**TEACHERS' EXPERIENCES IN TEACHING SEXUALITY EDUCATION IN THE FOUNDATION PHASE IN RURAL SCHOOLS IN THE UGU DISTRICT**


**BY**


**NOMBUSO CECILIA NGELEKA**
**STUDENT NUMBER: 213569581**
**SUPERVISOR: DR. V. JAIRAM**
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**By**

**Nombuso Cecilia Ngeleka**

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# DECLARATION

I, Nombuso Cecilia Ngeleka, hereby declare that this dissertation and its contents is my original work and where I have made use of other people's work, acknowledgement has been made in the text. I further declare that this work has not been submitted to any other university or institution for any other qualification.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

# DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my parents, Mrs Khethiwe Agrina and Mr Mphikwa Isaac Ngeleka, and my late younger brother, Lungelo Ngeleka.

# ACKOWLEDGEMENTS

# ABSTRACT

The study sought to understand teachers' experiences in teaching sexuality education in the Foundation Phase in rural schools in the Ugu District.

The aim of sexuality education in schools is to promote and enable a learner to ultimately become a sexually responsible man or woman. The rapid rise of sexuality-related challenges that our communities face sends a clear message that there is a desperate need for our learners to be taught sexuality education effectively. It is important to investigate how teachers experience the teaching of sexuality education since they are the main role-players in teaching learners sexual responsibility so that learners are not adversely affected by poorly built foundational teaching during the early years of their schooling.

The study took place in Port Shepstone, located on the Lower South Coast of KwaZulu-Natal in the Ugu District. Nine Foundation Phase teachers from three schools (Mbisho, Masenge and Mandisa primary schools) were involved. I used a qualitative research design. To elicit more valid data, one-on-one interviews, a focus-group discussion and lesson observations were conducted.

The main finding of the study was that it was evident that the teaching of sexuality in the three schools is largely shaped by teachers' cultural and religious belief systems within their different social contexts. Lesson observations revealed that teachers avoid explaining issues of sexuality as much as possible to their learners, because it would compromise the teachers' beliefs. The community as the custodian of moral values has generally transferred the problem of silence on sexual matters which caused teachers to be faced with immense difficulties in teaching the subject because sexuality education is an unwelcome topic to some.

Findings also revealed that those who teach sexuality education are not adequately trained and often feel uncomfortable with the content of the pedagogical style. Some teachers were afraid that addressing issues of sexuality would encourage sexual activity on the part of learners, and that parents would blame them for this; they also feared that parents would feel that it is inappropriate for teachers to talk about

sexuality education to learners who are so young. Parents need empowerment in so far as sexuality education teaching is concerned. There should be programmes focusing on teacher professional development and mentoring. There is a need for collaboration between teachers, parents, churches and community leaders, non-profit organizations (NPOs) and youth leaders, and to have campaigns to break the silence about sexuality.

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# CHAPTER ONE

## CONTEXT AND RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

### 1.1 Introduction and background

The aim of sexuality education in schools is to encourage and enable a learner to ultimately become a sexually responsible man or woman (Loeber, Reuter, Apter, van der Doef, Lazdane & Pinter, 2010). Our communities are faced with high rates of teenage pregnancy, rape, HIV infection and abortion, as well as homophobia. The adolescent abortion rate increased by fifty percent between in the past seven years (Loeber et al., 2010). Nowadays children at a very early age are exposed to media, especially television programmes, that contain nudity, violence and sexual activities, and they view these as the way of life. Enid Gruber and Helaine Thau (2003) state that researchers have documented the increased prevalence of sexual communications and more explicit visual portrayals of sexual behaviour in televised media. Some of the young learners in the Ugu District are sexually active because they live with alcoholic parents who engage in sexual activities under the influence of alcohol in the presence of their young ones (pers. comm. with learners).

The rapid rise of these sexually related challenges that our communities are facing sends the clear message that there is a desperate need for learners to be taught sexuality education effectively. It is also important to teach sexual responsibility at an early age and to investigate how teachers experience this teaching. Teachers are the main role players in teaching learners sexual responsibility so that learners are not adversely affected by poorly built foundational teaching during the early years of their schooling.

Reviewing the literature on sexuality education shows that in some cultures, especially in black communities, talking about sexuality is still avoided. Research by Bhana (2007) shows that some or most teachers in the Foundation Phase are conservative and reticent. Sexuality education has been regarded as humiliating to talk about and sexuality has been regarded as a topic engaged with by undisciplined

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people who lack self-control. Globally, if teachers cannot change their outlook and attitudes towards sexuality education, we will not be able to win the battle to equip learners with skills at an early age to prepare them to be responsible citizens who will make responsible choices around their sexuality. In South Africa there is a high rate of teenage pregnancy in spite of all the programmes and interventions by the Department of Education (DoE) and non-profit organisations (NPOs). Thus this research is worth doing because it will provide important information to the relevant stakeholders, particularly the DoE, on how teachers experience the teaching of sexuality education and on the challenges they face in their teaching. It will enable stakeholders to empower teachers to locate, handle and refer problems that may occur among learners, and guide parents with regard to challenges that may occur with their children.

