However, various factors were seen to contribute to teacher absenteeism (which is seen to be often linked to laziness by the parents), such as stress and burnout (Fisher, 2011), high teacher-learner ratios (Rockoff, Jacob, Kane & Staiger, 2011) or lack of professional competence (Musyoki, 2015). These factors, most likely, emanated from personal, structural (school) or environmental (community) issues which impacted on teachers' work and their performance. But, because parents are not at school, they get informed about what happens in school by their children; either voluntarily or when asked specific questions about their schooling. Often, this information is hardly verified for its truth or untruth, but is usually taken at face value as the truth about teachers.

Amongst other things, the laziness of teachers that the parents referred to also contributed to the unprofessional behaviours displayed by some teachers (SP18/20). Perhaps the parents' rhetoric on teacher professionalism which was largely negative, was based on their experiences (with teachers) which may not have been good (SP18). However, not all teachers were unprofessional in their work, some teachers are good at what they do

and they are dedicated to their work, as suggested by the teacher participants (see the sub-theme on the rhetoric of dedication / caring – see pages 102-104).

Overall, whilst the parents' rhetoric acknowledged the demanding work that teachers engage in, it also equally highlighted the unhappiness or negativity that parents level on some teachers' behaviour and work ethic. In some instances, the parents were not able to distinguish between the Department of Education and the government, they conflated them all together as failing to monitor teachers. This conflation of the Department of Education (which is only a subset of the government) and the Government which is the State is not surprising because the department is located in Government. The Government was macro, the Department of Education was meso and the school monitoring, micro. The fact that these three levels were all conflated together was not surprising because the parents' rhetoric ignored the role of the school management (which is an immediate structure within the school) in the monitoring of teachers' work.

There is a lot of criticism about the lack of professionalism. It is manifest in teachers who have intimate relationships with learners or teachers who engage in unbecoming behaviour in front of, or together with learners. These are some of the aspects that were seen by the parent participants as problematic and often led to issues of ill-discipline where teachers seem to have lost control and are unable to manage the learners' behaviour in class. It was almost as if parents only saw teachers as teachers, while teachers saw themselves as professionals who also had a private life. What teachers do not realise is the right space in which they can express these things. Such things (intimate relationships) cannot be expressed in the same space where teachers do their work, it should be outside of the work space. So, often those teachers who engage in these acts are not differentiating the space which dictates which identity comes out, whether it is the professional or the social. But parents seem to be able to see it clearly that this space (the school) is only for the professional. Theme two is discussed below.

6.3 THE RHETORIC OF GOODNESS, PASSION AND EXPERTISE AS CHARACTERISING TEACHERS' WORK

This theme was derived from the parents' articulations about some of the aspects that they considered fundamental characteristics of outstanding teachers and how these characteristics directly or indirectly influenced the work that teachers do. From the

parents' interviews, three sub-themes in relation to theme two were further identified, namely; the rhetoric of a good teacher, the rhetoric of dedication or passion and the rhetoric of expertise.

6.3.1 The Rhetoric of a Good Teacher

The rhetoric of a good teacher can be categorised into issues of expectations, teacher character and qualifications**.** In one case, the gendered nature of a good teacher was presented. One of the parents talked about the kind of teacher that was expected and deemed acceptable to parents. She talked about a teacher who exudes excellency which rubbed on to the learners:

> ***Zenith:*** *I think you can take good or excellent but you can't take anything else as teachers do when they do reports for our children indicating whether they are outstanding, good or what not. So, teachers too, ought to be excellent or good. Anything less than that 'hey ...not acceptable!'* ***(ZP 14.)***

This parent observed that teachers ought to be assessed for their competence prior to being employed for teaching. What Zenith advocated was a means by which the selection team would be able to distinguish the excellent or good teacher from the rest of the crowd. The rhetoric was about teachers who led by examples, and portrayed the same kind of excellence that they demanded from learners, if not more.

Characterising what good teachers ought to be like or be able to do in relation to their work was articulated by two of the parents (Sharon and Zenith). Whilst the one parent talked about the essential skills that good teachers ought to have, the other parent categorised teachers in relation to their work and the skills they displayed.

> ***Sharon:*** *I would have been a very good teacher ..., Yes, because I love children. Because I have very good listening skills. I listen and I'm able to interact with children* ***(SP 12).***
>
> ***Zenith:*** *A good teacher is a teacher who evaluates his/her work to see how many children were able to absorb what has been taught or how many children were left out. A moderate teacher is a teacher who can also evaluate her/himself and maybe can also give learners a test but s/he doesn't care if learners are 'with him/her'. A poor teacher is a teacher who come to school to teach but is not prepared* ***(ZP 2).***

Being a good teacher was associated with the academic qualifications that the teachers have. One parent talked about how the teachers' qualifications influenced the manner in which the teachers conducted their work.

> ***Sharon:*** *It depends on the kind of education that the teachers possess. I don't know if the institutions they went to, play a role, but it gives them a certain class in terms of how they do their work (you can tell that they were not cooked from the same pot…because there are those teachers ongazi ukuthi baphasa kanjani esikoleni [whom you don't know how they passed at school] to become teachers and then you wonder 'what this person teaches the children'?* ***(SP 31).***

What Sharon assumed was that teachers who were well qualified were generally good teachers capable of fulfilling their roles. By implication, Sharon noted that when teachers fulfilled their roles, the parents would be satisfied with the teachers and the work that they do. At the same time, Sharon suggested that parents were not happy with some teachers who lagged behind in their work. She posited that lagging behind could be influenced by the kind of qualifications that the teachers possessed. Sharon used a metaphor of a cooking pot to indicate that when teachers are qualified, they would have been either carefully and thoroughly prepared for their work (well-cooked) or insufficiently prepared for their work (undercooked). The rhetoric here was that being a good teacher is determined by the kind of qualification/s one has. What was not clear from Sharon's articulation was how the goodness could be measured. Were parents able to know about the kind of qualification/s that their children's teachers possessed? Were parents able to know about how teachers performed as learners in schools? Were parents able to tell how good a teacher is just by looking at them?

In another instance, the rhetoric of a good teacher was presented as gendered. In this case, teachers and their work were viewed in a male/female binary; in comparison and in competition with each other. Two of the parents talked about female teachers faring far better than their counterparts (male teachers). Whilst Barbara talked about the particularistic nature, that is, the ability of female teachers to pay attention to detail, Sharon talked about the natural empathetic nature of female teachers.

> ***Barbara****: Mina ngokwami othisha abaningi abakhuthele abesifazane (in my opinion, female teachers are hard-working), abantu besifazane isikhathi esiningi banayo lento yabo yokwenzisiza banawo unembeza*

(females usually have it in them to be thorough in what they do and they have a conscience) ***(BP 21).***

Sharon: *Female teachers are better than males. Males are stricter and they are more of disciplinarians than being teachers. Females have that motherly aspect and would have a kind of relationship with learners that males may not have (****SP 30).***

On the one hand, Barbara's comparison of female and male teachers' work-ethic seemed to position female teachers as people who were well-organised and driven by ethics. On the other hand, Sharon's comparison seemed to portray male teachers as enforcers of rules which, in a way, positioned male teachers as patriarchal, uncaring and unloving. Sharon assumed that female teachers were good because of the motherly instincts they possessed and hence, they had the potential to relate well with the learners. Both Barbara and Sharon positioned female teachers as better suited to do the work because of their gender attributes, which were said to be conforming to the idealistic and universal view of female teachers as emotional. On the contrary, these views could be seen as questioning the ideas that at secondary / high school level, male teachers are domineering and well-respected. The rhetoric in this case was that teachers are good when they seem to care about their learners.

Being a good teacher was seen as having a positive role to the learners when it assisted them to be successful in class, as well as allowed them to be organised and perform to the best of their abilities.

6.3.2 The Rhetoric of Dedication or Passion

The rhetoric of dedication or passion was seen as ranging from doing more than is necessary to reaching out to the struggling learners, and to being a visionary teacher. Two of the parents talked about teachers who dedicated their 'free' time to teach learners, that is, teaching beyond the specified 'school time':

Barbara: *Othisha abazinikelayo bafundise izingane ngesikhathi okungesona esokufunda (teachers who dedicate themselves and teach learners even during the times which are not official school times). Uthisha enomndeni wakhe, baSacrifice isikhathi sabo (teachers have their families but they sacrifice their family time). Uma ngicabanga othisha abakuholeli*

> *ukufundisa ngamaWeekend (I don't think that teachers are paid for teaching on weekends) (**BP 13).***
>
> ***Sharon:** Some teachers are passionate with their work **(SP 19) ….** For those teachers, teaching is a calling, more than a profession. They go an extra mile, teaching on weekends and holidays **(SP 35).***

Both Barbara and Sharon talked about teachers who fully committed to their work by dedicating extra time to teaching than was expected of teachers. On the one hand Barbara viewed the dedication as a sacrificial kind of work because teachers lost out on their social life while busy with some aspects of schoolwork. On the other hand, Sharon saw the commitment as being passion-driven, whereby teachers would do anything for the love of their work. In both instances, teachers were seen to be putting the best interest of the learners first as opposed to their personal lives. The rhetoric was about the selfless nature of some teachers.

Another parent talked about teachers who made the effort to reach out to the learners who could be having some difficulty in their schoolwork. As indicated in her statement:

> ***Zenith:** A concerned teacher can make means for those learners who are left behind. If s/he sees that so and so still cannot read, then the teacher can do something; and maybe even communicate with the parent to say, 'can you please assist me in helping your child to read' **(ZP 8).***

Zenith, in this case, suggested that teachers are dedicated when they are able to show concern for individual learner's needs. For Zenith, such teachers did not work in isolation, but acknowledged the importance of inclusion of both learners and parents; the school – home partnership. This parent highlighted the importance of the connection and working together of the two systems (the home and the school) for the benefit of the learners. The rhetoric in this case was that a dedicated teacher works in collaboration with others to find solutions to learners' problems or to satisfy learners' needs.

Furthermore, Zenith talked about how teachers who seemed interested in the learners' future/s were known to engage, not only with helping learners with their individual needs, but also with developing better communities for the greater good.

> ***Zenith:** There are teachers who dedicate themselves fully in education, who are concerned with the children. A concerned teacher will even take his spare time and deal with the problem (academic or social) that he sees*

> *in a particular child. Teachers who fully dedicate themselves, who want to build a better community, a better country...but there are very few of those, most of them are there just to earn money* ***(ZP 26).***

Zenith suggested that some teachers were good because of their patriotic attributes, not only being concerned about the immediate, individualistic benefit of teaching children; but also being dedicated to the extensive contribution of their work. When teachers were able to fully dedicate themselves to their work, learners' lives would highly likely to improve, academically and socially. However, it also appeared that Zenith was troubled by the fact that there was only a small percentage of teachers who were fully dedicated to their work who were not seeking personal gratification.

On the other hand, Zenith's idea of dedicated or passionate teachers clearly centred around the teachers' ability to identify the various learners' needs but teachers who are also altruistic in their teaching.

Dedication to one's work or being passionate about the work that one does has a positive role in enhancing learners' experiences in the classroom. However, this rhetoric on dedication or passion that teachers were expected to display ignored the negative effects it could have on some teachers' lives when it crept into the family or social life of teachers. Some teachers would be dedicated to the detriment of other aspects of their lives, for example, the absence of balance between home and work. The parents alluded to the fact that teachers have to sacrifice their home and personal times, especially for the lazy ones who wanted to escape from work and would rather be more at home than at work.

6.3.3 The Rhetoric of Expertise

The rhetoric of expertise as understood by parents in this study can be grouped around issues of what teachers can do and fitness for purpose of teachers' qualifications. Sharon talked about the specific skills that only teachers are known to have which enable them to teach the learners.

> ***Sharon:*** *The role of teachers is to teach children new things that will impact on their lives as they grow and in their future careers. Educational stuff that parents cannot teach which needs to be done by somebody who is qualified to do that…as for me, I cannot teach my children how to write. I cannot teach them to understand concepts like teachers would do. Because*

> *as a parent, maybe you can teach children manners and stuff like that, but teachers go an extra mile* ***(SP 6).***

Seemingly, Sharon suggested that teaching required competencies which, in her view, were located within particular individuals (teachers) who possessed expert knowledge. She further observed that teachers' expertise could be seen as authentic when it had a lasting and futuristic impact on learners' learning. Sharon highlighted the important role that parents play in the education of their children, but stressed the limitation that some parents experienced because of their lack in certain skills. Therefore, Sharon assumed that meaningful contribution in the learners' academic lives was only possible when it was made by teachers who were qualified to teach. The rhetoric in this instance, was that expertise was an essential aspect in teaching and it set apart the qualified from the unqualified. Sharon linked the rhetoric of expertise to the teachers whom she had referred to as passionate, because they *"go an extra mile"* (SP6/35).

The rhetoric of qualifications was further buttressed by Zenith who talked about the importance of matching the teachers' qualifications with the actual subjects that they were employed to teach.

> ***Zenith****: The Department of Education must employ teachers to teach in the subjects that they majored in, where they will excel and make learners to love those subjects because they are taught by somebody who enjoys and excel in that subject - somebody who knows what he is talking about* ***(ZP 32).***

In this case, Zenith observed the importance of teachers being qualified, and noted that when teachers were made to teach the subjects they studied, the likelihood was that they would perform at their peak. She also suggested that teachers' high performance had the possibility of energising the learners, who in turn could also be motivated to emulate their teachers' attitudes towards their work. For Zenith, teachers' expertise in specific subjects arose, not only from their academic excellence, but also from their passion about specific subjects or about teaching in general. The rhetoric on expertise was, not only about the level of theoretical grounding that the teachers had in the subjects that they taught, but also on the enthusiasm that they showed in their work of teaching. However, Zenith suggested that male teachers were usually excellent or expert teachers when she refers to "*somebody who knows what* ***he*** *is talking about"*. At the same time, Zenith appears to infer that some teachers encounter challenges at their time of employment by the

Department of Education, when they are asked to teach subjects which they have very little or no content knowledge in. The need for the teachers' major subjects to match the subjects they are employed to teach by the Department of Education as proposed by Zenith would perhaps mean that due to the shortage of teachers in certain fields / subject departments, teachers may find themselves teaching subjects that are outside of their field.

The rhetoric of expertise was strongly linked to the rhetoric of a good teacher which, together, provided positive experiences for the learners. Teachers who were deemed to be experts in their work were seen by the parent participants as having the ability to use their advanced knowledge and skills for the betterment of ***all*** learners in their classrooms.

6.4 EXTENDED DISCUSSION OF THEME TWO

On the one hand Sharon observed that teachers were regarded as good at their work when they were seen to be compassionate about the needs of learners and also when they had the ability to listen. Being able to listen, is usually an indication that the teacher is interested in what the learners are saying and also in them as persons (Miller, 2012). This interest was mandatory in the interaction of teachers and learners since teaching involves human connection, coupled with warmth and nurturance (O'Connor, 2008). Sharon's articulation suggested that to be characterised as being a good teacher or doing good work, the teacher had to display some love towards the learners. This view coincided with Hargreaves' (1998) assertion that emotions are inherent in the teaching and learning processes, and are known to be socially situated.

On the other hand, Zenith observed that teachers were generally good when they were able to reflect about their practices in order to improve the learners' experience of learning. She tried to show the features that distinguished a good teacher from the rest. The rhetoric seemed to be about the characteristics of a good teacher in relation to their work. What was interesting in this case was that, what teachers and researchers knew theoretically what makes a good teacher, parents seemed to know intuitively. Zenith also indicated the kind of commitment that some teachers have in doing their work. This kind of commitment is referred to by Day (2004) as emotional commitment, and he observes that teaching is, not only an intellectual, but also an "emotional engagement with the self through regular review and renewal of purposes and practices" (p. 1). This renewing of

purposes improved the teacher's performance and the learners' learning experience so that there would be no learners left out, as stated by Zenith.

Sharon's suggestion (SP31) assumed that good qualifications equalled good teaching and therefore, quality education. Her suggestion coincided with Miller's (2012) idea of a good teacher who is supposed to be well grounded in academic knowledge and be able to challenge learners to think critically.

The aspect of good teaching is often linked to caring which is regarded as an emotion (Darby, 2008; Zembylas, 2003). Therefore, it was not surprising that the parents talked about good teachers in a gendered way which positioned female teachers as good teachers because, as women or mothers, they were usually associated with the ethic of care (Chikoko, 2015).

It was apparent that the parent participants saw teachers' work as difficult and stressful but also recognised that there were teachers who rose above all the difficulties and stressors in their work. Both Sharon's and Barbara's views about teachers using their personal times to do the teaching work were in agreement with observations about the interconnectedness of the teachers' professional and personal lives (Alsup, 2006; Bukor, 2013; Crosswell & Elliot, 2004). Being passionate about the work that they do, teachers drew from their personal reserves or resources in order to achieve the professional expectations. What Sharon and Barbara foregrounded was the time that was invested by teachers at school in doing their work. This rhetoric was silent about the time that was invested by teachers outside of school hours or site (Crosswell & Elliot, 2004). Perhaps this silence was due to the fact that, not all parents were aware about all the nuances of teachers' work.