The United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (2009) views sexuality as a central aspect of being human in every part of  life and includes sex, gender identities and roles, sexual orientation, eroticism, pleasure, intimacy and reproduction. Gonzales-Acquaro (2009, p.1) clarifies 'sexuality education as a life-long process of acquiring information and forming attitudes, beliefs and values. It encompasses sexual development, reproductive health, interpersonal relationships, affection, intimacy, body image and gender roles'. The sexuality education provided by parents may be deficient in three ways: discussions between parents and their children may not take place often enough; parents may not cover important topics adequately; or parents' own ignorance or discomfort may make them completely inept in their attempts to educate their children about sexuality. However, teachers are trusted sources of knowledge and skills in all education systems, and children of school-entry age are able to judge the reliability and relevance of knowledge they receive from such sources (Goldman, 2013). Effective sexuality education helps young people to avoid misguided conceptions or dangerously wrong information, and develop cognitive and reflective thinking process, positive psychological affects, and responsible behavioural skills. Most importantly, early, normalized and comprehensive school-based sexuality education programmes deliver knowledge and competencies that help protect against child abuse, exploitation and disabling violence (Goldman, 2013). Thus teachers can be instrumental in uplifting, refining and directing children to make responsible sexual choices, thus preparing them to be able

to acknowledge, understand and respect their own human dignity as well as of that of others within a relationship (Van Rooyen, 1997).

## 1.2 Review of literature

The following section presents an outline of previous studies related to teachers' experiences in teaching sexuality education.

Bhana (2007, p. 432) points out that "little research attention has been paid to HIV/AIDS education in the early years of schooling," and that "this is perhaps so because sexual education is not considered appropriate to young children". Though previous research has focused on secondary schools in South Africa, research on Life Skills and HIV education clearly reveals that teachers are unsure of content and style of lessons (Bhana, 2007). Bhana's view is that teachers and learners find it challenging to have discussions around the issues of sexuality education and gender which decrease the possibilities of addressing crucial issues which are relevant to HIV/AIDS.

Now that teachers teach sexuality education as a requirement in the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS), the questions that intrigue me are: how do they teach and how deep do they go in their teaching of this subject?

In South Africa, CAPS requires that learners in the Foundation Phase are taught about keeping their bodies safe, which covers prevention of sexual abuse, how to report sexual abuse, and so on. This approach aligns with global approaches towards sexuality education. In Queensland, Australia, for example, the Australian Department of Education is currently replacing the Human Relationship Education programme for students aged five to fifteen years (Goldman, 2013). These learners aged five to fifteen would fall in the Grade R to senior phase in the South African system of education.

Research by Bhana (2007) shows that some or most teachers in the Foundation Phase are conservative and reticent. They are not comfortable with rapid change and instead of teaching sexuality they would rather create their own ideologies or give false

information to scare children into making choices. In this way children are not given the chance to make choices but are frightened into making choices. This is evident in Bhana's study (2007) when teachers asked learners if they had seen a person with HIV/AIDS. The teachers explained that the person would have diarrhoea and maggots, in order to make the learners fearful (Bhana, 2007). Teachers also called non-communication around sexuality, "respect".

When reviewing studies done in Africa, the recent finding by Kibombo, Neema, Moore and Ahmed (2008) suggest that Ugandan teachers do not feel comfortable discussing sexuality and reproductive health (SHR) issues with students due to a fear of parents' reactions. In addition, many feel that they do not have sufficient training or resources to deliver sexuality education effectively. This raises the question of how teachers can be expected to teach sexuality education effectively if they are not properly trained on such aspects. This also shows that traditionalism has a huge effect on the way learners are taught (Iyer & Aggleton, 2013). Iyer and Aggleton (2013) also state that teachers in particular expressed reluctance to discuss teenage pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections (STIs) openly with students. This study was conducted in Uganda in a secondary school where learners are vulnerable to or exposed to pregnancy and STIs, and where some male educators take advantage of young girls (Iyer & Aggleton, 2013).

Khau (2009) has observed that teachers find it more difficult to teach sexuality in their own schools because they have to face the students daily. They would rather exchange the teaching of sexuality education with teachers from other schools to reduce the feeling of guilt. Though it is not fully explained what causes their feelings, it may be the influence of traditions. Khau (2009) has observed that sex and sexuality are considered to be "shameful" subject, and that some teachers feel uncomfortable delivering sexuality education in schools. It is uncomfortable and difficult for teachers to be in a position of teaching sexuality since they feel it will corrupt learners, especially Foundation Phase learners, and sexuality is regarded as a topic for adults. This might be the influence of religion, which enforces good values, abstinence and virginity.

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Francis (2012) indicates that it was found that those teachers with a high level of belief in God, either Muslim or Christian, did not agree with the inclusion of discussions on homosexuality in the curriculum. In his study he found that prospective teachers in the United States of America (USA) were reticent about including lesbian, gay and bisexual issues in the curriculum, and that teachers' cumulative knowledge about homosexuality was minimal. Their religious beliefs made them compromise the content. Francis also feels that little has been done to equip teachers to challenge and teach issues related to homosexuality and homophobia in class.

The teaching of issues related to homosexuality in South African schools faces a challenge for three reasons. First, according to Helleve, Flisher, Onya, Mukoma and Klepp (2009), teachers' cultural perceptions often mean that basic sexuality education content such as safe sex is not delivered effectively, as teachers are more concerned about the fact that learners are sexually active at all, than that they are practising unsafe sex.

Secondly, teachers often view homosexuality as deviant or immoral and are reticent to deal with the issue in their classrooms due to cultural and religious opinions. Thirdly, Francis and Msibi (2011) report the slow shifts in attitude among South African in-service teachers attending a module on homosexuality. Of 11 educators who were interviewed, none of them formally included issues related to homosexuality and bisexuality in their teaching on sexuality education. Three teachers mentioned that they would discuss it only if the learners mentioned it. Finally, the gap concerning teacher training, cultural beliefs and religion needs to be bridged.

Parker, Wellings and Lazarus (2009) discovered that in Bulgaria sexuality education is initiated when the learners are about eleven or twelve years old and focuses on the male and female reproductive systems, sexually transmitted infections, HIV/AIDS, contraception and violence, and less on the emotional aspect. In Cyprus teachers and parents are still quiet about sexuality and gender imbalance is common and the church has a strong influence. In Estonia sexuality education begins when pupils are around the age of ten. In Estonia challenges include insufficient teacher-training, a lack of comprehensive teaching and study materials and not enough time being allocated to sexuality education in the curriculum. In France sexuality education is mandatory and

is provided in both primary and secondary schools, beginning at around the age of six. Also in Greece it is taught to pupils from the age of six.

As Helleve et al. (2009) found out, teachers tried not to challenge existing norms and values by avoiding difficult sections such as the sexuality education component of Life Orientation.

The social constructionist theoretical framework is suitable for my study since it offers some insight into how knowledge on sexuality is historically and culturally constructed (Burr, 1995; Gergen, 1985). Issues of sexuality and by implication sexuality education run deep in discourses about social life and social action. Instead of viewing sexuality education as an historical and social phenomenon, social constructionism views human meanings of sexuality as originating in socially shared constructions. Within the framework of social constructionism, language is not simply a means through which we express ourselves but is also instrumental in constructing reality. Social constructionists view language as organized into discourses that are socially and historically constructed (Burr, 1995; Burton, 1999).

## 1.3 Location of the study

My area of study was in Kwa-Zulu-Natal on the lower South Coast, Port Shepstone. The study was conducted in three different schools. Mandisa Primary School is in the south of Port Shepstone near the Eastern Cape border. It is in a rural low-cost government housing area occupied by citizens ranging between the ages of 20 and 45 years. Masenge and Mbisho Primary schools are located inland from Port Shepstone. Most of the parents there are single and live on social grants. Some families are child-headed. Though it is a very fertile area, very few families live on subsistence farming. Electricity has recently been installed. The residents of this area belong to different political parties and are also from different social backgrounds, since there are isiXhosa, isiZulu-speaking people and foreign immigrants who are locally called amaKwerekwere. They come from different countries like Zimbabwe, Somalia and Ghana. Mandisa Primary School is about four years old and the other two are about twenty years old.

**1.4 Objectives**

The objectives of this study were:

1. To explore the experiences of teachers in teaching sexuality education in the Foundation Phase.

2. To explore what informs the way they teach and the influence it has on their teaching of sexuality education in the context in which they teach.

**1.5 Key questions**

The study was guided by the following key questions:

1. What are the experiences of teachers in teaching sexuality education in the Foundation Phase?

2. What informs the way they teach and the influence it has on their teaching of sexuality education in the context in which they teach?

**1.6 Research methods / approach to study**

My intention for the study was to explore the experiences of teachers in teaching sexuality education in the Foundation Phase, what informs the way they teach as well as the influence it has on their teaching of sexuality education. I aimed to also explore how these experiences hinder or promote the teaching of sexuality to learners.

1.6.1 Approach

I decided to use a qualitative research design in my study. McMillan and Schumacher (2006, p. 26) state that "interactive qualitative methods use face-to-face techniques to collect data from people in their natural settings". In qualitative research the data is presented as a narration with words which is better understood than numbers. It is also based on understanding the social context from the point of view of the participant. This is possible through the active participation of the researcher while researching. In my study, qualitative research was suitable as it enabled me to understand the influences of the social context on the participants' experiences of teaching sexuality education.

Unlike the quantitative mode, where there is a set of procedures to follow, the qualitative mode is flexible in its strategies and in the research process, in case one strategy does not work out. The researcher can always revise data collection strategies when the research is in progress. McMillan and Schumacher (2006, p. 16) state that "researchers become immersed in the situation and the phenomenon being studied. Qualitative scholars emphasize the importance of data collected by skilled prepared persons in contrast to an instrument".

## 1.6.2 Design

McMillan and Schumacher (2006, p. 26) state that "five interactive designs are ethnographic, phenomenological, case study, grounded theory and critical studies". A mode of enquiry I used was a case study whereby a case could be an activity or an event or "a set of individuals bounded in time and place" (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006, p. 26), which enabled me to make sense of the responses deeply and understand the social context irrespective of the number of sites or participants for the study. Cohen, Manion and Morrison  (2007, p. 182) explain that a case study "strives to portray "what it is like to be in a particular situation, to catch the close-up reality and thick description of participants' lived experiences of thoughts about and feelings for a situation". Using a case study approach enabled teachers in this study to express their experiences and feelings about teaching sexuality.