Sharon used the metaphor of a 'calling' to explain the kind of commitment that some teachers display towards their work. A 'calling' is closely linked to a vocation which, in the opinion of Hackett and Lavery (2010), implies the work that is done to provide service to others (learners) whilst the service providers (teachers) remain personally fulfilled. It can then be argued that Sharon and Barbara found the dedicated, committed or passionate teachers to be intrinsically motivated to do their work irrespective of the external circumstances (Chikoko, 2015). The ultimate goal for such teachers was the best interest

of the child. Whether teachers were teaching beyond school hours or they attended to learners' individual needs, the focus was on the betterment of the child. For such teachers, Day (2004) observes, "passion is not an option [but] it is essential to high-quality teaching" (p. 2).

Zenith's idea (ZP26) of dedication was in line with the notion of teaching which prioritises moral practice over technical proficiencies (Day, 2004), or teaching that shows emotional attachment (in a positive way) to the work (Crosswell & Elliott, 2004). Zenith understood that teachers who had strong commitment to their work were often driven by good personal imperatives (O'Connor, 2008; Zembylas, 2003), and by their political interests (Kelchtermans & Ballet, 2002). For Zenith, teachers were passionate or dedicated when they taught book knowledge as well as when they taught learners about patriotism.

Both Sharon (SP6) and Zenith (ZP32) highlighted the need for expert teachers in the education of children. Their view was congruent with ideas of other education researchers who justified the necessity for expert teachers in the schooling system. Expertise is defined to mean 'principled knowledge' (Alexander, 2003); 'exceptional knowledge' (Hattie, 2003); 'sound knowledge base' (Huntly, 2008). By a teacher having principled knowledge, Alexander (2003) means that the teacher has well-integrated and relevant knowledge which when disseminated in a captivating manner is highly likely to promote high learner achievement. Similarly, Hattie's (2003) exceptional knowledge refers to a teacher who uses his/ her integrated knowledge to organise, combine or modify aspects of a lesson to suit the needs of the learners and thereby influence positive achievement. For Huntly (2008), expert teachers are those who use their sound knowledge base of the curriculum, the pedagogy and the learners, to provide favourable learning experiences for high learner achievement.

When teachers excel, the assumption is that they are doing quality work, therefore learners are getting quality education. Perhaps, Zenith was speaking from her own experiences whilst in school under the apartheid regime, where in most Black schools, teachers were either under-qualified or unqualified (Douglas, 2005), and therefore not much excellence displayed, with mostly negative experiences for learners.

6.5 SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS ON THE PARENTS' RHETORIC

The findings indicated that some parents in this study felt that, for order to be maintained in schools and for ensuring that smooth teaching and learning occurs, some sort of surveillance needs to be effected by the authorities (department officials). Parents in this study noted that teachers often lack work ethic or resourcefulness and therefore, need to be dictated to or monitored by external bodies to check the extent to which they are doing their work. The parents' request or demand for surveillance can be assessed on the basis of New Zealand's experience where the Ministry of Education is monitoring and controlling teachers and the work they do (George, 2009) through various auditing and evaluation systems. The study by George (2009) revealed that New Zealand's teachers' performance and competence are continuously managed and assessed by the Education Ministry, and this is precisely what the parents in this study wanted to see.

An analysis of the findings from the parents revealed varied perspectives on the difficulty of teachers' work which were seen to be expounded by the sociocultural and contextual factors that surrounded various schools which impacted negatively on the teaching and learning processes. However, the parents also reported that issues which were seen as disturbances to teaching and learning processes were, not only caused by learners, but also by teachers. For instance, issues like drug use and abuse by learners, teacher laziness, teacher unprofessionalism and teacher stress were identified by parents as some of the factors that contributed negatively to teaching and learning processes. These findings were in line with a study conducted in Nigeria by Oghuvbu (2007), which noted that different levels of indiscipline among teachers resulted from various acts of unprofessionalism.

In this study, all parent participants (Barbara, Sharon, Zenith and Whitney) showed some understanding of the complexity of teachers' work which they deemed 'hectic' (Whitney), 'stressful' (Barbara) and 'difficult' (Sharon and Zenith). These labels resulted from the parents' acknowledgement of the social realities that teachers worked under. For example, Barbara highlighted that teachers were stressed because they had to deal with learners who used and abused drugs and Zenith indicated that the ill-disciplined learners made teachers' work difficult. In Laclau and Mouffe's (2001) terms, the construct of 'complexity of teachers' work' operated as a point of crystallisation (a nodal point) which shaped the discourse. Through the parents' attempts to explain their understanding of

what the complexity of teachers' work meant, they were momentarily articulating (or fixing) the floating elements to become moments within the discourse; hence, forming the competing discourses of difficult work, stressful work and hectic work. The meanings constructed by the parents in this study about the complexity of teachers' work present differences in how the complex nature of teachers' work was conceived by the parent participants.

However complex the work of teachers might be; the parents in this study were generally satisfied with the work of some teachers whom they constructed as 'good', 'dedicated or passionate' and 'expert' teachers as discussed in chapter six (analysis of parents' rhetoric). Being good and passionate was seen by the parents in this study as associated with the aspects of care and commitment that teachers displayed towards their work.

6.6 CONCLUSION

The question, 'What are parents saying about teachers' work? Why?' was the focus of this chapter. The analysis presented here indicated the parents' rhetoric about teachers' work emanated from the parents' experiences with teachers or from the information they gathered from their children or from the media. The two broad themes discussed in this chapter were a) the rhetoric directly linked to teaching and learning which covered issues such as monitoring and evaluation of teachers' work and teaching programmes, difficult work, stressful work, teacher laziness, professionalism and unprofessionalism; and b) the rhetoric of goodness, passion and expertise as characterising teachers' work which was more about the qualities that parents expected from their children's teachers. The analysis revealed that monitoring and evaluation operated at four levels; that teachers' work is monitored by the Department of Education officials; that teachers' work can also be established from the evidence in the learners' books; that teachers themselves can monitor their work, and that the government needs to evaluate the impact of new programmes on teachers' work. The success of the teaching and learning process was dependent on the kind of work that teachers did in class (interaction that exist between teachers and learners in the classroom) which was, not only difficult, but also stressful, particularly when it was disrupted by external factors (learners' ill-discipline). The parents' rhetoric also revealed their perspectives of what they thought to be contributing negatively to the teaching and learning process, such as laziness and unprofessional behaviour of teachers.

Whilst Theme One revealed a combination of positive and negative parent rhetoric about teachers' work, the analysis of theme two revealed the perspectives which, on the surface, appeared to be positive but from an in-depth analysis also showed the negative experiences or the concerns that parents had around some of the work that teachers do.

Whereas the previous chapter presented interpretations constructed from teachers' interviews, this chapter presented interpretations constructed from the parents' interviews. The comparison of the nature of the rhetoric constructed from both the teachers' and parents' focus group discussions is introduced in the next chapter. Both teachers' and parents' perspectives of teachers' work are presented.

CHAPTER SEVEN
The Nature of the Rhetoric

Introduction

Chapter Six presented interpretation and analysis of data representing parents' rhetoric about teachers' work. The aim of this chapter is to present the joint analysis of data produced from two focus groups; that is, teacher participants and parent participants, which were conducted separately. The findings that emerged from the two focus groups are presented together with the intention to juxtapose the data to highlight the nature of the rhetoric about teachers' work that arose from the discussions with the two groups. The nature of the rhetoric is analysed based on eight themes which were identified as issues of concern (when the participants were interviewed on one-on-one basis) which needed further elaboration. The themes are: overwork/ work overload, unappreciation, dissatisfaction and satisfaction, professionalism and unprofessionalism, ill-discipline, corporal punishment, leadership and management. Quotes (in italics) from teachers' and parents' focus groups (respectively) were analysed and are foregrounded using pseudonyms for each participant and alphanumerical codes at the end. Each alphanumerical code is composed of the first letter from the name of either the teacher or parent. Letters "T" and "P" indicate teacher and parent participant individually and the number indicates the paragraph from which the quotes are extracted. The rhetoric from both focus groups is connected to teachers work and the analysis tries to show the nature of teachers' work.

The data analysis clearly shows that there were things/issues that teachers and parents had common views about and there were points were they differed. Even with the issues that seemed to have common views, those views were not necessarily completely crystallised (they did not seem to fully agree on every aspect). Therefore, the nature of the rhetoric can be visualised as starting off (with some views) as very closely related (complementary rhetoric with differential points) and then diverging to almost oppositional state (partially incompatible rhetoric). My interpretation and hence the meaning I make of the data is presented in the diagram below:

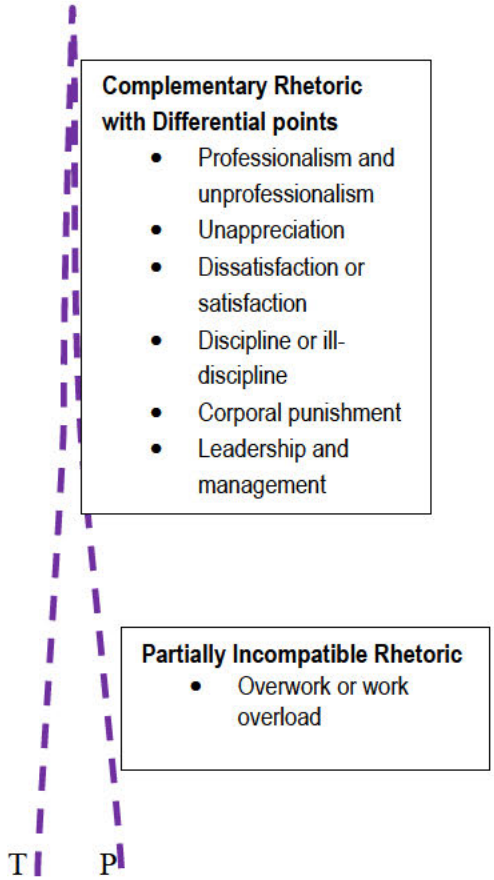

Figure 7.1 A diagram representing the nature of rhetoric between **T**eachers and **P**arents

For the focus group interviews, the schedule consisted of the same set of questions for both the teacher participant group and the parent participant group. The questions emanated from issues that arose from the one-on-one interview findings which were not fully interrogated or expatiated on by the participants. The discussion for each item of focus begins with the excerpt from teachers' conversation and its analysis, followed by an excerpt from the parents' conversation and its analysis. An extended discussion on the issues presented by both participant groups is also presented.

7.1 Focal Points of Focus Groups Discussions

The presentation of data in this section is based on the concepts that were used to initiate the focus group discussions, and which were also used as the points of departure (themes) for the analysis of data.

7.1.1 Teachers on **teacher professionalism**:

> **Kadesh:** I think a professional teacher is a teacher who is always in class teaching and learning.... For me, that is teacher professionalism. It is

also about setting example for the learners that you are teaching, also about the way you interact with other staff members.... That's what teacher professionalism means for me **(KT 35).**

Grace: Okay, to add on that one, it's a matter of 'walking the talk'. if you are a teacher, it means you must be a lifetime researcher **(GT 37).**

Grace: Another thing, you must have this element of pastoral feeling. As teachers, we just creep into the kids' social lives. If we know that someone is lacking, maybe financially or is not emotionally okay, we get in there somehow; and this makes you feel like the job that you are doing is producing something good and meaningful **(GT 38).**

Kadesh: Again, teacher professionalism is about boundaries. If you look into the teacher-learner relationship, there should be boundaries. A teacher cannot have sexual intercourse with the learner **(KT 36).**

Grace: Sexual relations **(GT 39).**

Kadesh: A teacher cannot be in a romantic relationship with a learner (**KT 37).**

Grace: And drink with them **(GT 40)** …and gossip with them **(GT 41).**

Kadesh: And gossip with them, because...I have been to a school where I help out on Saturdays (I teach in that school on Saturdays). A male teacher said to one learner "Hi babe, how are you?" I was shocked. I was thinking to myself, 'this is unprofessional. How can this man say this?' **(KT 38)**

Grace: It happens... **(GT 42).**

Mercy: Yeah, professionalism is also compromised...Sometimes you find that a teacher plots with a learner or learners against another teacher - so in this way professionalism is compromised (**MT 33).**

Noah: It's a question of ethics...If we are doing all (like our colleague has said), how we dress, we don't smoke in front of learners, we don't drink with them and stuff like that... and also doing your work properly; if you give out homework, you take it back and mark it and give it back to the learners **(NT 29).**

Kadesh: Even the way you interact with your staff members - the manner of approach also links to professionalism. Being professional at all times. In terms of approach, approaching people in a respectful manner **(KT 39).**

> **Mercy:** Like if the head of the school is not disciplined, s/he cannot perform his/her duties well, then the whole school collapses. Even the school that I'm in now, was once the best school but now, it's so bad (**emphasis**). Some teachers would not go to class and tell the principal that they are attending union's meetings. If the principal questions the teacher, the teacher will say to the principal "What's your problem, are you interfering with my union **(MT35)?**
>
> **Kadesh:** So, in a way, the unions are hampering teacher professionalism **(KT 43).**

In this discussion, Kadesh and Grace started off by talking about what teacher professionalism should or ought to be about; the ideal. Leading by example (for the learners) and how one interacts with one's colleagues were suggested by Kadesh to be the basics of teacher professionalism (KT35). Grace talked about staying true to one's commitment, "*walking the talk"* (GT37). Helping learners in other ways besides academic assistance was suggested by Grace as bringing about meaning into the work that they did as teachers (GT38). Furthermore, Kadesh talked about how the teacher-learner relations should be bounded in order to avoid compromising situations between the two (KT36). Some of the boundaries that Kadesh talked about were also referred to by one of the parents (Zenith) in their discussion about ill-discipline (ZP15FG).

Having sexual intercourse (KT36) / sexual relations (GT39) or romantic relationship with a learner (KT37) or drinking with learners (GT40) or gossiping with learners (GT41, KT38) were some of the things that were seen by Kadesh and Grace as diminishing the teachers' professional status. In line with Kadesh's and Grace's comments, Mercy noted that professionalism gets jeopardised by underhanded actions of some teachers, in this instance, when some teachers schemed with learners against other teachers (MT33).

The rhetoric of ethics was brought into the discussion by Noah who suggested that everything that teachers did needed to be guided by integrity (NT29). The issue of how teachers dressed [although generalised and not specific to female teachers as was the case under the section on ill-discipline] (NT41FG)] was again highlighted by Noah as possibly impacting on teacher professionalism. He further suggested that when teachers are conscious of their coincided with the views of one of the parent participants (Sharon -

SP19FG) who mentioned that teachers should be exemplary to the learners, although Sharon was talking under the leadership and management issues.

Kadesh's and Mercy's take on the discussion on ethics was drawn from the interpersonal rhetoric, particularly among the teachers or between teachers and the principal. Mercy highlighted instances whereby teachers would leave learners unattended and make derogatory[18] comments towards the principal if he tried to reprimand them (MT35). Mercy's observation of teachers who questioned the principal *"what's your problem, are you interfering with my union?"*, could be seen as a way of instilling fear in the principal using the name of the union/s which were highlighted by teachers as having a huge influence in the employment of HoDs, deputy principals and principals. However, Mercy assumed that the unbecoming behaviour by teachers was encouraged by the principal who was also not disciplined, and therefore, unable to control the teachers. In addition, Kadesh saw unions as de-professionalising teachers by holding meetings during teaching and learning time (KT43).

7.1.2 Parents on **teacher professionalism and unprofessionalism:**

> **Whitney**: Teacher professionalism means knowing how to behave as a teacher; such as, knowing the things the teacher is liable and accountable for (**WP 12).**
>
> **Zenith**: For me, it means that teachers must know that they must behave in front of pupils. Teachers need to respect themselves even if they are of the same age with the pupils. Teachers must know that they represent parents in their absence (**ZP 12).**
>
> **Sharon:** Well, teacher professionalism means that teachers should treat their work with respect. Having the ability to draw a line between being friendly and a friendship between themselves and learners. Teachers should not be involved in romantic relationship with their learners. Professionalism means using proper language, that is; they should refrain from using swear words/vulgar language (**SP 12).**

[18] intentionally offensive comment -

> **Barbara:** Being professional is to do something with some expert skills. So, if teachers do their work showing that they are experts in what they do. Doing work with some honesty **(BP 12).**
>
> **Zenith:** Issues like when teachers become too friendly with some pupils such that they buy them alcohol and even drink with them. Some teachers even impregnate pupils. These are some of the issues that make teachers to be disrespected by other pupils because the teacher has misbehaved; and these issues interfere with their professionalism (**ZP 13).**
>
> **Barbara**: Lack of self-respect, when teachers behave badly, not in accordance with the school rules or not acting as parents to the learners as my sister has mentioned that some teachers have intimate relationships with learners **(BP 13).**
>
> **Sharon**: Being looked down upon, interferes with teacher professionalism. Teachers have to always defend their profession. Also being compensated (paid) less than they should be (**SP 13).**
>
> **Whitney:** Learners' attitudes and the parents' expectations. Wearing different caps is not easy for teachers, but I believe they have Professional Bodies to guide them **(WP 13).**

Whitney, Zenith and Sharon talked about teacher professionalism as a measure of teachers' behaviour. Whitney's comment suggested that no matter how teachers behaved, in a good or bad way, the likelihood was that they would be held accountable for their behaviour. (WP12) Zenith noted that respect was the core of teacher professionalism which started from self-respect (teachers) and extended to the learners and authorities (ZP12). What would it mean for teachers to act '*in loco parentis'?* as this is what was suggested by Zenith. In a way, Zenith sees teachers as professionals because of all the roles and responsibilities that are entrusted upon them by parents when they send their children to school. Sharon also talked about respect but not just respect for the people but respect for the work (SP12). Respecting the work meant teachers treating every aspect of their work with respect which went together with fairness and truthfulness. Sharon suggested that the teacher-learner relations must be bounded; a comment similar to one teacher participant (Kadesh's) (KT36FG – see page 156). She further suggested that teachers need not use defamatory language when interacting with the learners or with each

other. Again, this comment was related to the comment made by Kadesh (KT39FG – see page 155) about the manner of approach that was deemed acceptable for teachers.