Some of the responses were obtained verbally and some were written by the participants. This enabled me to draw the most valid and credible conclusions from the answers to all of my research questions. According to McLeod (2008) case studies give psychological researchers the possibility to investigate cases. In this case it was the experiences of teachers that could not be simulated in a research laboratory. The advantage of a case study is its "applicability to real life contemporary, human situations and its public accessibility through written reports" (Rubin & Babbie, 2011).

1.6.3 Method

**Interviews**

To elicit more valid data and to encourage full meaningful answers, open-ended questions were used in one-on-one interviews with teachers. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2006, p. 447), "open-ended questions obtain data of participant meanings-how individuals experience their world and how they explain or make sense of the important events in their lives". With the help of tape recorders during interviews I analysed the conversations and interactions that I had with the participants. The typical technique was to conduct long interviews with the participants geared toward understanding their perspectives on their experiences with teaching sexuality education (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006). Through these long interviews with teachers I was able to understand what informs their teaching of sexuality education and how they ensure that learners receive information from them without teachers compromising culture. As a strategy in data collection, I directly observed my participants and recorded events and teachers' actions in the settings where the interviews took place.

**Focus group discussion**

Mason (2002) views focus group discussion as a way of stimulating interaction, where the researcher gives a direction to a group discussion through a particular set of topics so as to notice how situational interactions unfold and how issues are conceptualized. Focus group discussion is used to obtain a better understanding of a problem or an assessment of a problem, concerning a new product, programme or idea. I conducted a focus group discussion of nine people who have common characteristics to stimulate in-depth discussion around their experiences of teaching sexuality education. Maree (2011, p. 79) explains that "purposive sampling simply means that participants are selected because of some defining characteristic that makes them the holders of the data needed for the study".

I used a non-probability method where purposive sampling was used. In purposive sampling I sampled teachers who had already been teaching in the Foundation Phase. Nine Foundation Phase teachers who had experience in teaching sexuality in the Foundation Phase were sampled from three schools for a specific purpose. "In a focus

group discussion, a moderator directs discussion among five to twelve people with the purpose of collecting in-depth qualitative data about a group's perceptions, attitudes and experiences on a defined topic" (Maree, 2011, p. 91). In this case it was the group's experiences in teaching sexuality education.

I facilitated the session by means of a case study on which questions were based. I used participants from three schools as it was an in-depth study. Another data production technique used in this study was observations of teachers' teaching in the classroom. I carefully observed how they teach sensitive areas on sexuality, looking at their verbal and non-verbal reactions and responses, the time they take when answering questions, and their feelings and attitudes (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006, p. 360). The use of a variety of data production techniques increased the authenticity or credibility of the findings of my study.

## 1.7 Data collection

According to Leedy and Ormrod (2005, p.88) 'data are those pieces of information that any particular situation gives to an observer, and are manifestations of reality. Furthermore, these authors maintain that reality is assumed as not easily divided into discrete, measurable variables'. Qualitative researchers use various methods of collecting first-hand information. These methods include interviewing, observation, documents, visual materials and the use of personal experience (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008). Data was audio recorded, transcribed and analysed using thematic analysis where relationships between patterns in the data were looked at.

## 1.8 Validity, reliability and rigour

Cohen et al. (2007) state that in qualitative research, reliability can be considered as "a fit between what researchers record as data and what actually occurs in the natural setting that is being researched". The interviews and lesson observations played a vital role in getting first-hand information to ensure accuracy and consistency in the collection of data. The same results should be obtained irrespective of when the

assessment is done as long as it is what the researcher intends to find. To verify this, video recorders and tapes were revisited.

Validity suggests truthfulness and it refers to how well an idea fits with actual reality. The absence of validity occurs if there is a poor fit between the constructs a researcher uses to describe, theorize or analyze the social world and what actually occurs in the social world (Neuman, 2006). I also filmed lessons, which provided a permanent and authentic record of the information gathered, as these recordings cannot be distorted.

The atmosphere for the participants was conducive to open communication, which made it easier to get the information I needed. I have already alluded to the purpose of using focus group discussions (section 1.6). The group consisted of nine members who share common characteristics, such as teaching in the Foundation Phase, irrespective of the grade in the Foundation Phase. A social atmosphere was created, which enabled members of the group to be triggered by one another's experiences and strengthened the collection of data. The use of these different techniques also added to the authenticity or credibility of information gathered for the study.

## 1.9 Conclusion and overview of thesis

**Chapter One** provided an outline of the background, focus, aims and objectives, and rationale of this study. I also included the research questions that guided my study. The questions were:

(a) What are the experiences of teachers in teaching sexuality education in the Foundation Phase?

(b) What informs the way they teach and the influence it has on their teaching of sexuality education in the context in which they teach?

**Chapter Two** consists of a comprehensive review of literature. There are a number of studies carried out on teachers' experiences in the teaching of sexuality education in schools. Some of these studies were done nationally as well as internationally.

**Chapter Three** discusses the research design and methodology suitable for my study. The qualitative approach, sampling method and biographies of the participants are

discussed. The data collection methods, data analysis, validity and reliability, ethical issues and limitations of the study are also discussed.

**Chapter Four** presents the analysis of data and the participants' responses which were used to qualify the findings. The data was analysed according to the themes that emerged from the data analysis process.

**Chapter Five** summarises the findings in each of the chapters outlined above. This chapter provides a consolidation of the main findings of this study and puts forward possible recommendations based on these findings.

What follows in the next chapter is a review of literature related to the topic. It also discusses the social constructionism theoretical framework, which proved to be suitable for my study since it offered me an understanding of what informs the way the teachers teach sexuality education and in so doing what impact it has on the lives of the children and the content of sexuality itself.

# CHAPTER TWO

# LITERATURE REVIEW

## 2.1 Introduction

This study sought to understand how teachers in the Foundation Phase understand, view, feel about, experience and perceive the teaching of sexuality. It focused on identifying their challenges in teaching the subject, and also their strengths in teaching sexuality to Foundation Phase learners. This chapter reviews literature that deals mainly with the experiences of teachers in teaching sexuality in the Foundation Phase. It will explain what is meant by experiences of teachers in relation to the teaching of sexuality and what sexuality is.

This chapter also discusses the social constructionist framework that underpins this study. The social constructionist theoretical framework proved suitable for my study since it offered some insight into how teachers' knowledge on sexuality and how they translate that knowledge in the teaching of sexuality is historically and culturally constructed (Burr, 1995; Gergen, 1985). The accounts of teachers' experiences in teaching sexuality provided an understanding of what informs the way they teach it and in so doing what impact it has on the lives of children and the content of sexuality itself. Knowledge construction gives us clear insight into concepts around the issues of sexuality which are constructed rather than discovered.

## 2.2 How does society view sexuality and the challenges related to sexuality?

## 2.2.1 How does society view sexuality in Africa?

Though it is not easy to define sexuality, sexuality is defined as a "lifelong process of acquiring information and forming attitudes, beliefs, and values about identity, relationships and intimacy. It encompasses sexual development, reproductive health, intrapersonal relationships, affection, intimacy, body image and gender roles. Sexuality education addresses the biological, sociological, psychological and spiritual dimensions of sexuality from the cognitive domain, and the behavioural domain,

including skills to communicate effectively and make responsible decisions" (Goldman, 2011, p. 156). The lack of acquiring relevant information about sexuality is evident through the high rate of teenage pregnancy, abandonment of infants by young mothers, abortion and rape. This clearly indicates that the society has a mammoth task of ensuring that young and old people change the way they view sexuality education in order to make responsible decisions.

Sexuality in South Africa is closely linked to HIV/AIDS. Helleve et al. (2009) indicate that because many parents believe that children are too young to learn about sex and that it is an activity for adults only, they place an emphasis on abstinence as a form of protection. Beliefs about HIV/AIDS should be taken into account in prevention programmes. A study was done on 'Understanding Black Farm Workers' beliefs concerning HIV /AIDS'. 15% of the workers were of the opinion that HIV did not exist (Dintletse et al., 2013). Some of the practices and beliefs contributed to protective measures of HIV like the initiation ceremonies of men and woman based on religious and cultural beliefs and aiming at discussing sexuality and sexual activities.

In a study conducted by Ncama et al. (2013) the single young taxi drivers who didn't finish school and who do not have much information on HIV/AIDS, are vulnerable to the HIV/AIDS infections as their work demands travelling  throughout the cities, townships and in rural areas. They might be offered sex by women who are in desperate need of money with the hope that drivers will pay them. In Uganda, Kenya and Zimbabwe, teenagers are exposed much to HIV/AIDS. In eastern and southern Africa many teenagers in Tanzania are also exposed to negative sexual and reproductive health results related to early and unsafe sexual activity such as sexually transmitted infections, early pregnancy and childbearing and unauthorised abortions (Remes et al., 2010).  These studies suggest that there is a crucial need that parents are equipped with parenting skills to combat communicable infections, early pregnancy and childbearing which leads to unauthorised pregnancy terminations.

 One of the causes of the challenges like communicable infections, early pregnancy and child bearing is that the young women have a longing for modern goods such as cosmetic lotions, sanitary pads and fashionable clothes. Rural poverty can contribute

to young people longing to live sophisticated lives and inequality between men and women and is associated with such desires. It appears that when boys return from fishing activities, they give young girls cash they need (Remes, 2010). In many countries this is common where men would take advantage of young helpless women to gain sexual contact or be involved in sexual activities in return for payment, and these are the first steps which might give rise to prostitution at a later stage.

According to Remes (2010) both young and old in group discussions had a feeling that the increased sexual reproductive health risk behaviour was caused by the lack of responsibility of parents and caregivers in terms of ensuring that young people have enough food, shelter, school fees and clothing, monitoring one's children, valuing education and providing good role models and communicating advice [most people felt that promiscuous behaviour amongst the youth is because parents are failing in their responsibilities]. It appears that if parents monitor young people's behaviours and not allow them to find their own entertainment they would put youth vulnerability to an end (Remes, 2010).

A lack of knowledge about HIV is still impacting people's lives negatively. In Botswana parents forbid their children to go for HIV/AIDS testing and take them to traditional doctors. Youth also die in large numbers because they are afraid of consulting medical doctors for help and prefer to stick to traditional doctors for help (Nleya & Segale, 2013). There is evidence that most secondary school students do not know their own status for fear of judgement. HIV positive teachers are unsure of their pledge and ability to deliver lessons on HIV/AIDS. They are of a mind to refuse to disclose their HIV/ AIDS status to anyone because they will not be comfortable when they are asked to be part of the talk back studio (Nleya & Segale, 2013).