Barbara changed the focus of the discussion by talking about professionalism in relation to teacher expertise (BP12). For Barbara, teachers could be regarded as when they possessed particular skills or knowledge and displayed certain qualities, like honesty. Honesty was closely related to ethics and therefore, Barbara's comment was similar to Noah's (NT29FG) comment about professionalism being an issue of ethics.

The discussion on the issues that impacted negatively on teacher professionalism seemed to vary from teacher misbehaviour (ZP13, BP13), teacher salaries (SP13) to learners' attitudes and parents' expectations (WP13). Issues of teacher misbehaviour as suggested by parents included; teachers drinking alcohol with learners, teachers breaking the rules, failure of teachers to act as parents, teachers having intimate relationships with learners. Some of these issues were similar to those suggested by parents.

The complementary nature of the parents' and teachers' rhetoric was evident in this discussion about teacher professionalism and unprofessionalism as most issues that were discussed in both groups had very minimal differences.

7.1.3 Teachers, on the question on **unappreciation:**

> **Kadesh:** Nowadays, in schools, learners are very rude, they are disrespectful. Whether you teach them or you don't teach them, they don't care. You put in the effort, they don't care, so at the end of the day you feel unappreciated and demotivated. If learners don't appreciate, then it comes as an insult to the teachers because we put in the effort, we do everything we can because we want the best for the learners **(KT 15).**
>
> **Mercy:** Sometimes we do write letters to parents asking them to allow learners to come to school during the school holidays - and then it seems that the parents also do not appreciate the work that we do if they don't encourage their kids to come to school. And you teach these learners and at the end of the year they fail and the department will say YOU are not doing your work...So, nobody appreciates us really **(MT 18).**

Kadesh: And then the department will say you need to account: how am I going to account if a learner is disrespectful...can I account for that? **(KT 16)**

Grace: They say 'you have failed to make the children pass' **(GT 20).**

Kadesh: Sometimes you feel demotivated, you feel like giving up. Because when I am trying my utmost best but it's not working out', when I want the best for the learner and they don't give me 100% effort in achieving what I want them to achieve **(KT 19).**

Grace: Sometimes I even bunk classes so that I can say 'huh...at least I stole their time' **(GT 26).**

Kadesh: And speaking of unappreciation - let's bring in the issue of pay. You know we have degrees...I think that we are underpaid **(KT 21).**

Noah: What pay? **(NT24)**

Grace: What pay? **(GT27)**

Mercy: Just to buy a loaf of bread **(MT21).**

Kadesh: I think as an educator, you should live in a proper house, you should have a car - the salaries that we are earning, we can't afford to live comfortably **(KT 22).**

Grace: You know, there were exchange teachers from Germany to one of the schools in lnanda[19] and they asked 'why are the teachers here not staying in the prime suburbs? Why is the government not investing in the education?' **(GT 28)**

Kadesh: Even when they [the government] do invest, the problem is with implementation. We are always failing at implementation. How many curriculums have we had? **(KT 23)**

Noah: I would go further and say implementation, monitoring and evaluation **(NT 25).**

Kadesh: On that issue, you know what the department said with the matric exam? They said that they will send out exam monitors to all the schools, but not even one monitor has pitched up at my school...not even one ***(emphasis***)!!! **(KT 24)**

[19] Inanda is a township in eastern KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa that is situated 24 km inland from Durban. It is populated primarily by Zulu-speaking Black Africans – retrieved from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Inanda,_KwaZulu-Natal

> **Noah**: No, they are sending double monitors to our schools - they don't trust us!! **(NT 26)**
>
> **Mercy**: They don't trust us...even the chief invigilator [the principal] ...they want to be sure **(MT 22).**

From this extract, teachers noted that the unappreciation occurred at three levels, namely; the learners (who are usually ill-mannered), parents (who are not supportive), Department of Education (with unrealistic demands and meagre salaries). Kadesh's articulation on the demotivation he felt (KT19) as a result of being unappreciated by the learners who were often disrespectful and uncaring (KT15) was reciprocated by Grace who implied that she bunked classes as her way of retaliation. However, Grace's comment was in contradiction with her own comment in the one-on-one interview where she indicated that she bunks classes in order to do the work that she usually cannot do in class [marking learners' books (GT39 INT)]. Now she was suggesting that it is a way of revenging the unappreciation (GT26 FG). Mercy, in turn talked about the discouragement that teachers received from parents who often did not show support of teachers' initiatives (MT18). Together with Kadesh and Grace, they talked about how they felt teachers were unappreciated by the Department of Education officials who were seen to hold teachers accountable even for things that were regarded by teachers as unfair (KT16, GT20). The rhetoric that was espoused in this part of the discussion was that of defeat or failure, that is, when teachers did not get the respect or the anticipated results from learners; when teachers were blamed by the DoE for learners' failure in the exams; when teachers did not get support from parents. They felt demotivated or defeated and highly unappreciated.

When Kadesh identified salaries as a one form of unappreciation, all the participants made comments on how little they were being paid to the extent of equating the salary to *"just enough to buy a loaf of bread"* (MT21). Grace emphasised the seriousness of the issue of salaries, where it was, not only South African teachers who realised that they were unappreciated, but also visiting international teachers who commented about it (GT28). The discussion then changed its focus from unappreciation to implementation, monitoring and evaluation. Kadesh's assertion about the ineffectiveness of the Department of Education in monitoring the examination processes (particularly the matric[20] exams) was

[20] Matriculation – in the South African context refers to the final year of high school; which when passed well serves as a basic entrance to tertiary education

based on the rhetoric of blame. However, on the contrary, Noah who initially positioned monitoring as something which was lacking in the education system, indicated together with Mercy that their schools were being monitored throughout the matric examination session. The rhetoric of trust vs distrust was explicitly purported by both Noah and Mercy (NT26, MT22). By implication, the Department of Education officials favoured certain schools over others. It seems that the schools that were monitored during the examination period were those that were deemed as having potential of misconduct.

7.1.4 Parents on **unappreciation:**

> **Sharon**: Teachers are unappreciated in terms of their salaries. They are underpaid by their employer. Some parents also do not appreciate the work teachers do. They shift their responsibilities as parents to teachers and blame teachers for everything that goes wrong with their children **(SP 8).**
>
> **Zenith**: They are unappreciated by the communities. Because we as communities are unaware of the conditions that teachers are working under. Having more than forty learners in one class cannot be easy for them **(ZP 8).**
>
> **Barbara:** Unappreciated by the Department of Education since they are not paying them decent salaries **(BP 8).**
>
> **Whitney:** Teachers are more unappreciated especially when it comes to Grade 12 results which paint a wrong picture about teachers as if they are not competent enough. The Department of Education, when it announces Grade 12 results, all fingers pointed at teachers ignoring that learners sometimes do contribute in raising the number of failures or poor results **(WP 8).**
>
> **Zenith**: When not recognised even when you have done good, even those teachers are demoralised by the unappreciation (**ZP 9).**
>
> **Sharon**: I agree, they are demoralised and therefore end up losing interest in their work **(SP 9).**
>
> **Barbara:** Teachers become frustrated and stressed and sometimes take out their stress on learners by shouting at them (**BP 9).**

> **Whitney**: The reality is few teachers enjoy working as teachers. Some they just do it because other job opportunities are too scarce. Being unappreciated demotivate teachers (**WP9).**

The parents felt that teachers were not being commended for the work that they did; citing various issues such as being underpaid (employer SP8 & BP8), blame levelled on them [parents (SP8) and DoE (WP8)], unsuitable working conditions (ZP8). These sources of unappreciation were similar to those identified by teacher participants. However, one parent, Zenith also identified communities as one of the sources of unappreciation (ZP8). Zenith implied that parents were sources of unappreciation, because parents were members of the very same communities that were said to be unappreciative of teachers and their work. The nature of the rhetoric was complementary as both groups mentioned similar sources of unappreciation, with the exception of one different source; communities identified by a parent. The parents in this study viewed the unappreciation as contributing negatively to teachers' work and as leaving teachers feeling frustrated or stressed (BP9), demotivated (WP9) and demoralised (ZP9, SP9), all of which invoked negative emotions.

The nature of the rhetoric on unappreciation for both teachers and parents had negative effects on teachers' work.

7.1.5 Teachers on **satisfaction or dissatisfaction**:

> **Kadesh:** Maybe because of lack of support, a teacher may not want to go to a particular class because s/he knows that if I go to that class I'm not going to get any co-operation from the learners. Sometimes the learners are arrogant. I report them to the principal, the principal does nothing. I feel demotivated **(KT 25).**
>
> **Mercy:** Yeah, dissatisfaction, again can also be caused by the type of learners that we teach. They are disrespectful - they are unruly. You give them the homework and they don't do it...so our work is not satisfying **(MT 23).**
>
> **Kadesh:** That leads to job dissatisfaction because you do your best **(KT 26).**
>
> **Grace:** And you get nothing out of it...They even reported me to the principal that I'm calling them names...because I was so irritated **(GT 31).**

Mercy: Those are the signs of job dissatisfaction **(MT 27).**

Kadesh: You end up saying hurtful words to these learners. They are not interested. You know with the ANA exams, some of them will tell you that "I just don't care about this ANA exam, I'm just going to write anything that I like"; and then the Department officials will come to your school and say that you must account for the results, then as teachers how can we account for that, because the learners said that they don't care about those exams...That's another form of job dissatisfaction **(KT 27).**

Kadesh: Job satisfaction, like getting praised for the work that you are doing and when the kids that you are teaching are passing well because some of the kids do put an effort. This leads to job satisfaction because it will motivate you to do even more. If you have learners that are serious with their work, if you have learners that are serious with their academic development, it leads to job satisfaction **(KT 28).**

Kadesh: Job satisfaction can also include the praise from the HoD or school principal. If they see that you are a dedicated, hard-working and you are a professional in your work and they commend you for it, it leads to job satisfaction because you would see that at least someone sees my effort and appreciates what I'm doing **(KT 30).**

Noah: You see, part of the cause of job dissatisfaction comes from that...people come to the teaching profession, they join this union of ours (name of Union withheld) and within two years they are promoted - HoD this year, the following year they become deputy principal, maybe only for six months; another bulletin comes and the same person applies and becomes principal **(NT 27).**

Kadesh: My colleague here earlier told me that she obtained her Masters degree from Stellenbosch University but she is a level-one teacher. Is that fair? Is that fair? **(KT 31)**

Mercy: If you are not active in our union, that's what happens **(MT 28).**

Grace: No, I'm not a unionist - I'm an educator. People make that mistake. They think they are unionists first before they are teachers. That's the problem **(GT 34).**

Mercy: So, you won't get anything (laughing) **(MT 29).**

> **Kadesh:** Unions add to this dissatisfaction. I have made peace that I will remain a post level 1 teacher **(KT 33).**
>
> **Kadesh:** In terms of satisfaction, it enables you to work much harder, it enables you to achieve things that are not easily achievable if there is job satisfaction, because if you are satisfied with something, you think positively about it and you can achieve a lot of things. If you have a vision and say ok I would like to achieve this, it can happen with job satisfaction **(KT 34).**
>
> **Mercy:** But if you are dissatisfied, like our colleague said, you don't do your best. You only do for the sake of doing it. You don't perform to the best of your ability **(MT 32).**

This extract showed a jointly constructed position on dissatisfaction. The participants had a 'collective voice' on the cause for dissatisfaction among teachers. This 'collective voice' was also evident in the instances where some participants completed each other's conversation to emphasise their agreement to the point being made. While the dominant discourse appeared to be about how teachers were dissatisfied with certain aspects of their practice, Kadesh also presented a different view of being satisfied with some aspects of his work. Because his view of satisfaction was in conflict with the dominant view of dissatisfaction, his view was not fully commented on by the other participants. In fact, when Kadesh initially introduced the rhetoric of satisfaction, Noah redirected the discussion back to dissatisfaction without making any reference to Kadesh's comment. In the second instance when Kadesh again talked about how being satisfied influenced his work, Mercy interjected and made emphasis on the point made earlier on about how dissatisfaction influence the teachers' performance of their work.

In the above extract, Kadesh, Mercy and Grace all talked around the term of dissatisfaction and how it constructed their individual identities. Lack of support was positioned as a central sign around which other signs such as learners, principal, Department of Education are organised. The rhetoric ascribed to individuals (teachers) a frustrated identity in which they were discouraged and disinterested in performing their work because of the arrogance (KT25) and unruliness of learners (MT23) which resulted

in the naming and shaming[21] of learners (GT31). The non-supportive principals (KT25) and unreasonable demands (KT27) from the Department of Education equally contributed to the frustration. This frustrated identity evoked negative emotions in teachers.

The silence about the aspects of teachers' work that brought satisfaction to the teachers was evident when Kadesh's articulations (KT28/30/34) were not responded to by any of the other participants. This silence was a typical case of exclusion, whereby an alternative discourse is seen as posing threat to what seems to be a dominant discourse.

Teacher unionism, particularly interference of some teacher unions with the promotional processes of teachers (NT27), was introduced by Noah as another dimension of teacher dissatisfaction. Seemingly, the level of teacher activism within the union was one of the deciding factors as to whether the teacher got appointed (MT28/29) for a promotional post or not. From the above extract, a demotivated or discouraged teacher who had minimal chances of upward mobility was being portrayed. When teachers are demotivated, they are likely not to fully engage with their work, and this disengagement may lead to low performance of teachers in their work or even low learner achievement. Inherent in this union activism was the rhetoric of inclusion and exclusion where, according to some participants, only a select few individuals got into the circle of being promoted into managerial positions.

7.1.6 Parents' rhetoric on **teacher dissatisfaction** or satisfaction:

> **Sharon:** Job dissatisfaction is caused by being overworked and being underpaid **(SP 10).**
>
> **Whitney:** Job dissatisfaction may be caused by a number of factors, such as; learners' attitude towards learning, use of drugs by learners and ill-discipline. Work conditions are a contributing factor **(WP 10).**
>
> **Barbara**: Dissatisfaction may result from the bad conditions that teachers work under. If teachers are teaching large classes but their salaries are not matching the work that they do, they may become

[21] Shaming – an act of causing one to feel a painful emotion resulting from an awareness of having done something dishonourable, unworthy, degrading, etc. retrieved from http://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/shaming Collins English Dictionary. Copyright © Harper Collins Publishers

> dissatisfied. Sometimes teachers may be frustrated or dissatisfied with the school management which may not be functioning properly **(BP 10).**
>
> **Zenith**: If teachers can be given a good wage, it may give them satisfaction because they are doing a job and the most important one. No-one wants to deal with her/his own child for a few hours but teachers do. The bad things we (the community) say about teachers demoralise them **(ZP 10).**
>
> **Barbara**: Teachers may absent themselves from school in order to not deal with the stressful issues they encounter in schools **(BP 11).**
>
> **Whitney**: Work conditions may affect the way they want to execute their job (**WP 11).**
>
> **Sharon**: They don't perform to the best of their abilities because they are not paid well anyway **(SP 11).**
>
> **Zenith**: Earning less or low wages makes you to have lots of debts. This can affect teachers' performance because they think about their debts meanwhile they are supposed to teach the children. Some teachers end up being short-tempered and even give corporal punishment without noticing **(ZP 11).**

The parents' rhetoric revealed that teacher dissatisfaction emanated from their work conditions. These work conditions resulted from the lack of support from the employer [overcrowding (BP10), teachers overworked (SP10) and underpaid (BP10, SP10, ZP10)], lack of support from the learners [ill-discipline and drug use (WP10)], and lack of support from the school management [which could be dysfunctional (BP10)]. On the one hand, the issues that Barbara and Sharon talked about were structural and therefore, the responsibility of the employer. On the other hand, Whitney talked about interpersonal issues or social interactional issues. Whilst Whitney, Sharon and Zenith suggested that the dissatisfaction impacted negatively on teachers' performance (WP11, SP11, ZP11), Barbara noted that teachers could find ways of escaping the stress of the dissatisfying work by not being at school (BP11). Barbara intimated that when teachers were not at school (their places of work), the likelihood was that they would tend to forget about the negative emotions brought by their work. It was interesting that teachers did not bring in the issue of salaries into this discussion about dissatisfaction or low morale but parents did. The nature of the teachers' and parents' rhetoric was complementary because both

indicated that, irrespective of the source of dissatisfaction, it often led to teachers' low performance in their work. However, the parent participants seemed to offer more insights on what they perceived as contributing to teacher dissatisfaction on the teaching and learning processes.