**2.2.2 How does society view sexuality in other countries?**

In Ghana they view HIV/AIDS as a reprimand from God for sexual promiscuity and conversely that is basically preordained. Parker et al. (2009) indicate that in Bulgaria most city youth feel more comfortable discussing sexuality than are students from rural areas. Due to the power of the church in Cyprus youth are uninformed about sexuality and access to sexual and reproductive health services. In Greece, school

teachers, school nurses and the family planning associations are responsible for its provision.

In Iceland most of the population are more open to sexuality of young people, and there is generally a positive attitude towards sexuality education and sex is largely a taboo subject (Parker et al., 2009). In Europe during the time of the Roman Empire, attitudes towards sexuality education were based on a rigid interpretation of biblical precepts, enunciating sexuality and pleasure, repudiating non-proactive sexual relations, setting a high value on virginity and assigning a low status on women (Loeber et al., 2010). During this time there was little or no intimacy between husband and wife in Europe before the 20th century. The woman was mainly useful to her husband as a producer of offspring, a keeper of the household and a release of sex drive. Ideas about raising children changed and slowly sexuality became recognised as a normal feature of adolescence. School based sexual education was slowly adapted in European countries.

### 2.2.3 Societal challenges related to sexuality

When reviewing the literature on sexuality education, in some cultures more especially in black communities talking about sexuality is still avoided. You would find that people would rather prefer to seek advice from an outsider rather than their own family members to circumvent humiliation and embarrassment such that when somebody dies of HIV/AIDS the family members would say the cause of death is witchcraft (*uthakathiwe*). In marriage couples would simulate that things are working well and rather than talk about sexuality or problems around sexuality, they leave issues unfixed such that they cannot be fixed anymore and end up divorcing. Discussing sexual matters openly is regarded as a taboo in many societies and this can become a significant barrier to effective sex education (Iyer & Aggleton, 2013).

There is a constant supply of condoms in the public places like clinics but young women are afraid to access them because the nurses would talk negatively or utter negative remarks which will cause them to be labelled as a 'bitch' or promiscuous [Condoms are freely available but young women are embarrassed to collect them] (Francis, 2012). The attitude they portrayed was likely to perpetuate the spread of

HIV/ AIDS and teenage pregnancy. Challenges in accessing condoms would not necessary stop the youth to experience sexual activities. The same will also apply to contraceptives.

## 2.2.4 Sexuality and culture

Child-bearing was viewed as a crucial part of womanhood in the studies conducted in the 1970s (Berglund, 1976; Ngubane, 1977). Participants in a study conducted by Wood, Maepa and Jewkes (1997) stated that they were given pressure by their families and boyfriends to have at least one child; hence some mothers of pregnant teenagers frankly accompanied their pregnant teenage daughters to the ante-natal b clinic. However, Varga (2003, p.165) opposed this view by discovering that young African women perceive education as more valuable since they aspire to complete their education and get better job opportunities.

Other studies exposed that some teenagers intentionally get pregnant because of pressures from their boyfriends, peers and families with the intentions of proving their fertility as this is viewed as an indispensable element of social respectability and femininity (De Villiers & Kekesi, 2004; Wood et al. 1997). Holloway (1994) discovered that in Tanzania traditionally authority is held by the older men of the community and that the man has head-of-household rights which have not been questioned by women's liberation as in the West. As a result, in Tanzania before a woman is allowed to access training in civil service, permission is obtained from the husband, despite an official policy of equal access. In the African culture, especially Zulu, fathers are viewed as symbols of authority, discipline, power and order whose main role is to provide for the family and bring financial stability in their households (Hunter, 2005). Teenage pregnancy undermines all that the household head represents (Mcambi, 2010).

## 2.3 How do teachers experience the teaching of HIV/Aids?

Francis (2012) indicates that in as far as policy is concerned, HIV/AIDS and sexuality are a key content area in Life Orientation, a programme that was introduced as a learning area in South African schools in the late 1990s. The introduction of Life Orientation as a subject only focused in the intermediate phase and in the Foundation

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Phase Life Skills was also introduced. Nevertheless the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) which was phased in, in 2012 covered a very little portion of HIV/AIDS in the Foundation Phase yet those learners are exposed to HIV//AIDS on a daily basis. This shows a lack of consistency in repackaging of the curriculum since there has been a huge change in curriculum from Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS) to Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS).

Helleve et al. (2009) suggest that when teachers engage in HIV/AIDS teaching in the classroom, it is not easy to enforce discipline and order because their main concern is to make sure that learners do not laugh as well as make negative comments which might embarrass teachers. This gives a reason why other teachers would have very strict classroom rules and limits. But some teachers perceived that they found themselves performing differently when teaching HIV/AIDS compared to other subjects. Some would say that though they are firm teachers during their lessons, their firmness goes away.

There is an idea that teaching sexuality undermines a teacher's position of authority. Some teachers expressed that personality and life experiences were necessary qualities for a teacher to have in order to teach HIV/AIDS. Well, I do not concur with this statement. When learners ask questions around teachers' sexuality, teachers are afraid that learners will ask inappropriate questions and they do not feel comfortable. Hence, they have a feeling that the classroom is not the right place to discuss such issues since they want to protect their privacy as well as to uphold and protect their status as teachers against the learner-centeredness which allows questioning. According to Nleya and Segale (2013) some teachers are ambivalent regarding their commitment and competence in the delivery of HIV/AIDS information.