7.1.7 Teachers, on the question on **ill-discipline:**

> **Kadesh:** I think that lack of support from parents, the school environment where I am working in, you have kids that would just speak to you anyhow and if you try to discipline them they would tell you that 'I speak to my mum and father like this' and then I would tell them "I'm not your mum and I'm not your father, I'm not related to you. When you are here, you will respect {emphasis} me." That's what I would tell the child who then will inform his/her parents. The next day the parent would be at school and say 'who the hell are you to speak to my child like that?'...so the lack of support from parents leads to the ill-discipline in schools **(KT 49).**
>
> **Noah:** In the same vein, we got parents who are not concerned about their children's schooling, who don't even know what grade their children are in...and if you ask 'who is the class teacher?' They don't know…They don't instil discipline in their children. They don't care...so now it becomes our job of teaching these learners manners, how to behave and how to conduct themselves in order to be acceptable members of society **(NT 34).**
>
> **Kadesh:** Also the issue of drugs and alcohol leads to ill-discipline in school. Because learners who use drugs and who consume alcohol their behaviour is different in class, they are going to be rebellious, they are going to challenge you and make your life miserable. So those things cause a lot of ill-discipline, so if we can get rid of those things, our schools would not be dysfunctional **(KT 50).**
>
> **Mercy:** Yeah, and the society that they grow in is so violent. You find that it is easy for the child to carry a gun to school or a knife. They use their socks to stash the knives or they even use the scissors to stab one another...Violence is so prevalent in schools. And in my school, ill-discipline is so bad (emphasis), because you may find that one child

stabs another and you send them to the principal's office and the principal would just say 'hey my son, don't do that again'. As a teacher, you would have sent that child for disciplining but the culprit would come back to class laughing saying 'hey, meneer understands us'... **(MT 43).**

Kadesh: You see; the principal is being unprofessional because that learner should have been suspended. You give a warning letter to the child and you attach that letter to his file. If there is persistent behaviour, you compile all the paperwork so that it will be easy for expulsion to take place **(KT 50).**

Noah: The DoE says that as a principal if you expel a learner, it's your responsibility to look for another school for that child **(NT 35).**

Noah: "If you say you want a child to be removed from the school, find him/her an alternative school - we have seen all the reports that you have compiled but find another school for the child." That is what the department says say **(NT 36).**

Kadesh: If there is an ill-disciplined child in the classroom, it will disrupt the teaching and learning and you will pay more attention to that child than the other kids in the classroom, which is not fair to the other learners because you would be busy disciplining that child because sometimes they will do things just to irritate you. They want to see your reaction...and it affects my work as an educator because I cannot teach in an environment where a learner is disrupting my lesson **(KT 52).**

Mercy: Yaah, it's not easy to do your work in such a class...Sometimes you become afraid of them. There are big boys and sometimes you know that the boy has got a gun, so you have to tread very safely because anything can happen. Teachers have been shot in classes, so I don't know... You always have to be very careful with what you say because they also take drugs. Sometimes you may say something innocently and only to find out that you may have offended him. Another thing is those girls who have relationships with the male teachers. It's very difficult to discipline those girls because anything you say they get angry quickly and they rush to tell their people [the teachers they are in relationships

with] that you are always on their case because you are jealousy or whatever **(MT 45).**

Grace: and that's exactly what I was referring to earlier when I said that they went to complain about me saying that I am calling them names, because I was moralising them, trying to talk sense into them, that they should not be having relationships with teachers who are supposed to be their parents when they are within the school premises (**GT43).**

Noah: I think sometimes the behaviour of teachers contributes to the ill-discipline. You know we've got young female teachers, young ladies...and they wear very short, short skirts or dresses and there are boys here who are… **(NT 41).**

Noah: ...and bashaya amakhwela (they whistle at them), so the question of ill-discipline comes in there, the manner in which teachers conduct themselves. It's not even easy for these young teachers to discipline the learners if they all shout at once and blowing whistles. What do you say to that? So, it's even difficult for us seniors to discipline those learners because they would say… **(NT 42).**

Mercy: they are appreciating what they see **(MT49).**

Grace: It's not about appreciation. Do they do that to their mothers, aunts, sisters or cousins…? It's just being rude, plain rude and ignorance. Why should you be focussing on what I am wearing? Why are you not focusing on salient matters of your education? (**GT 44**)

Lack of support from parents, rebellious learners, violence in society which creeps into school premises, dangerous weapons and drug use, girl learners in intimate relationships with male teachers, teacher misbehaviour were identified by teachers as sources of ill-discipline in schools.

In the above extract the discussion started off with Kadesh and Noah pushing the rhetoric of blame, blaming parents for ill-discipline of learners. On the one hand, Kadesh (KT49) talked about parents who were actively involved in the education of their children although in ways that were unacceptable or demeaning to the teachers. He noted that when a parent came to school and questioned the teacher in a confrontational and defamatory way, it rendered the teacher vulnerable and eroded the teacher's dignity. On

the other hand, Noah talked about parents who were absent from their children's education, parents who seemed not interested (NT34). Moreover, they both agreed that 'lack of support from parents' was one of the contributory factors to issues of ill-discipline in schools.

Kadesh and Mercy talked about societal problems such as drug use, alcohol and violence as creeping into the school premises and creating volatile situations under which teachers were expected to function. The rhetoric of vulnerability was used by Kadesh suggesting that teachers' lives were endangered by working with learners who were either under the influence of alcohol or high on drugs (KT50). At the same time, Mercy indicated that the issue of substance use and abuse by learners was also closely related to the violent incidences that took place in schools. However, Mercy suggested that the issue of violence in her school was perpetuated by a weak leader who condoned the wrongdoing by not punishing the perpetrators (MT43). Kadesh offered advice as to what Mercy should have done; that is, compiling paperwork as evidence of learners' behaviour. However, his comment was a contradiction of the statements he made in his one-on-one interview whereby he complained about the compilation of incident reports as time-consuming and taking away teaching time (KT32INT). Mercy noted that teachers were fearful for their lives and the lives of other learners (MT45), as they did not know how to handle the issue of ill-discipline in their schools. The rhetoric of fear was dominant in this instance.

When Kadesh brought into the discussion the issue of learner expulsion as being one of the viable solutions to dealing with ill-discipline, Noah highlighted the non-alignment of policy and practice regarding the expulsion issue. He blamed the Department of Education for the impracticability of the learner expulsion process (NT35/36). According to Noah, the Department of Education made it difficult for schools to expel learners because they were asked to find alternative schools where 'expelled learners' would be placed, a requirement which perpetuated ill-discipline in schools.

Another source of ill-discipline observed by Mercy was the female learners who had gained the status of 'girlfriend' to some male teachers. Disciplining these girls was always challenging for some teachers, particularly female teachers who would be labelled 'envious' of the 'relationship' (MT45). Noah changed the focus from the learners to some teachers' behaviour as being the source of ill-discipline. He shifted the focus to female

teachers whom he claimed wore revealing dresses and therefore, caused the male learners to behave in an unbecoming manner (NT41/42. The whistling by male learners directed to young female teachers was seen by Mercy as an act of appreciation (MT49), whilst it was condemned by Grace who viewed it as idiocy. (GT44)

This discussion highlighted the variety of issues that were regarded as sources of ill-discipline in schools such as lack of parental support, rebellious learners, use of alcohol and drugs, violence, and teacher misbehaviour.

7.1.8 Parents on **ill-discipline:**

> **Barbara**: Some of the learners smoke dagga[22] or Whoonga[23] and when they are 'high' or under the influence, they disrespect the teachers maybe to a point where a teacher gets physical with the learner…So if the issue of drugs can be dealt with, the discipline of learners will be better **(BP 15).**
>
> **Zenith:** Some of the issues that we have mentioned as for professionalism, e.g. when teachers become too friendly with pupils – even eating pupils' lunch or when teachers become lovers with pupils. These issues make it difficult for teachers to discipline pupils, as the pupils don't take the teacher seriously **(ZP 15).**
>
> **Sharon:** Ill-discipline results in teacher disliking the ill-disciplined children. Sometimes to an extent that they make those children to fail the grade even if they were supposed to pass **(SP 15).**
>
> **Whitney:** Schools having but not implementing discipline policies. **(SP 15)**
>
> **Whitney:** Ill-discipline does affect teachers at work. For example, if learners are uncontrollable, teachers will fail to complete the work they thought they would cover on that day **(WP 16).**
>
> **Zenith**: When teachers cannot control pupils in class, it's not easy to do their work **(ZP 16).**

[22] Also known as marijuana, weed, dope, zol, etc. Retrieved from http://www.drugaware.co.za/dagga.html

[23] Whoonga (also known as nyaope or wunga) is a street drug that came into rampant use in South Africa since 2010, particularly in the impoverished townships of Durban. Retrieved from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Whoonga

> **Sharon:** When children become disrespectful to teachers to an extent that they come to school as and when they want; and not doing their work, makes teachers to be behind with their work **(SP 16).**
> **Barbara**: When a teacher feels that s/he was humiliated by one or some learners, s/he may lose interest of going to teach on that class; hence even innocent learners may suffer the consequences of the badly-behaved classmates **(BP 16).**

Drug use and the blurring boundaries between teacher-learner relationship were explicitly identified by parents as contributing to the ill-discipline of learners. At the same time, loss of interest to do work, a dislike for learners who are ill-behaved as well as the inability to finish the set work were likely effects of learner ill-discipline on the work of teachers.

Similar to the teachers' rhetoric, specifically MT45FG and KT50FG (see pages 169 and 170), Barbara suggested that the use of drugs by learners was problematic and constituted a major cause of ill-discipline in schools (BP15). In a different vein, Zenith talked about the issue of teacher-learner relationship, that if no boundaries were set, issues of ill-discipline would result (ZP15). Additionally, Whitney highlighted the source of ill-discipline as the failure of the schools to implement their disciplinary policies (WP15).

All four parent participants agreed that when learners appear to be ill- disciplined, it hinders the teachers' progress with their work in class. When learners are ill-disciplined, teachers may become disinterested in their work (BP16), may be behind with the scheduled work (WP16, SP16). Sharon also suggested that the poor behaviour of learners may push teachers to the point of disliking the particular learner (SP15) and not the work as suggested by Barbara (BP16). In such instances, some teachers punish learners by making them repeat the grade even if they were not supposed to.

The parent rhetoric on ill-discipline was complementary to the teachers' rhetoric on two points; drug use and teacher-learner relationships. However, dissimilar points were also noticeable. Whilst the parents' rhetoric presented strong views about how ill-discipline affected teachers and their work, teachers' rhetoric focused more on the detailed descriptions of the kind of disciplinary issues they encountered in their respective schools.

7.1.9 Teachers on **corporal punishment:**

> **Mercy:** The alternatives that were given are not working, so we end up stealing the learners because they don't feel (fear) the other types of punishment that we try to use, so those who have power to steal them, they do, unfortunately some cases become very bad especially if a child has to be taken to hospital; I don't think that the alternatives are working **(MT 50).**
>
> **Noah:** Yah, like the case of detention[24]. You detain learners after 15:00... (**NT 45).**
>
> **Mercy:** You are detaining yourself... **(MT 51).**
>
> **Noah:** Yes, you are detaining yourself, so it becomes a problem. There is a problem of transport. You also need to inform the parents that the learner will come home late and that they must arrange alternative transport. How? Because they come by a taxi from a particular area, so it becomes a problem - you just give him/her two strokes and it's done! **(NT 46)**
>
> **Grace:** Yeah, I also use it particularly for my Grade 12s…They are lazy!! I just want to keep them on their toes…but not in an abusive way **(GT43).**
>
> **Mercy:** For me it's about teachers being frustrated and not knowing what else to do. They don't know what other way to work with the kids, so they end up doing what they know will help create order **(MT 52).**

Three of the four teacher participants engaged in the discussion about corporal punishment. Mercy and Noah agreed that the alternative forms of discipline or punishment which were introduced after corporal punishment was banned in 1996 were not working in many schools, hence teachers often administered corporal punishment on learners illegally. Mercy suggested that "stealing" learners (by corporally punishing them) was not open to every teacher but to those with the power to do so. By "*those who have power to steal them"* perhaps Mercy means only the school management (people in authority) or any other teacher who is not scared of the consequences (MT50).

[24] A punishment in which a learner is required to stay at school after the rest of the learners have left – Online Merriam-Webster's Learner Dictionary, retrieved from www.merriam-webster.com

Noah and Mercy suggested that because teachers had to supervise learners when they were detained, they somehow felt that they were also being detained (NT45, MT51). As a result, teachers were not always keen to use this form of punishment. Noah observed that corporal punishment was an easy way out for both teachers and learners because it was quicker to use and did not need any preparation from the teacher (NT46).

Using corporal punishment (innocently – with no malicious intent) as a way of maintaining order in the classroom was suggested by Grace (GT43) and Mercy (MT52). The rhetoric of justification (of the wrong doing) was mentioned in this discussion. Kadesh's exclusion from this discussion on corporal punishment was due to the fact that he had never experienced it as a learner nor used it at school as a teacher.

7.1.10 Parents on **corporal punishment:**

> **Barbara:** Well there is nothing wrong with using corporal punishment in a small way of trying to get learners to do the tasks that the teacher asks them to. But some teachers use it in a bad way like the teacher in one school who made learners to kneel down on the tarred ground, moving up and down until their knees bled. You see, that's totally wrong, because this teacher would not have punished his/her own children like that! So this teacher was not acting as a parent to these children. As parents we don't like it when teachers use corporal punishment in a way that put our children's lives in danger **(BP 17).**
>
> **Sharon:** In my times, as a learner, corporal punishment was okay to a certain extent because it kept learners on their toes when it came to school work. The problem was with the teachers who abused corporal punishment which ended up hurting children. My take on this corporal punishment issue is that it should be totally banned in schools because it threatens the children and they live under a fearful environment which is not healthy at all (**SP 17).**
>
> **Whitney**: Sometimes teachers become harsh to learners with the hope to correct learners from doing wrong things and led them to use corporal punishment unintentionally. I think that corporal punishment was not meant to destroy learners but to mould them to be productive citizen in future and for their own benefit **(WP 17).**

> **Zenith**: I have no objection to corporal punishment because, for instance, I was also punished with it when I was still in school, and I did great at school. Also most of people in Government went through the education where corporal punishment was used and they passed. Yes, in model C schools they don't use corporal punishment because they have less pupils in class, so teachers are able to deal with individuals. So, we ask the Government to build more schools to accommodate Black pupils so that they can be treated the same as other races. You know, sometimes teachers use this corporal punishment just to make pupils to do their work because teachers have too many pupils to look after in one class. The Government should think about us (parents that have no money to take our children to model C schools) that we also want what is best for our children **(ZP 17).**

Barbara, Whitney and Zenith noted that they did not have a problem with teachers using corporal punishment for a 'good cause', "*trying to get learners to do the tasks that the teacher asked them to" (BP17); "not meant to destroy learners but to mould them to be productive citizen in future and for their own benefit" (WP 17); "sometimes teachers use this corporal punishment just to make pupils to do their work because teachers have too many pupils to look after in one class" (ZP17).* For these parents, when teachers corporally punish learners, it was often accompanied with good intentions and, for these reasons, they fully endorsed the use of corporal punishment.

Although Sharon fully accepted corporal punishment when she was still a learner at school, she seemed to now have a very strong opinion against its use *"it should be totally banned in schools because it threatens the children and they live under a fearful environment which is not healthy at all"* (SP 17). In this instance, Sharon highlighted the psychological effects of corporal punishment on learners.

Even for the parents who endorsed the use of corporal punishment, they seemed to be aware of the underlying dangers of corporal punishment when used "wrongly". Barbara used a collective rhetoric or a rhetoric of representation in her suggestion that "*as parents we don't like it when teachers use corporal punishment in a way that put our children's lives in danger"* (BP 17). In this case, she was representing all parents. At the same time, Whitney acknowledged the harshness with which some teachers applied corporal

punishment. However, Zenith blamed the government for the continued use of corporal punishment in some schools. She saw the use of corporal punishment as a way of teachers dealing with their frustrations of poor working conditions, for instance, overcrowding. The rhetoric of race and space was reflected in Zenith's articulation about the differences in the teacher-learner ratio in ex-Model C schools and in Black schools. Or is it perhaps the rhetoric of inequality?

Overall, the teachers' and parents' rhetoric on corporal punishment had striking similarities; hence, complementary in nature.

7.1.11 Teachers on the question of **leadership and management:**

> **Kadesh:** I get enough support from the leadership and management of the school. All the resources that I need, I get them. If I have discipline problems, I get assistance from the HoDs, so I can say that through their positive contribution, building me up as a young educator, I am satisfied with what they have done so far in helping me, in assisting me every way possible. I can say that I have become motivated, positive thinking is good for the mind. And also, I am putting a lot of effort in the teaching and learning in the classroom because I know that whatever I ask for, I get. So, as a token of appreciation, I always give the best to the learners. If I get the best from the leadership and management of the school, I need to transfer that to my learners **(KT 60).**
>
> **Mercy:** I also believe that leaders and managers should be a step ahead. They shouldn't be at the same level as us (level one teachers). Whatever information is needed; we should be able to get from them. Any communication that comes from the department should be there. They should know what new things are there if they are able to do all those things, then I think the school should be able to run smoothly. So, I think it's very important that managers and educators should work as a team **(MT 55).**
>
> **Grace:** Leaders and managers who are creative and innovative, but who also consider other people's views. If I have a good idea to improve whatever at school, they must consider my idea and not just brush it on

the side because it came from me whom maybe they don't like. People just become personal and not think about the bigger picture **(GT45).**

Noah: Yah, it's just one word – lax. If leadership is lax, management is lax, if they don't lead by example - as maam has said here, if they don't give support, everything goes down. I will go back to this thing of monitoring and evaluation, remember in interview session [one-on-one interview] I told you (referring to the researcher/moderator) that the senior management (the principal and his deputy) have to go down to the floor to make sure that the school is running. Otherwise, if they get bogged down in their offices with office work… **(NT 50).**

Noah: Nothing happens, they will have to be on the floor - but it can't happen all the time. So that kind of leadership, if you see that the principal has just gone out to make an effort to see that the school is running; you know when you are in class and you don't get disturbed by the learners who are unattended **(NT 51).**

Mercy: Hahaha...the last period! You will find that there is only one teacher in the whole block and there is so much chaos, principal is sitting in his office, he doesn't care, he doesn't know what's happening **(MT 56).**

Grace: Yeah, I am also guilty sometimes of not attending the last period of the day…but there are those teachers who go to class no matter what time of the day **(GT46).**

Noah: You know, the first period after break and the last period, they know that they [the management] have to be on the floor. If they are not around.....you can't teach **(NT 52).**

Mercy: You can't teach ...how can you talk to this group of learners when there is noise all over and everybody is shouting outside? **(MT 57).**

In this extract, the discussion begins with Kadesh talking about the good support he gets from his leaders and managers for various aspects of his work (KT60). However, his statement "*if I have discipline problems I get assistance from the HoDs",* is surprising and appears to be rather contradictory to the comment he made on the issues of ill-discipline, where he revealed his own vulnerability when he suggested that the rebellious learners "*challenge you and make your life miserable"* (KT50). Kadesh advanced the rhetoric of

excellence when he suggested that he gives the ***best*** to his learners as a token of appreciation to the management. Whilst Kadesh referred to the specific (particular) issues of leadership and management that affect his work directly, Mercy talked in general terms (MT55). Mercy used the rhetoric of generalisations about what leaders and managers ought to be like (the universal). She suggested that managers ought to be well-informed about managerial issues in order to be able to move the school forward and to assist teachers to be successful in their work.

Creativity and innovation were what Grace looked for in a good leadership and management team. She suggested that good leaders and good managers did not stifle the growth of staff, and were usually open to suggestions irrespective of their personal standing with the contributors (GT45). Noah changed the focus of the discussion to talk about the effects of sloppy leaders and managers as opposed to active leaders and managers. He suggested that when leadership and management is sloppy, everything within the school is likely to be in a state of chaos (NT50); but when there is visibility of the leaders and managers, harmony prevails (NT51).

It appeared from Noah's, Mercy's and Grace's discussion that what was not done by teachers, in one way or another, was blamed on the leadership and management of the school. When teachers did not attend to their teaching at certain times of the day (immediately after tea break or in the last period of the day), the expectation was that the leaders and managers must be seen to be doing something about the situation. If not, then they were blamed for negligence, *"principal is sitting in his office, he doesn't care, he doesn't know what's happening"* (MT 56). The rhetoric of laxity seemed to be dominant in this part of the discussion.

7.1.12 Parents on **leadership and management:**

> **Sharon**: Teachers have to be good leaders so they can produce good and disciplined children. They need to be exemplary in the way they dress, talk or even walk. They need not be seen by children in compromising conditions e.g. under the influence of alcohol etc. They should be disciplined and instil discipline to children (lead by example) and be able to walk the talk. In terms of classroom management, they should have organisational skills so that their work can always be in order and

> up to date. They should be able to manage their classrooms, as well as their work (**SP 19).**
>
> **Barbara:** In some schools, we see teachers and learners doing as they please. They come late to school and they leave early – then you just see that there is a problem with the head of the school and other people in management. If there are no strict rules, people do as they please and I think that affects the running of the school and how teachers do their work **(BP 19).**
>
> **Whitney:** Management will be always needed since it controls, manages and oversees whether teachers are doing their work as they are expected. Its presence in school should enhance the way teachers do their work (**WP 19).**
>
> **Zenith:** The school management should be strict on both teachers and learners so that teaching and learning can happen with very few disturbances. But if the school management lacks the right skills of running the school, then there will always be chaos in schools which has negative effects on the manner in which teachers do their work **(ZP19).**

In this discussion, whilst Barbara, Whitney and Zenith talked about the school leaders and managers as people who ought to bring about, and maintain the order of things, Sharon referred to all teachers, and not necessarily those who were positioned as leaders and managers. In a way, Sharon talked about leadership and management in a narrow way (within the confines of the classroom) whilst the other three parents talked about leadership and management broadly, relating to all aspects of the school which may ultimately influence how teachers performed their work.

Whilst Whitney saw leadership and management as a necessary structure in schools which served to oversee teachers' performance (WP19), both Barbara and Zenith advocated strict rules for both teachers and learners as a means of alleviating chaos in schools (BP19, ZP19). Barbara seems was concerned about the laxity of the school management, about the amount of time that was not utilised effectively for teaching and learning by both teachers and learners whom she saw as not conscientious of the school times. Additionally, Zenith suggested that this laxity of the school management had the potential of creating disorder and thus, compromising the teaching and learning processes. Sharon shared a different view, that all teachers, by virtue of their profession, were leaders and

managers. She drew on a rhetoric of causality when she suggested that for learners to be good, they dependent upon teachers to be good leaders (SP19). For Sharon, management was about being organised. She also drew on the rhetoric of role-modelling when she suggested that teachers should be able to "*walk the talk"* a similar expression as was used by Grace although under the discussion on teacher professionalism (GT37FG – see page 156).

Whilst the nature of the parents' and teachers' rhetoric on leadership and management differed in terms of its conceptualisations. It was in tandem when it came to understanding the impact of weak leadership and management on teachers' work.

7.1.13 Teachers on **overwork or work overload:**

> **Kadesh:** The number of periods is a challenge, for me. I teach grade 10, 11 and 12 Business Studies and I teach 4 grade 8 EMS and I teach 4 grade 9 EMS, so I have 36 periods in a 6-day cycle because, at our school, we work according to the PPN (Post Provisioning Norms[25]) because we are an ex-Model C school. The department does not give us a lot of teachers. We have about 804 learners and only 26 teachers including the SMT (school management team). The majority of the teachers at my school have about 35-36 periods in a 6-day cycle because we do not get enough support from the department, because they say we are an ex-Model C school therefore, we should have money to hire more educators **(KT 10).**
>
> **Mercy:** Another problem is that the workloads are not balanced. If you are teaching a language subject, one class equals to three classes because of pieces of writings they do for the exam; and then you will find a Life Sciences teacher saying that they have 5 classes but the number of learners is not the same **(MT 10).**
>
> **Grace:** I think they should also look into the specialisation, not per subject but within the subject. You see, I am a language teacher. We do

[25] PPN is a process by which the number of educator / teacher posts that each school is should have [National Report: Assessment of National Implementation of Post Provisioning System (2013)], retrieved from http://www.education.gov.za/Portals/0/Documents/Publications/National%20Report_10%20September%202013%20Finalised.pdf?ver=2013-09-11-214854-000.

language and grammar, we do creative writing, and we do literature. There must be some area where, as a teacher, you see that you really excel in. Maybe you excel in literature or language and grammar, then that could be the easy way out of the overload situation with the teachers **(GT 14).**

Grace: Team teaching...two teachers of isiZulu, they shouldn't say that they have two teachers for isiZulu. They should say that teacher A is for language and grammar, and teacher B is for literature and teacher C is doing creative writing. That would be better **(GT 15).**

Mercy: because then you would know that you are dealing with one paper **(MT 11).**

Noah: Now tell me guys, what do you think about the number of tasks – the prescribed tasks that... **(NT 15).**

Grace: Madness, because you have to mark them and attend all these moderation meetings. Last year, I did not do it (not last year, in 2013 when I was teaching matric). I didn't moderate for the whole year, and I ended up doing it in the subject advisor's office **(GT 16).**

Noah: At the end of the day, it compromises quality teaching because you have to concentrate on the number of tasks that you are required to do and the due dates - if you have a strict subject advisor **(NT 16).**

Kadesh: Colleagues, I also think that administration work also plays a role in the work overload. There is so much of administrative work that we do - we have to do formal tasks and record the marks; we have to do informal (emphasis) tasks and record the marks. You have to do your daily planning, period 1, I did this, period 2, I did that up to period 6, and you record everything that you have done on a daily basis. This takes away a lot of time. Really time-consuming and it contributes to work overload. And there will be times where you just don't have time to record what you did for the day, and then the next day you need to remember what you did, and you have to write it down; and while you are writing it down the kids will be there in class waiting for you to teach; and you are unable to teach them if there is a lot of admin work that you need to do**.** So, they (department or the school) also need to lessen the administration work **(KT 12).**

> **Grace:** Because it is creeping into the teaching time **(GT 17).**
> **Kadesh:** And also colleagues with the formal tasks we also have to do the analysis for the formal tasks; you have to write down the strengths, the weaknesses, the remedial work and it takes time to fill in that form, so if you have 4 tasks you need to fill in 4 of those analysis sheets - really time-consuming! **(KT 13)**
> **Mercy: '**Hhayi'[No!] ...in your school! We don't do that in our school **(MT 14).**

Seemingly, a dominant voice emerged from this conversation: the view that teachers were overloaded with various aspects of their work. All teacher participants seemed unanimous about this, and one participant, Grace, attempted to offer some solutions to the work overload conundrum. The participants enumerated different aspects of their work which invariably contributed to overwork or work overload. All the participants agreed that the issue of numbers was problematic in these cases. Whether it was the number of periods or subjects that one teaches (KT10), or the number of classes or that of learners (MT10) emanating from unequal distribution of the workloads; or the number of prescribed tasks (NT15) that Grace disapproved of (GT16) as they compromised quality teaching (NT16).

The rhetoric of blame emerging from this the group (blaming the DoE for lack of support in employment issues, or a rigid curriculum, or blaming the school leaders' or managers' lack of workload distribution) was disrupted by Grace's attempts to provide 'workable' solutions (GT14/15) for the teachers of Languages who were identified by Mercy as overburdened. Grace's suggestion of team teaching within the same subject was based on the rhetoric of collaboration which had the potential of lessening the teachers' load.

Whilst the teacher participants all seemed to agree that the number of prescribed tasks intensified teachers' work because of all the expectations for teachers to complete, assess and provide feedback on the prescribed tasks within a specified time, they differed in terms of understanding the procedures that needed to be followed when assessing these tasks. The view by one participant that learners' performance in these tasks need to be diagnostically assessed (KT13) so that teachers can provide necessary interventions, was not reciprocated. In fact, an opposing voice emerged (MT14).

One of the participants, Kadesh, also indicated that administrative work played a role in increasing teachers' workload (KT12); the view shared by Grace (GT17). However, it was interesting to note that Kadesh made a connection to the statement he made in his one-on-one interview, in which, some aspects of administrative work that he viewed as unavoidable (KT14INT), was now indicating that they may be adding to the stress of work overload (KT12FG).

7.1.14 Parents' perspectives on **overwork or work overload:**

> **Zenith:** Pupils with social problems contribute to the overload of teachers, because a good teacher cannot neglect the child with problems just because the teacher wants to finish the syllabus **(ZP 3).**
>
> **Barbara:** Teachers have to know and understand the learners' backgrounds so that they can be able to help them accordingly. Sometimes this causes teachers to be stressed, especially if they are not able to help the needy learners because there are too many learners that the teacher has to cater for (**BP 3).**
>
> **Sharon**: Overcrowding in classes. Teachers cannot cope with teaching large numbers of children with different needs in one class (**SP 3).**
>
> **Whitney:** The pressure from the Department of Education, expecting more than what teachers can perform (**WP 3).**
>
> **Sharon:** Teachers end up 'moving with the movers' and paying less or no attention to slow learners, because they find themselves behind with their schedules as a result of having large numbers of learners in a class **(SP 6).**
>
> **Zenith**: …and because of being behind schedule (as indicated by my sister) – teachers may never meet their expected teacher performance and whatever is required to be achieved at the end **(ZP 6).**
>
> **Barbara**: Teachers may be stressed and … end up being sick. When the teacher is sick, his or her work gets affected because the teacher may be absent from school and therefore, the teacher may not be able to cover all the work (**BP 6).**
>
> **Whitney:** The term overworked in this case means teachers being expected to do more work which is beyond their potential. In other

words, teachers may fail to complete their duty load on stipulated time"
(WP 6).

This discussion started off with the parent participants speaking with one voice that teachers seem overworked. Two of the participants suggested that teachers' work overload emanated from the fact that teachers had to take into consideration all the learners' social issues or problems (ZP3, BP3) in addition to academic problems, if their work was to be taken as meaningful for them and for learners. According to this rhetoric, acknowledging and engaging with learners' social aspects was seen as a moral necessity for teachers. When Sharon and Whitney identified what seemed to be structural or institutional problems which add on to teachers' work overload, the focus of the discussion changed from expressions of moral obligation to those of performance. The claims they made about overcrowded classrooms and what seems as unfair demands from the Department of Education were based on the rhetoric of performativity characterised by the expectations which are usually known to be context blind.

Falling behind the work schedule, failure to meet teacher performance standards, and being stressed and sick are some of the things that the parent participants identified as consequences of work overload. Therefore, these participants agreed on the negative impact that work overload had on teachers' work and lives. The rhetoric was about the everyday difficulties that teachers faced as a result of overwork or work overload.

The nature of the rhetoric (teachers' and parents') of overwork or work overload, at first sight, appears to be incompatible because teachers' rhetoric on overwork was largely about formal elements of teaching whilst the parents' rhetoric was mostly about material elements (social aspects) of teaching. Therefore, these two points of view may be seen as separate emanating from different participant groups, but together, they give a complete picture of teacher work overload is revealed. For instance, even in the absence of relationships with teachers, there was an understanding by parents that teachers' work was intense, challenging, complex and difficult because of the kind of children that they taught. And from teachers, what emerged was that, teaching is difficult, especially because they worked as professionals in terms of pedagogy, curriculum, administration and so on. As such, one point of similarity regarding the issue of numbers, particularly the number of learners in a class was a concern for both groups of participants. For this reason, the parents' rhetoric and the teachers' rhetoric on work overload were partially incompatible.

Overall, in this study, the nature of the teachers' rhetoric and the parents' rhetoric about teachers' work was complementary in many ways although sometimes not under the same topic of discussion, but between, and among different topics. One may argue that the rhetoric of the two groups of participants must not be seen as unilateral but as 'multi-complementary'. Where the complementarity occurred within the same topic, the rhetoric was lateral / horizontal / intra-complementary; and where the complementarity occurred among various topics, the rhetoric was cross or inter-complementary. This inward and outward complementarity was an indication that most of the issues articulated by the teachers and parents in this study about teachers and their work are interrelated.

7.2 EXTENDED DISCUSSION AND CONNECTION TO THE LITERATURE

The concepts that were used as focal points for the focus group discussions; that is, professionalism and unprofessionalism, unappreciation, dissatisfaction, ill-discipline, corporal punishment, leadership and management and overwork or work overload can be regarded as central signifiers (Rear, 2013) around which a variety of meanings were made by the participants. The meanings of these concepts were derived through shared understanding by the group participants (teachers and parents separately). This sharing is indicative of the fact that the concepts were meaningless on their own (Žižek, 1989) until they were explained or articulated by social actors (Keller, 2012) (teachers and parents in this case), through the interpretations and meanings they gave (Talja, 1999) within the context of a focus group discussion.

The contentious nature of **teacher professionalism** renders it difficult to define. Some argue that teacher professionalism is about specific behaviours (Stefanides-Savva, 2012), set of values and norms (Craig & Fieschi, 2007), or teacher performance (Douglas, 2005). With these varied understandings of what teacher professionalism means, one would expect that the teachers' and parents' rhetoric on professionalism would be greatly varied and, to a particular extent, incompatible. However, the findings showed that teachers and parents in this study presented a rather highly complementary rhetoric which actually converged at certain points, thereby creating a momentary closure (Rear, 2013). This closure excluded statements (elements) that were uttered by some teacher participants which were not completely complementary to what seemed to be the dominant rhetoric.

The rhetoric of **unappreciation** was based on the combination of issues, such as learner behaviour, increased demands from the DoE, lack of support (Fisher, 2011), which are known to induce a chain of negative emotions on teachers. When teachers feel that their good intentions and efforts are not reciprocated, they feel unappreciated by the learners, parents and the Department of Education. The participants in this study indicated that the feelings of unappreciation linked to job dissatisfaction and therefore, had a high potential of leading to teacher stress (Blase, Blase, & Du, 2008; Geving, 2007). Whilst the teachers' and parents' rhetoric on unappreciation seemed to be complementary on many levels, it also showed some silences in terms of articulating the effects of unappreciation on teachers' work. These silences were possibly due to the manner in which the discussion (discourse) was shaped, which perhaps, led to some statements being left unsaid (Talja, 1999).

Teacher **dissatisfaction** was seen as closely related to unappreciation and was often attributed to feelings of "vulnerability and negative perceptions of self-worth" (Zembylas & Papanastasiou, 2006, p. 231) that teachers are likely to have in relation to certain aspects of their work. The participants in this study indicated that the negative perceptions possibly emanated from the lack of support from various stakeholders for example, principals or SMTs, learners and the Department of Education, as well as poor working conditions and interference of some teacher unions with the promotion of teachers. These findings were in line with other scholars' observations that nepotism and comradeship are used by a particular teacher union in promoting teachers (Zengele, 2013). Poor salaries, work overload and poor working conditions (Fisher, 2011; Zembylas & Papanastasiou, 2006) are among the sources which contribute to teacher dissatisfaction. The rhetoric of teachers and parents in this study regarding sources of teacher dissatisfaction or satisfaction was complementary, despite some points of differences. However, the teachers' rhetoric operated in an exclusionary agenda, whereby an opposite rhetoric of satisfaction was deliberately excluded in an attempt to fix the rhetoric of dissatisfaction (Dabirimehr & Fatmi, 2014).