Some teachers in Botswana alluded that the language that was used was not easy to understand and included terminology that was also not easy to understand thus hindering the discussions to be infused effectively in teaching and learning. Teachers experience difficulties in going beyond the methods of enriching the minds of learners in sexuality education as well as handling participatory facilitation skills that have been proved to be effective in the teaching of sexuality education (Mkumbo, 2012). It was apparent that teachers often felt that their work as Life Orientation teachers led to

the handling of issues that they did not feel they had the necessary competence or time to handle (Helleve et al., 2009).

## 2.4 Teenage pregnancy flow

There has been a high frequency of teenage pregnancy in spite of all the programmes and interventions by the Department of Education and Non Profit Organisations (NPOs). KwaZulu-Natal is the province with the highest number of pregnant teenagers in South Africa; about 59% of all the pregnancies in South African schools are located in the KwaZulu-Natal province. In 2010, 17 260 pregnancies were reported in KwaZulu-Natal schools (SAPA, 2011). These statistics are an indication that teenage pregnancy is mostly centralised in provinces which comprise mainly of disadvantaged schools like rural, informal settlements and farms (DoE, 2009).

Most learners in KwaZulu-Natal come from poor rural and even deep rural backgrounds. The majority of rural areas in South Africa have high rates of unemployment therefore they are underdeveloped and poverty-stricken. The poor development in these areas is due to the past government's paying attention on urban development. Department of Education (DoE) introduced Guidelines for the Prevention and Management of Learner Pregnancy which was adopted by schools as an effort by the Department of Education to balance the right of pregnant teenagers to education against the rights of an unborn child (DoE, 2007). According to Bhana et al. (2010) there is a need for a change in teachers' attitude towards pregnant and young mothers in schools. It was found that there are caring teachers who understand the circumstances surrounding teenage pregnancy. Chigona and Chetty (2008) proposed that the government must provide policies for schools that have pregnant girls or young mothers.

## 2.5 How do teachers experience the teaching of sexuality?

This part of the chapter presents the outline of the previous studies related to teachers' experiences in teaching sexuality education. Globally, if teachers cannot change their outlook and attitudes towards sexuality education, definitely we will not win the battle of giving learners skills at an early age to prepare them to be responsible citizens who will make responsible choices around their sexuality.

### 2.5.1 Teachers' experiences in South Africa

According to Helleve et al. (2009), teachers' cultural perceptions often mean that basic sexuality education content such as safe sex is not delivered effectively as teachers are more concerned that learners are sexually active than that they are practicing unsafe sex. Research by Bhana (2007) shows that some or most teachers in the Foundation Phase are conservative and reticent. Sexuality education has been regarded as humiliating to talk about and has also been regarded for undisciplined people without self-control. Many parents fail to teach their children about sexuality through embarrassment or a lack of knowledge. However, teachers are trusted sources of knowledge and skills in all education systems and children of school-entry age are able to judge the reliability and relevance of knowledge they receive from such sources (Goldman, 2013). Bhana (2007, p. 432) points out that minimal research has been done regarding HIV education in Foundation Phase perhaps because it is regarded as unsuitable.

Though previous research has focused on secondary schools in South Africa, research on Life Skills and HIV/AIDS education indicates that many teachers are unsure of what to cover in Life Skills lessons (Bhana, 2007). Bhana's view is that communication between teachers and learners limits the learning that should take place. Now that teachers teach sexuality education as a requirement in the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) the questions that intrigue me are: how do they teach and how deep do they go in their teaching of this subject? In South Africa CAPS requires that learners in Foundation Phase are taught about keeping their bodies safe which covers prevention of sexual abuse, how to report sexual abuse etc.

They are not comfortable with rapid change and instead of teaching sexuality they rather create their own ideologies or give false information to scare children into making choices. In this way children are not given the chance to make choices but are frightened into making choices. This is evident in Bhana's study (2007) when teachers asked learners if they had seen a person with HIV/AIDS. They further explained that the person would have diarrhoea and maggots to make them afraid (Bhana, 2007). Teachers called non-communication around sexuality respect. Khau (2009) has

observed that teachers find it more difficult to teach sexuality in their own schools because they have to face the students daily. They would rather swop the teaching of sexuality education with teachers from other schools to reduce the feeling of guilt. Though it is not explained what aggravates this, it may be the influence of traditions.

Khau (2009) has observed that sex and sexuality are taboo hence some teachers feel uncomfortable delivering sexuality education in schools. It is uncomfortable and difficult for teachers to be in a position of teaching sexuality since they feel it will corrupt learners especially Foundation Phase learners hence it is regarded as a topic for adults. This might be the influence of religion which enforces good values, abstinence and virginity.

The teaching of issues related to homosexuality in South African schools, however, faces a challenge. Francis and Msibi (2011) report the slow shifts in attitude among South African in-service teachers attending a module on homosexuality. Out of 11 educators that were interviewed none of them formally included issues related to homosexuality and bisexuality in their teaching on sexuality education. Three teachers mentioned that they would discuss it only if the learners mentioned it. As Helleve et al. (2009) found out, teachers attempted to maintain current thinking by avoiding difficult sections such as the sexuality education component of Life Orientation. Teachers often view homosexuality as deviant or immoral and are reticent to deal with the issue in their classrooms due to cultural and religious opinions.