The views of teacher and parent participants about issues of **ill-discipline** highlighted a variety of aspects as potential sources of ill-discipline in schools. The enumeration of these sources of ill-discipline seemed to emanate from teachers' lived experiences, and from what parents gathered from their children or from what they heard or learnt from the

media. Whilst the teachers' and parents' rhetoric on ill-discipline corresponded on two points, namely: drug abuse and teacher-learner relationships, it was dissimilar in certain aspects. Several scholars have written on learner misconduct and its negative influence on teachers' work (Moloi, 2002; Rossouw, 2003; Smit, 2013). The parents' rhetoric was in line with these studies regarding the effects of ill-discipline (blurring boundaries between teachers and learners and the abuse of drugs) on teachers' work.

Closely related to issues of ill-discipline were the means and forms of disciplining that teachers used in an attempt to maintain order in the classrooms. For the participants of this study, it seemed that **corporal punishment** was one of the means that some teachers still used in schools, irrespective of its ban twenty years ago. It was interesting that three out of four parents endorsed the use of corporal punishment on condition that teachers used it 'within the means' or 'with love', with an intention to *"correct the wrongdoing"* (WP17). In this way, the parents' rhetoric confirmed the teachers' rhetoric (with the exception of one teacher) who also noted that they use corporal punishment because it is a quicker method than all the other alternatives. There seemed to be conflation of terms by the participants, who used 'punishment' to mean the same thing as 'disciplining.' Various studies have alluded to the fact that some teachers have continuously been administering corporal punishment with, or without, the permission from parents (Maree & Cherian, 2004; Morrell, 2001; South African Human Rights Commission, 2008). In this case, although the dominant rhetoric was about the continued use of corporal punishment with the endorsement by parents, it must be noted that an opposite rhetoric was also instituted by at least one parent; who advocated for the total ban of corporal punishment because of its negative effects on the psyche of learners. It can be argued that an attempt was made to subvert what seemed to be a dominant rhetoric (Laclau & Mouffe, 2001), of viewing corporal punishment as a necessity.

The beliefs held by teacher participants about **leadership and management** were diverse as these beliefs seemed to be linked to the teachers' work experiences. Teachers' articulations portrayed an understanding of leadership and management as something that occurred outside the classroom. This finding was in line with Leithwood, Day, Sammons, Harris and Hopkins' (2006) finding which explains that teachers tend to wait for the school leaders to influence their work positively so that they can be able to influence learners positively in return. This was also the view held by the parent participants except for one,

Sharon, who viewed teachers as sources of leadership and management within their classrooms. Viewing teachers as typical leaders acknowledged teachers' positive contribution to learning, and their agency in their work spaces (Lieberman & Miller, 2005). Although there were prominent differences between the teachers' and parents' rhetoric on the issues of leadership and management, there also seemed to be points of similarities regarding the effects of lax leadership and management on teaching and learning (teachers' work).

What was apparent in the rhetoric of overwork **or work overload** was the perceived sources of work overload as identified by both groups of participants. The findings identified teachers' rhetoric to be about the issue of numbers (number of periods, grades, subjects, classes or learners, prescribed teaching and learning tasks), unequal distribution of workload, and administrative work. This was contrary to parents' rhetoric which was about learners' social issues or problems (drug use), and structural or institutional problems (overcrowding, diverse needs of learners, pressure from DoE). Some of these sources have already been identified as intensifying teachers' work (Ballet, Kelchtermans & Loughran, 2006; Hargreaves, 1992; Penrice, 2011; Wiebe, 2014). Whilst the teachers' rhetoric was solely about the things that impacted directly on the formal elements of teaching, the parent rhetoric presented a conflation of the formal and material elements of teaching (Morrow, 2007). This conflation resulted from the overlapping of one source, 'overcrowding' (from the parents' rhetoric), which indirectly complemented the teachers' rhetoric on the issue of numbers.

7.3 CONCLUSION

The aim of this chapter was to answer research question 3: What is the nature of the teachers' and parents' rhetoric on teachers' work? Why? The analysis indicated that the overall nature of teachers' and parents' rhetoric was complementary in many ways in relation to the topics that were discussed in the focus groups, namely; professionalism and unprofessionalism, unappreciation, dis/satisfaction, discipline, corporal punishment, leadership and management and overwork / work overload. Although the presentation of the data seemed to be linear or incremental, the analysis showed that there was an interconnection among these issues; some more than the others.

The analysis of the rhetoric on professionalism as presented by both groups of participants seemed to be in sync. The synchronisation arose from the fact that the issues discussed by both groups seemed to cover both the aspects of what professionalism is and what it is not (unprofessionalism). Points of similarities seemed to outweigh points of differences.

Very closely related issues of unappreciation, dissatisfaction and ill-discipline were also discussed. The rhetoric on these issues seemed to be internally complementary (per topic) but externally complementary (between topics). The analysis revealed the negative emotions evoked by these issues and therefore, their likelihood to lead to stress or burnout. When teachers are stressed, the chances are that they would resort to the use of corporal punishment which they, not only viewed as an easy option, but also encouraged its use by parents.

Effective leadership and management had the potential of circumventing most factors that impacted negatively on teachers' work. Equally, when leadership and management were exercised ineffectively, the results were often frustrating for teachers. In such instances, structural or institutional issues such as workload distribution, working conditions and perhaps, disciplinary problems were unlikely to be resolved.

Interpretations constructed from the teachers' and parents' focus groups were presented in this chapter. The rhetoric produced in both groups was compared and juxtaposed in an attempt to pull out the nature of the rhetoric. The next chapter discusses the findings of the study and the interpretations and meanings made from the findings.

CHAPTER EIGHT
Rhetoric is a Class-Based Perspective

Introduction

This chapter collapses the analysis of the three preceding chapters into one unified chapter. It is now apparent how and why teachers (who participated in this study) spoke about their work and what it was about. However, in this study, teachers' rhetoric has to be read together with parents' rhetoric, which was presented and analysed in chapter six. The parents' rhetoric was a justification of parents' perspectives on teachers and the work they do. What must be remembered is that the focus group discussions for teachers and parents were conducted separately, and neither group was asked to comment on what the other had said. The re-presentation and analysis of both the teachers' and parents' rhetoric which arose from the focus groups discussions is captured in chapter seven.

Juxtaposing teachers' rhetoric with parents' rhetoric was useful in revealing the nature of the rhetoric about teachers' work, as presented by the two groups of participants (teachers and parents), and highlighting how parents conceived teachers and the work they did. Rear and Jones (2013, p. 9) note that nodal points create chains of signification which make it possible to "analyse how the meanings of floating signifiers are configured in different discourses". These configurations were also apparent in this study, in the sense that similar utterances and concepts that were articulated by teachers and parents were used under different themes or focused topics to mean (in some instances) the same thing or (in other cases) different things; forming what is called "interdiscursivity" (Candlin & Maley, 1997, p. 212). Therefore, when both sets of data (from teachers and parents) were considered bifocally, the data yielded various connections and disconnections through the discussion of the themes (from one-on-one interviews), and the focused topics (through the focus group discussions). The separation of the two focus groups was to facilitate and closely explore each group's rhetoric without the influence of the other in order to understand the nature of the rhetoric that emerged between the two groups. The analytic framework from the discourse theory of Laclau and Mouffe (2001) was used to understand the relationality of the teachers' and parents' rhetoric about teachers' work.

The findings of this study were guided by the three critical questions:

1. What is the teachers' rhetoric about teachers' work? Why?
2. What is the parents' rhetoric about teachers' work? Why?
3. What is the nature of teachers' and parents' rhetoric about their work? Why?

The purpose of this chapter is to synthesise the findings in order to reach the *thesis* of the study, by looking backwards to provide a synopsis of the research approach and findings. In addition, a reflexive account of the challenges and the possibilities regarding the thesis generated, is also provided.

8.1 Teachers' Work as Multifaceted and Complex

The multifaceted nature of teachers' work arises from the different kinds of work that teachers are expected to fulfil; formally by the employer, and informally by the society at large (including parents who are also part of the society). The rhetoric on teachers' work as presented in this study emanated from the different articulations, such as the lack of monitoring of teachers' work and therefore, highlighting the need to put stringent measures in place to ensure efficiency in the delivery of work. The convergent and divergent views were also articulated, not only on the commitment or passion that the teachers have about their work, but also, on the laziness of teachers. The rhetoric also stems from the tensions of how aspects of teachers' work such as teacher professionalism and unprofessionalism, leadership and management, and work overload were conceived by both teachers and parents who participated in this study.

With an understanding that discourses are mere 'assemblages' of words (Duhn, 2010), the meanings attached to the various central signifiers such as monitoring of teachers' work, laziness of teachers, teaching and learning resources, dedication, stressful work, professionalism and unprofessionalism, unappreciation, ill-discipline, as well as leadership and management (identified as themes from individual interviews and focus points of discussions in focus groups), were read as assemblages in an attempt to disrupt the view of a consistent monolithic discourse (Cruickshank, 2012). This kind of reading revealed the fluidity rather than the staticity of meanings; and therefore, the intra- and interconnections as well as interrelationships that exist within, between and among discourses as assembled by the participants of this study.

8.2 The Rhetoric

8.2.1 Teacher Rhetoric: Unsupported and Powerless

The analysis revealed that teachers, in this study, were frustrated by the policy demands imposed by the Department of Education, which they felt treated teachers as mere technicians who were supposed to implement policies without questioning the institutional system. A clear case of chains of equivalence in relation to the disciplinary issues that all teachers in this study grappled with, was revealed in the teachers' rhetoric irrespective of the school context that the teachers worked in. Teachers complained about the lack of support from the education stakeholders, that is, parents, learners, Department of Education, and so on. All five teacher participants (Faith, Noah, Grace, Kadesh and Mercy) indicated that they were grappling with the learners' ill-discipline and sometimes, as lamented by Kadesh, had to deal with the abuse from parents who questioned the teachers' authority. On the contrary, chains of difference existed regarding the departmental discourse and teachers' discourse on discipline issues which indicated the power and authority politics. For example, Noah and Kadesh articulated how unclear the departmental policy on expulsion of learners was, and how often the Department of Education operated contrary to what the schools did. Furthermore, the authority of the Department of Education to make policy decisions that rendered teachers powerless in the classrooms (in relation to disciplinary measures) was articulated by all teacher participants. With the exception of Kadesh, the other four teachers (Mercy, Grace, Noah and Faith) also questioned the role of the department in the promotion of learners, which clearly indicated the differences in terms of how the policies were understood and enacted. An emerging discourse of dissatisfaction was manifest in the teachers' articulations on various aspects of their work, for example, on the issues of leadership and management and on availability of resources; to mention a few.

8.2.2 Parent Rhetoric: Sympathy and Disillusionment

Parents in this study talked about the complexities of teachers' work and the fact that some teachers were lazy and so on. The surprising part was that they were still sympathetic towards teachers. Generally, there was a myth that parents were angry with teachers which this study surprisingly proved not to be the case, particularly with Black parents in Black schools which are usually under-resourced. These were parents from a lower-middle class social stratum who dealt with discipline issues (in their homes) that the teachers had to deal with also (in schools). So, the parents understood what it meant

to deal with difficult children and how stressful it could be for teachers who had forty or fifty learners in a classroom when they, as parents, only dealt with two or three children. Therefore, parents in poor communities were more sensitive to the challenges that teachers faced at schools.

Whereas we can conjecture that in the middle-classes, parents only deal with their families and thus, cannot imagine how a teacher can cope with forty or fifty children in one classroom. Possibly, this explains why they are usually less sympathetic. The fact that parents pay exorbitant school fees, they tend to expect much from teachers; and if their expectations are not met, the results are often negative for teachers. Parents who are economically empowered are usually more sensitive to their children and see their children as needing more protection from the teachers, whereas poor parents would trust the teacher because they know that the teacher wants to do something good (hence the parents' rhetoric on corporal punishment as something that teachers could use to maintain order in class). Poor parents did not see their children as vulnerable (Amin, 2008). They tended to see their children as disruptive or dangerous, hence their sympathy for teachers. However, in the so-called wealthy schools, children are seen as vulnerable and needing protection from teachers who are regarded as abusive and not having the interest of children at heart as do the parents.

8.2.3 The Nature of the Rhetoric

In relation to the third critical question: what is the nature of teachers' and parents' rhetoric about teachers' work and why? the findings indicate the intra- and interconnectedness of the rhetoric as shown in Figure 8.1 below:

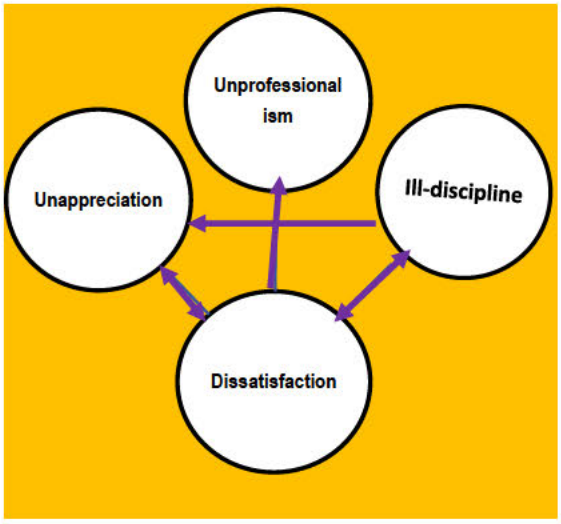

Figure 8.1 Diagram showing intra-connections within the teachers' rhetoric on teachers' work

Figure 8.1 depicts the various intra-connections that seemed to exist between the teachers' rhetoric on the various aspects about teachers' work. By intra-connections, I mean connections that are made by the same group (teachers or parents) between its own rhetoric about different topics. For example, as shown in the above diagram (Fig. 8.1), teachers' rhetoric made intra-connections between issues of ill-discipline, dissatisfaction and unprofessionalism; whilst issues of unappreciation and ill-discipline showed connections to teacher dissatisfaction. Teachers in this study were concerned about the heightened levels of learner ill-discipline which seemed to overwhelmingly make them feel unappreciated by the learners and therefore, dissatisfied with their work. However, the dissatisfaction resulted, not only from ill-discipline, but also from other sources, such as being unionists leading to some teachers acting unprofessionally (sometimes) towards their colleagues and school management teams, as observed by Mercy and Kadesh. On the other hand, parents' rhetoric showed intra-connections on the issues of work-overload and dissatisfaction as well as ill-discipline with unprofessionalism and dissatisfaction as shown in Fig 8.2 below.

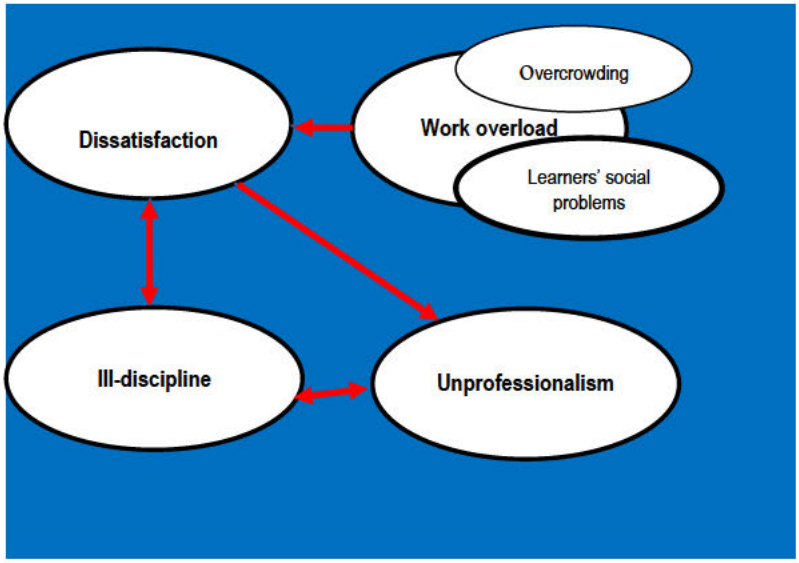

Figure 8.2 Diagram showing intra-connections within the parents' rhetoric on teachers' work

The intra-connections between the parents' rhetoric as indicated in Fig.8.2 suggest that ill-discipline caused teachers to be dissatisfied with the work that they did, and therefore, resulted in teachers acting in an unprofessional manner, for example, not doing their job with honesty as was suggested by Barbara.

For the parents in this study, work overload had to do more with the conditions that teachers worked under. For example, teachers having to deal with learners' social problems such as drug use (Barbara) or learners who were not coping academically (Zenith), and working in overcrowded classrooms (Sharon and Whitney). All these factors led to teacher dissatisfaction. Some unprofessional behaviour of teachers, as noted by parent participants, emanated from the dissatisfaction that teachers had, either with their working conditions (as discussed above) or with learner ill-discipline. However, as suggested by Zenith, some learners' ill-discipline was triggered by some teachers' unprofessional behaviour such as male teachers having intimate relations with girl learners, which usually led to learners' lack of respect for the teachers involved.

Whilst the rhetoric of each group of participants (teachers or parents) showed very strong intra-connections (as discussed above), it also showed various interconnections as indicated in Fig 8.3 below.

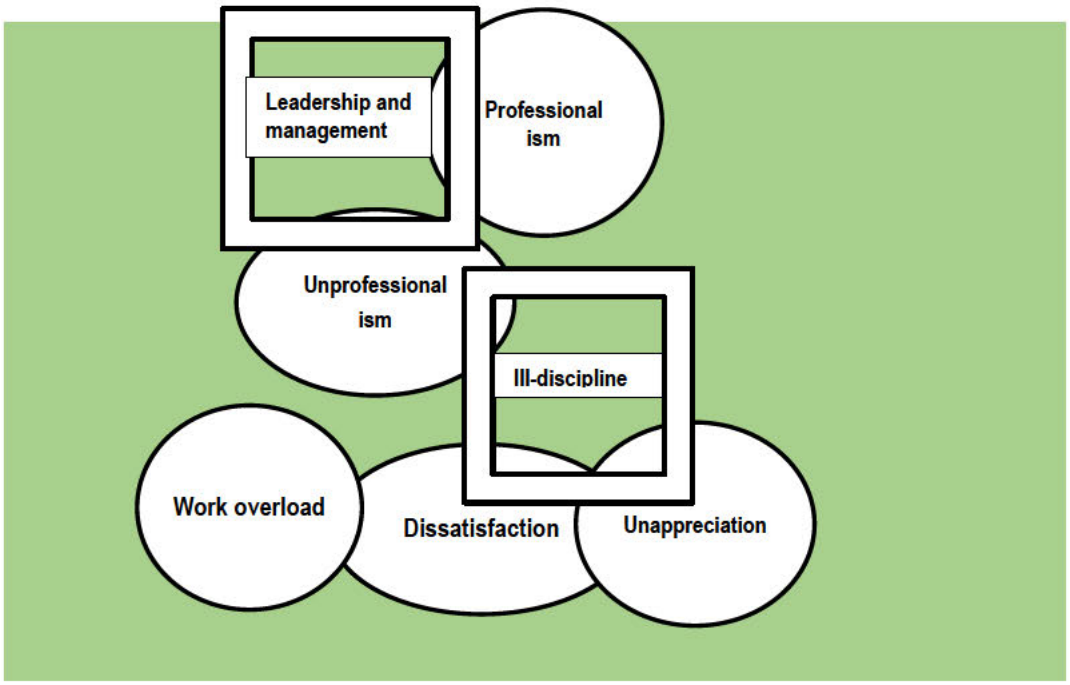

Figure 8.3 Diagram showing interconnections between teachers' and parents' rhetoric about teachers' work

Keys: Teachers' rhetoric – ○
Parents' rhetoric – ⬭
Identical rhetoric for both teachers' and parents' - ▣

By interconnections, I mean the connections made by either group of participants (teachers or parents), where its rhetoric on one topic intersected with the rhetoric of the other group on the same or on different topic/s as depicted in Fig 8.3 above. For instance, Sharon's (parent participant) utterances (under the topic of leadership and management) about teachers having to be exemplary leaders who 'walk the talk' were strikingly similar to two teacher participants' (Grace and Kadesh) utterances on teacher professionalism. Likewise, teacher participants positioned the issue of salaries (being underpaid) within the rhetoric of unappreciation, whereas parents located the teacher salaries within the rhetoric of teacher dissatisfaction. Furthermore, another interconnection existed between the parent participants' observations about the conditions that teachers work under, e.g. overcrowding of learners in class, as a source of teacher dissatisfaction; and teacher participants' (Mercy and Grace) observation of overcrowding and the high number of class tasks (Kadesh and Noah) as some of the causes of work overload. Whilst both parents and teachers in this study talked about very similar issues as sources of ill-discipline of learners e.g. drug use [Kadesh – teacher and Barbara - parent] and

unworkable or unclear DoE policies on discipline (Whitney - parent) or on expulsion (Noah - teacher), they pointed to divergent effects; such as unappreciation (teachers), dissatisfaction and unprofessionalism (parents). In a way, these connections (whether intra- or inter) indicated the relational nature of the issues that were said to influence teachers' work. As aptly put by Suurmond (2005, p. 16), new orders of discourse are always a possibility since words are not "stably attached to concepts". This instability or permeability of discourses was also applicable to this study, as has been shown by the numerous connections or infiltrations of some discourses by alternative discourses, indicating the discursive nature of meanings.

The formation of connections within or between discourses was argued by Olivier (2005) to emanate from human subjects' capabilities of positioning themselves differently within language thereby creating different 'contexts of meaning'. These interconnections were also due to the multivocal nature of language; that is, one word could be used differently to subvert its meaning in the dominant discourse. This multivocal nature of language is what Laclau and Mouffe (2001) calls the discursivity of meaning which does not subscribe to any permanency. This also applied to this study, where, if it was to be replicated, the same discourses would not emerge; and if they did, they would be articulated differently.

The analysis of this study's findings revealed various forms of dispositions which emerged through the meanings constructed by participants (both teachers and parents) in their understanding of teachers' work. Dispositions categorising teachers as lazy, good, passionate or dedicated were identified as nodal points around which discursive teacher identities were formed. Svensson (2016) argues that identities are usually created in relation to what they are not. In other words, the meaning ascribed to particular identities is created in contrast to the 'other'. Teachers were conceived as good, dedicated and passionate in relation to their professional selves and work ethic, as opposed to lazy teachers whose behaviour was linked to unprofessionalism.

8.3 The Thesis: Rhetoric is Class-Based

In South Africa, people are positioned as middle-class in relation to their levels of education, whether they have a qualification, employment, and material conditions

(Hoadley, 2009) such as running water, good salaries and so on. Teaching is among the highly paid professions, particularly in the KwaZulu-Natal province, and that is what makes the teacher participants middle-class. These teachers' occupational status (marked by expertise) and lifestyle set them apart from the parent participants who were mostly working class. Once they become teachers, people appropriate middle-class values (Ndletyana, 2014). For example, to them education becomes important and they expect one to have a vision of the future in which one will become successful. To them, it is about accumulating wealth (economic standing) and also the social and cultural capital. However, the route to these things is through education and it means that these teachers expect parents to participate in education, by helping their children with homework in their journey to becoming literate.

Being middle-class, generally allows teachers to behave in certain ways, and to hold specific views on things that they normally perceive as good (Seekings & Nattrass, 2002). These include education, access to technology, access to books, being assisted by parents in educational matters, coming regularly to school and being supported at home. Yet, for the teachers in this study, all the middle-class values get subverted in the classroom because most learners come from broken families or non-traditional family structures. For this reason, teachers are faced with learners who have no control, who may not be controlled at home, who have no limitations to what they do and not do, and who are exposed to criminality and violence. So, what was worse for the teachers in this study, was having to deal with learners with such negative attributes with not much support from the DoE through the services of counsellors or social workers in the schools, and provision of psychological interventions.

Non-cooperation with teachers occurred not only with parents, but with the government and the school management as well. Teachers in this study felt let down by their own school management for not having proper plans for dealing with learner ill-discipline and protection of teachers from abusive learners or parents. They also felt that they failed to get the government's attention and support on issues regarding teaching and learning resources as well as expulsion of learners from school. This explains why teachers' rhetoric was all around, "I am not supported and I do not have any power." Teachers' rhetoric almost bordered on despair and disillusionment.

For the parents in this study, who were lowly paid (and mostly single mothers) often had to leave their children unattended, and when they came back from work, they knew that they had lost control, in terms of the children's discipline. So, working with one, two or three children and usually finding it difficult to control the children, the parents understood fully why a teacher who had a class full of learners (in the range of forty or fifty) would have difficulty in disciplining the learners.

To some extent, the parents' rhetoric acknowledged that some parents lost authority when it came to disciplining their own children; and at the same time, it also indicated loss of authority by teachers (which they inferred to be due to teachers' unprofessional behaviours). This finding was related to the teachers' rhetoric which also indicated that teachers felt disempowered by some of the Department of Education's expectations (as discussed earlier) which weakened teachers' authority. One could argue that the chains of differences played an enormous role in the construction of these meanings since meanings were derived from difference (Svensson, 2016). For the participants (teachers and parents), one key signifier (loss of authority) seemingly occupied various positions in relation to other signs (ill-discipline, unprofessional behaviour, DoE's expectations) to produce their varied meanings.

The parents were disillusioned as they expected that in the post-apartheid era, their children should have gotten better access to education. They were disillusioned because they knew that education was a way out of poverty but not the quality of the education that their children were receiving. However, for them, some education was better than nothing and there was still hope.

It was apparent why teachers' rhetoric was based on complaining and moaning about the lack of support (from other stakeholders) and the lack of agency (from their part). This rhetoric emanated from these teachers' overwhelming experiences of dealing with difficult (ill-disciplined) learners, and continuously being gripped by feelings of disempowerment. It could also be understood why parents, immersed in the violent underbelly that lower class people lived in, understood and sympathised with teachers. Their sympathy emanated from the shared experience of not being in control with regard to the disciplining of children. One can almost be assured that the middle-class parents do not have the same level of sympathy for teachers in the middle-class school, and

teachers would respond differently to children who came from wealthier backgrounds who were prepared for school.

Who the teachers were, the schools they taught in, the learners they taught, and the milieu in which they lived, affected the discourse, but the discourse was only fixed within a class and became unfixed the moment it was considered by other classes.

8.4 Reflections on the Research Process

Being reflective about the research process allows the researcher to look back and think about the findings in relation to the literature, methodology and the theoretical framework used in the study. This reflection delineates the processes that this study took to arrive at the findings and to develop the thesis.

8.4.1 Literature Review

The review of literature indicated paucity of the discourse analysis research in the South African context, particularly in relation to teachers' work. Whilst some studies used critical discourse analysis to study certain aspects in teaching or in education, none of the selected readings studied rhetoric on teachers' work. Therefore, this study made a contribution in understanding teachers' work from the teachers' and parents' perspectives. From the local and international studies that were reviewed, issues of professionalism, commitment and caring, intensified work, stress and burnout were seen as impacting on teachers' work and lives. In this study, findings from the parents' rhetoric confirmed the difficult and stressful nature of teachers' work, and the teachers' rhetoric highlighted issues that contributed to the intensification of teachers' work, such as administrative work, as well as negative parents' and district officials' attitudes.

It also became apparent from the reviewed literature that the notion of teacher commitment was closely aligned to both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation (Crosswell & Elliot, 2004; Day, 2004) which often resulted in teachers being effective in their work. The intersection of the 'selves'; the professional and the personal, and how they influenced the 'work' was argued by Miller (2012) to bring out the emotional aspects into teachers' work. This suggestion related well to the findings of this study on both teachers' and parents' rhetoric, which viewed some teachers as 'dedicated and caring' or 'dedicated and passionate' in their work.

The motivation for doing a study on rhetoric about teachers' work emanated from the need to understand the two groups' perspectives (teachers and parents) on how they viewed teachers' wok and the reasons for their perceptions; particularly because the literature reviewed portrayed a negative impression of teachers by the public (Masondo, 2016; Thomas 2011). Whilst the negativity around teachers and their work often portrayed and perpetuated a discourse of 'not caring' from the teachers, or 'lack of trust' from the public (which parents formed part of), some literature suggested that teachers were not only committed to their work but passionate or emotionally engaged (Bukor, 2013; Miller, 2012; O'Connor, 2008). This emotional engagement was likely to lead to teacher stress and possibly burnout as teachers tried to manoeuvre around differing conditions of work in their various school contexts (Fisher, 2011; Froese-Germain, 2014; Kyriacou & Chien, 2004; Milner & Khoza, 2008).

Over and above the literature insights, a fitting methodology was carefully considered.

8.4.2 Methodology

A qualitative approach was adopted in this study to explore both teachers' and parents' rhetoric about teachers' work. In studying rhetoric, I interacted closely with the participants, getting exposure to the participants' lived experiences and social realities; and to "second-order interpretations" (Tracy, 2013, p. 5). Meanings were substantially derived from the participants' thick descriptions of their realities (during interviews) and arguments they made either explicitly or implicitly (during the focus group discussions) in relation to each other's statements (Cavender & Kahane, 2010).

Laclau and Mouffe's (2001) discourse theory was used to analyse and make meaning of the data which were produced through semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions. The analysis process occurred at two levels. The first analysis was to establish the rhetoric about teachers' work from the two groups of participants through the semi-structured one-on-one interviews. The second analysis was to establish the nature of the rhetoric from the two groups, using the data from the two focus groups. Whilst the findings of this study showed the relational nature of teachers' and parents' rhetoric, exploring the two participants' groups separately (through focus groups) was done to understand each group's rhetoric distinctly before identifying any interplay between the two groups' rhetoric.

The discourse theory was used heuristically in the analysis of data and it can be argued to have provided a broader understanding of the connections and disconnections that exist between the rhetorics of the two groups of participants (teachers and parents). Discourse analysis enabled the researcher to make meaning of the interplay of intra-connections (chains of equivalence) in the rhetoric of either group of participants (teachers or parents) and interconnections between the rhetoric of the teachers and parents. In this study, the intention was not to analyse the data using *all* the concepts of Laclau and Mouffe's discourse theory. The focus was on understanding the rhetoric that was constructed around the key signifiers (themes) in relation to teachers' work. Therefore, using aspects of the discourse theory framework allowed me to reveal how rhetoric constituted teachers' and parents' knowledge and their realities regarding teachers' work.

8.5 Implications of the Study

The following section presents the implications that arose from this study's findings.

8.5.1 The Need for Multi-layered Support for Teachers

Issues of professionalism are part of educational discourses which enforce control and accountability (Osgood, 2006), yet the teachers in this study highlighted the many ways in which the DoE compromises teachers' professionalism. For instance, four out of five teachers complained about being forced by the Department of Education to alter the marks of learners who had failed the grade so that they could pass and progress to the next grade. In this case, the department undermined the teachers' authority in not recognising that teachers were the ones who interacted with the learners during the teaching and learning and had a good sense of the learners' capabilities. The implication from this case is that, teachers did not get the support they needed from the department officials who seemed not to trust the teachers' decisions on the promotion of learners, hence it did what it was not supposed to do. The department tended to make decisions that were not congruent with the actualities of teachers' work. It seemed that the Department of Education, as the employer, needed to operate at a level of trust with the teachers.

From the parents' point of view, the government or the Department of Education was supposed to be visible and answerable to some of the problems that were prevalent in schools, such as overcrowding and indiscipline of both learners and teachers. All parents in this study relayed their concerns about the provision of resources, specifically human resources, in the form of teachers. They clearly located the problem with the DoE as the

employer. Their concerns emanated from the fact that many teachers in schools were teaching subjects which they were not qualified to teach, and so they lacked theoretical grounding and/ or pedagogical-content knowledge. Therefore, the employer (DoE) had the challenge of ensuring that mismatches were avoided between teachers and the subjects they were employed to teach in schools to ensure support for teachers and increase schools' success rates.

Whereas support from the school management team was known to create a conducive working atmosphere, lack of support or interest in teachers and their work caused frustrations and divisions among teachers, as was noted by the teachers in this study. Two out of five teachers reported the proactivity of their schools' SMTs in ensuring that effective teaching and learning occurred. This shows that there is a need for SMTs to involve teachers in decision-making on the matters that affected teachers and their work and in strategic planning for the whole school developments. Furthermore, there was need for SMTs to exercise fairness when dealing with teachers in order to avoid any favouritism or discrimination to some teachers. Any acts of favouritism and discrimination would impact on the teachers and the way they performed their work, as was observed by all teacher participants.

8.5.2 The Need for Collaboration between Teachers, Parents, Learners and the Department of Education

Teachers, parents, learners and the Department of Education officials needed to work together in order to ensure a positive teaching and learning experience and, consequently, smooth running of the schools. Having open lines of communication among all these stakeholders had the potential to alleviate problems in schools, particularly learner indiscipline.

There was need for all, not some, teachers to do their work diligently and professionally at all times. Working in collaboration with other teachers (either from the same school or across schools) would allow teachers to capitalise on their strengths and possibly work out on their weaknesses in relation to the subjects that they taught. For instance, Mercy and Grace highlighted how the language teachers could benefit from using team-teaching as a way of counteracting the seemingly huge workloads that they had. Collaboration between teachers would create collegiality, a support structure or a 'community of

practice' (Wenger, 2010) where teachers could learn meaningfully from one another in social contexts, rather than in isolation. By engaging in the communities of practice, teachers would likely gain or develop agency in relation to their professional development; seeing that all teacher participants complained about the minimal professional development activities that they expected the DoE to organise.

From the parents' perspectives, having open lines of communication among the education stakeholders, that is, parents, teachers and the DoE was a necessity. Parent participants wanted only the best for their children, therefore, they raised concerns about what they viewed as lack of interest or involvement by the government in developing/upgrading the schools and in ensuring that teachers were re-trained when new curricula were introduced. Whilst the parents in this study (who happened to be Black parents) were sympathetic to teachers and seemed not to push for changes (because they regarded most things that teachers do to be good or acceptable), three out of four parents also warned teachers to be cautious of favouritism when dealing with learners as this was one of the roots of learner indiscipline. Collaboration among parents, teachers and the Department of Education was likely to improve learner achievement because all stakeholders would be on board, knowing what is expected of them and playing their respective roles.

The teacher-parent-learner partnership should be underpinned by respect. Learners needed to respect the authority of both their parents and teachers. Similarly, the parents needed to trust and respect the authority of the teacher. Teachers in this study, believed that their work would be less of a burden if parents were to be actively involved in their children's education. Likewise, three out of four parents acknowledged that they also needed to be more involved in the education of their children. However, they cited the lack of communication and orientation when new syllabi were introduced. Therefore, there needs to be institutional planning on how to engage and assist parents when curricula changes occur, so that they, in return, can be able to assist their children with their school work.

Respecting the teachers' authority needed to stretch to the Department of Education officials who were portrayed by the teachers in this study as authoritative and enforcing hegemonic practices upon teachers, particularly in the unethical promotion of learners who had not passed the grade. The teachers felt that learners were short-changed by such

practices and often exited the school underprepared for tertiary education. Therefore, working in collaboration with the DoE would avoid misunderstandings between teachers and the department officials and perhaps, resolve incongruences or misinterpretation of educational policies.

8.5.3 What the Participants' Rhetoric does not Address (silences)

The teachers' rhetoric was silent about teacher stress and burnout. Teachers did not overtly talk about how they were stressed or suffered from burnout. However, it was implied within the discourses of unappreciation and dissatisfaction. Similarly, from the parents' rhetoric, there was relative silence around unionism and the possible disruptions it brought to teachers' work. It was implied within the discourse of teacher absenteeism and that of teachers finishing work much earlier than normal. These kinds of silences are what Laclau and Mouffe call hidden discourses (Laclau & Mouffe, 2001). Perhaps, the participants in this study understood the relational nature of the said to the unsaid (Dolling, 2003). This means most of the things that we say can be understood if one considers the flip side of our utterances, the unsaid.

8.6 Vistas for Further Research

This study only used five teacher participants from secondary (high) schools in one district (Pinetown) and one province (KwaZulu-Natal) in South Africa. Other studies can be conducted to include other districts (either within the same province or in various provinces). A larger number of participants can also be used than was used for this study.

Teachers who participated in this study were all high school teachers and so studies using primary school teachers can be done to find out if similar or different findings will emerge due to the different intricacies of teachers' work at different levels of the school system. The same applies to parent participants, where parents with primary school-going children can be interviewed to see how their understanding of teachers' work converged or diverged from the parents of high school-going children.

8.7 CONCLUSION

This study sought to explore the 'everyday talk' (rhetoric) of what teachers and parents understood teachers' work to be about and why they understood it in the manner they did. It further set out to understand the nature of the rhetoric as articulated by teachers and

parents, as they had influence in the manner in which teachers performed their work. This study showed that teachers' work was multi-layered and challenging. Teachers often had to succumb to the hegemonic practices of the Department of Education which usually left teachers in a state of confusion, if not chaos. Teachers felt deprofessionalised by the unrealistic expectations that both the Department of Education and some parents made on teachers, particularly regarding the promotion of learners and the disciplinary measures against ill-disciplined learners. This study showed that teachers' authority was taken away, not only by the departmental policies, but also by learners' indiscipline.

The parents in this study sympathised with teachers because of all the external forces which they perceived as contributing to the difficult and stressful nature of teachers' work, hence their commitment to rethink how they could contribute to their children's education. They were also vocal about the role that the Department of Education or government needs to play in order to make the work and lives of teachers bearable; for instance, building more schools to deal with overcrowding and considering teachers' specialisations at a time of employment.

This study is valuable as it contributes theoretically to the field of discourse studies which is widely populated by general discourse analysis, and not by the analysis of rhetoric (which is a particular form of discourse), which was the focus of this study. Methodologically, exploring teachers' work through teachers' views and parents' perspectives provided new insights on how teachers and their work were understood by important stakeholders in education. The parents brought in a fresh perspective on teachers' work, since most research on teachers' work is usually drawn only from teachers' experiences.

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INDEX OF APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

29 October 2014

Mrs Mildred Nomkhosi Nzimande (200276724)
School of Education
Edgewood Campus

Dear Mrs Nzimande,

Protocol reference number: HSS/1427/014D
Project title: Discourse analysis of teacher and parent rhetoric about teachers' work

Full Approval – Expedited Application

In response to your application received on 21 October 2014, the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee has considered the abovementioned application and the protocol have been granted **FULL APPROVAL.**

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment/modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number.

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

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

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

Yours faithfully

[redacted]

.....

Dr Shenuka Singh (Chair)

/ms

Cc Supervisor: Dr Nyna Amin
Cc Cc Academic Leader Research: Professor P Morojele
Cc School Administrator: Mr Thoba Mthembu

Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee
Dr Shenuka Singh (Chair)
Westville Campus, Govan Mbeki Building
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APPENDIX B

education

Department:
Education
PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL

Enquiries: Nomangisi Ngubane | Tel: 033 392 1004 | Ref.:2/4/8/213

Mrs M N Nzimande
P.O. Box 11015
Mariannhill
3610

Dear Mrs Nzimande

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE KZN DoE INSTITUTIONS

Your application to conduct research entitled: **"Discourse analysis of teachers' and parents' rhetoric about teachers work"**, in the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education Institutions has been approved. The conditions of the approval are as follows:

1. The researcher will make all the arrangements concerning the research and interviews.
2. The researcher must ensure that Educator and learning programmes are not interrupted.
3. Interviews are not conducted during the time of writing examinations in schools.
4. Learners, Educators, Schools and Institutions are not identifiable in any way from the results of the research.
5. A copy of this letter is submitted to District Managers, Principals and Heads of Institutions where the intended research and interviews are to be conducted.
6. The period of investigation is limited to the period from 01 August 2014 to 30 November 2015.
7. Your research and interviews will be limited to the schools you have proposed and approved by the Head of Department. Please note that Principals, Educators, Departmental Officials and Learners are under no obligation to participate or assist you in your investigation.
8. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey at the school(s), please contact Mr. Alwar at the contact numbers below.
9. Upon completion of the research, a brief summary of the findings, recommendations or a full report / dissertation / thesis must be submitted to the research office of the Department. Please address it to The Director-Resources Planning, Private Bag X9137, Pietermaritzburg, 3200.
10. Please note that your research and interviews will be limited to schools and institutions in KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education.

---------- Secondary School
---------- Secondary School
---------- Secondary School

[redacted]

Nkosinathi S.P. Sishi, PhD
Head of Department: Education
Date: 08 August 2014

KWAZULU-NATAL DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

POSTAL: Private Bag X 9137, Pietermaritzburg, 3200, KwaZulu-Natal, Republic of South Africa
PHYSICAL: 247 Burger Street, Anton Lembede House, Pietermaritzburg, 3201. Tel. 033 392 1004 Fax: 033 392 4203
EMAIL ADDRESS: kehologile.connie@kzndoe.gov.za; CALL CENTRE: 0860 596 363;
WEBSITE: WWW.kzneducation.gov.za

APPENDIX C

Gatekeeper letter – Informed permission from school principals

P.O. Box 11015
Mariannhill
3610
17 June 2014

The Principal
[redacted]

Dear Sir/Madam

I am Nomkhosi Nzimande, currently a registered PhD student at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (Edgewood campus) in South Africa. As part of my development, I am undertaking a research study entitled 'Discourse analysis of teacher and parent rhetoric about teachers' work'. The study's focus is really on about the everyday discussions that teachers and parents have about teachers' work. I am therefore seeking permission interview two teachers from your school. Interviews will be conducted after school hours or during vacation at a venue convenient for the teachers. Therefore, the school will not be affected in anyway and the teachers will not be detracted from doing their duties at school.

The study does not seek any information about the school or about specific individuals, i.e. either colleagues, parents or learners. Its focus is on the discourse (discussions) that teachers and parents have about teachers' work. The study is important because it will reveal why parent and teachers have different viewpoints (about teachers' work) and how these viewpoints can be harmonized to bring about mediation that will benefit the school, teachers, parents and learners alike.

Permission to conduct this research study has been obtained from University of KwaZulu-Natal. Should you have any questions about the legality of the study you may contact Ms Phume Ximba of UKZN Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (HSSREC) at ximbap@ukzn.ac.za or call her at +27(0) 31 2603587.

Should you need further explanations or clarifications about the study, feel free to contact me or my supervisor, Dr Nyna Amin. Our contact details are provided below.

Your understanding and co-operation in this regard will be highly appreciated.

Nomkhosi Nzimande
Student number: 200276724

Contact details:
Researcher: Nomkhosi Nzimande
Email address: khetza@yahoo.com
Tel/Cell: 031-7401012

Supervisor: Dr Nyna Amin
amin@ukzn.ac.za
031-2607255

Informed permission from Principal

I have read and understood all the terms stipulated for the conduction of this study. I do/do not grant the researcher permission to conduct the study using teacher/s from this school.

Name:_____ Date:_____

Signature:_____

School stamp:

APPENDIX D

Informed consent of research participants

Dear Sir/Madam

I, Nomkhosi Nzimande, am currently a registered PhD student at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. As part of fulfilling my degree, I am required to conduct a research project in my field of interest. The following topic is the focus of my research: Discourse analysis of teachers' and parents' rhetoric about teachers' work. Through the use of teachers and parents, this study aims to answer the following critical questions:

1. What are teachers' discourses about teachers' work? Why?
2. What are parents' discourses about teachers' work? Why?
3. What is the relationship between the teachers' discourses and parents' discourse about teachers' work? Why?

Participation in this study requires you to

- Be interviewed on a one-on-one basis
- Be interviewed in a group (focus group discussion)

With your permission, both these interviews will be audio-taped.

As a participant

- Your involvement in the study is voluntary
- You are assured that both interviews take place at a time and place convenient to you
- Your confidentiality will be maintained (all participants will use pseudonyms)
- You will not be exposed to any risk and you may choose not to answer questions should you wish to do so
- You may withdraw at any time during the research process
- You will have access to your data with the rights to review, retract, revise, your opinions
- You will have an opportunity to verify transcript /s of the one-on-one interview in order to confirm if your opinions have been captured accurately
- You will receive a copy of all research reports and publications should you wish to

Permission to conduct this research study has been obtained from University of KwaZulu-Natal. Should you have any questions about your participation and your rights in the study you may contact Ms Phume Ximba of UKZN Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee at ximbap@ukzn.ac.za or call her at 27 31 2603587.

Thank you for your co-operation

Nomkhosi Nzimande

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Informed consent of participant

I have read the information sheet and understand my participation in the study.

I understand that my real name will not be used in all write-ups of this study and that the information that I will provide will be used for this research project and other appropriate research presentations. I am also aware that

- Participation is voluntary
- I am not forced to answer any questions that make me uncomfortable and
- I am free to withdraw from the project at any point
- There is no payment for participation

I hereby give consent to participate in this research project.

I do / do not give consent to be audio-taped.

Name:_____ Signature:_____

Date:_____

APPENDIX E1 – INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR TEACHER PARTICIPANTS

Semi-structured interview schedule for teacher participants

Introductions – I will introduce myself and welcome the participant

Warm-up questions

- How did you come to choose teaching as a career? What were your expectations?
- When did you begin your teaching career?
- How long have you been at your present school?
- Which grades do you teach?
- What subjects do you teach?
- What is it like to teach at your school?
- What are your feelings about teaching as a career?

General questions on education

- In your opinion, what do you think is the **role of education**?
- In your discussions with your colleagues; what do they say about the role of education?
- What is the **role of teachers** in education?
- Are you able to fulfil your roles in your school? Why or why not?

Questions directly related to teachers' work

- How would you describe the work that you do?
- What does your typical school day look like? i.e. the different kinds of work that you do in school?
- Do you think there are different opinions about the work that you do as a teacher?
- What do you think other people (e.g. parents, family members, peers, social group, principal and the head of your department, district officials etc.) think about teachers' work? Probe – Why do you think they say this?
- What do you think the **parents' opinion/s** is/are about the work of teachers? Probe – Why do you think they have this/these opinion/s?

APPENDIX E2 – INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR PARENT PARTICIPANTS

Semi-structured interview schedule for parents/guardians

Introductions – I will introduce myself and welcome the participant

Warm-up questions

- How long has your child/ward been attending at his/her present school?
- Which grade is s/he in?
- What subjects is s/he doing (apart from languages and Life Orientation)?
- What are your feelings about the school's ethos? About the teachers?

General questions on education

- In your opinion, what do you think is the role of education? What do other parents/warders say about the role of education?
- What do you think is the role of teachers in education?

Questions directly related to teachers' work

- How would you describe the work that teachers do?
- What do you think the teachers' work look like in a day? i.e. the different kinds of work that teachers do in school?
- Do you think there are different opinions about the work that teachers do?
- What do you think the parents' opinion is about the work of teachers? Why?
- What do you think about the teaching profession and the work that teachers do?
- Do you think that teachers work hard? Why do you feel this way?
- What don't you like about the work that teachers do?
- Do you think that teachers find any joy in doing their work? Why do you feel this way?
- In your opinion, how do the parents come to know about the work that teachers do?
- How do you as a parent/warder come to know about what teachers do in schools?

Explanations given

- How would you rate the work that South African teachers do?
- Does this rating apply to all teachers?
- Do you think it has to do with race, gender, culture, religion, class or past experiences?
- Do you share the feeling that teachers work half a day and have lots of holidays?

APPENDIX F1 – FOCUS GROUP SCHEDULE FOR TEACHER PARTICIPANTS

Focus group – teachers (11 November 2015)

Introductions and house rules

Points of discussion:

"Empowering teachers, building sustainable societies" 2015 DoBE's theme for celebrating teachers during the World Teachers' day

- Empowerment of teachers – what does it mean for you as teachers? In relation to your work as teachers?

"A good teacher is like a candle – it consumes itself to light the way for others" Mustafa Kemal Ataturk (1st President of the Republic of Turkey)

- Does this statement speak to how you work as teachers? Consuming yourselves as teachers, in what ways?

Teachers being overworked:

- What do you think contributes to the overload of teachers' work?
- Are there ways by which you as teachers can escape being overworked?
- So, those teachers who say that they are overworked, are they over-reacting?
- How does being overworked affect your work?

Unappreciated:

- Unappreciation; what does it mean for you?
- Why do teachers feel unappreciated? Unappreciated by whom?
- How does it affect your work?

Job dis/satisfaction (morale)

- What are your views on this topic? What do you think contributes to teachers being dis/satisfied with their jobs?
- What contribution does it make to how you perform your work?

Teacher professionalism:

- What does it mean for you?
- What are some of the issues that interfere with teacher professionalism? And how do teachers deal with those issues?
- Do you think teachers are professional in their work? To what extent?

Issues of discipline:

Irrespective of the school context, there seems to be vast issues with discipline:

- In your opinions as teachers, what are the problems that culminate to issues of ill-discipline?
- How does it affect your work as teachers?

According to 2013/2014 SACE Annual report, "there is a sharp increase in the reported cases of teachers who still use corporal punishment" +/- 202 cases of corporal punishment were reported to the council; even after 19 yrs of it being outlawed.

- What is your take on this matter?

Annual National Assessment (ANA)

- What is the issue here? Why are teachers against ANA? How does it affect your work **as** teachers?

Issues of leadership and management:

- How does it relate to your work **as** teachers?

Any other points of interest in relation to teachers' work that you wish to discuss?

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APPENDIX F2 – FOCUS GROUP SCHEDULE FOR PARENT PARTICIPANTS

Research on Teachers' work

Focus group discussion – Parents (23 January 2016)

Introductions and house rules

Points of discussion:

"Empowering teachers, building sustainable societies" 2015 DoBE's theme for celebrating teachers during the World Teachers' day

- Empowerment of teachers – what do you think it means for teachers, in relation to their work?

"A good teacher is like a candle – it consumes itself to light the way for others" Mustafa Kemal Ataturk (1st President of the Republic of Turkey)

- Does this statement really speak to how teachers work? Do they consume themselves as teachers, in what ways?

Teachers being overworked or overloaded:

- What do you think contributes to the overload of teachers' work?
- Are there ways by which teachers can escape being overworked?
- So, those teachers who say that they are overworked, are they over-reacting?
- How does being overworked affect teachers' work?

Unappreciated:

- Unappreciation; what does it mean for you?
- In your opinion, do you feel that teachers are unappreciated? And by whom?
- How does this unappreciation affect their work?

Job dis/satisfaction (morale)

- What are your views on this topic? What do you think contributes to teachers being dis/satisfied with their job or work?
- What contribution does it make to how they perform their work?

Teacher professionalism:

- What does it mean for you?
- What are some of the issues that interfere with teacher professionalism? Do you have any idea as to how teachers deal with those issues?
- Do you think teachers are professional in their work? To what extent?

Issues of discipline:

Irrespective of the school context, there seems to be many issues with discipline:

- In your opinions as parents, what are the problems that culminate to issues of ill-discipline in schools?
- How does ill-discipline affect teachers' work?

According to 2013/2014 SACE Annual report, "there is a sharp increase in the reported cases of teachers who still use corporal punishment" +/- 202 cases of corporal punishment were reported to the council; even after 19 years of it (corporal punishment) being outlawed (made illegal).

- What is your take on this matter? Why do some teachers still use corporal punishment? And what are your feelings as parents on this matter?

Annual National Assessment (ANA)

- It has been all over the media (TV, radio, newspapers, social networks) that teachers are against this form of assessment. Are you (as parents) aware of the reasons why teachers are against ANA? How does it affect their work as teachers?

Issues of leadership and management:

- How do these aspects affect teachers and their work?

Any other points of interest in relation to teachers' work that you wish to discuss?

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