The lack of importance of puberty in both sexes as well as the indifference of Departments of Education in many countries regarding the provision and implementation of sexuality education many described as educational avoidance (Helleve et al., 2009).

### 2.5.2 Teachers' experiences in other countries

In Queensland the Department of Education is currently replacing the Human Relationship Education programme for students aged five to fifteen years (Goldman, 2013). These learners aged five to fifteen would fall in Grade R to Senior Phase in the South African system of education.  When reviewing studies done in Africa, the

recent finding by Kibombo et al. (2008) suggests that Ugandan teachers do not feel comfortable discussing Sexuality Reproductive Health (SHR) issues with students due to a fear of parents' reactions nor do many feel that they have sufficient training or resources to deliver sexuality education effectively. How can one expect teachers to effectively teach sexuality education if they are not properly trained on such aspects?

This shows that traditionalism has a huge effect on the way learners are taught (Iyer, & Aggleton, 2013). Iyer and Aggleton (2013) also state that teachers in particular expressed reluctance to discuss teenage pregnancy and Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) openly with students. This study was done in Uganda in a secondary school where learners are vulnerable or exposed to pregnancy and STIs and to some male educators who take advantage of young girls (Iyer & Aggleton, 2013).

Francis (2012) indicates that it was found that those teachers with a high level of belief in God, either Muslim or Christian, did not agree with the inclusion of homosexuality in the curriculum. In this study he found out that prospective teachers in the United States of America (USA) were reticent about including lesbians, gay and bisexual issues in the curriculum and that teachers' cumulative knowledge about homosexuality was minimal. Belief in God made them to compromise content. Francis (2012) also feels that little has been done to equip teachers to challenge and teach issues related to homosexuality and homophobia in class. Parker et al. (2009) discovered that in Bulgaria sexuality education begins when learners reach eleven or twelve years old and focuses on the male and female reproductive systems, sexually transmitted infections, HIV/AIDS, contraception and violence and no attention is paid to the emotional well-being of the learners.

In Cyprus people are still silent about sexuality and sexual imbalance is common, and the strong influence comes from the church. In Estonia sexuality education begins when pupils are around the age of ten. In Estonia challenges include insufficient teacher-training, a lack of comprehensive teaching and study materials and not enough time being allocated to sexuality education in the curriculum. In primary schools and in secondary schools, sexuality education is provided and is mandatory around the age of six in France.   Also in Greece, pupils from the age of six are taught sexuality education.

In countries like Australia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and the United States of America the primary school teachers do not enforce or assess sexuality education programs in school curricular because they are reluctant, untrained ineffectual, unconfident or otherwise unable to teach quality sexuality education (Goldman, 2011).

The position of avoidance is taken by the teachers and their principals in most primary schools, because of the lack of relevant content, curriculum integration and recommended pedagogies. Milton (2003) states that in Casuarina in New South Wales the year six girls' teacher commended that the girls felt really good without the boys because they were relaxed and could talk freely. One teacher indicated that they felt more comfortable doing lessons in separate groups like boys alone and girls alone. This gives an impression that when teachers separate learners according to gender, boys could be supported by other boys and girls could be assisted by other girls and the teachers as well could deliver lessons with ease. In this case the classroom discipline will not be a challenge.

 If learners make follow up questions they would be referred to their parents for those further answers or be told to wait until they reach the next grade or high school where the topic will be discussed further (Milton, 2003). Nevertheless this does not stop learners from asking questions above their age since there is a suggestion box. For a question like "Is it right for a man to love a man?" where the answer will provoke learners to ask further questions the teachers shift the responsibility to parents or tell the learners that there are different views regarding that particular issue and substantiate that. Teaching about sexuality calls for teachers who are vigilant and very careful when answering questions. Some learners rose that one family has got a mother and a father of the same sex, so a teacher had to respond cleverly because some learners who are directly affected by homosexuality would feel embarrassed (Milton, 2003).

Some teachers thought the work that they cover is sufficient for the primary school because if they cover a wide scope they would be overloading the learners. The teachers who have just started teaching do not find it easy to teach sexuality education programs and some topics of the formal program or answer some questions posed by

the learners. Experienced teachers commented that one has to be very comfortable with the terminology and one needs to practice before one gets there (in class). Some teachers would say they don't know how much information to give them (learners), they don't want parents to think that they are feeding their kids' heads with information far above their standard or age. Dilemmas for some teachers are created by answering the questions raised by learners because children often want to know the teachers' belief or attitude on some issues, for example learners would ask if it is alright to have an abortion. The teacher would explain what an abortion is but never say yes or no (Milton, 2003). If the teachers can lay a solid foundation as far as the content of sexuality is concerned learners cannot put the teachers in a position to give a yes or no answer concerning sensitive sexuality issues like abortion because the learners themselves will have been equipped with good decision making skills which will make them to understand that it rests upon the individual to decide on doing abortion or not.

## 2.6 Homophobia

Homophobia refers to negative experiences by those who have sexual relationships with people of their sex which range from disciplinary actions portrayed through offensive language to vicious reactionary hate. It is expressed through violence and often perpetrated by those against it even teachers at school. Francis (2012) feels that little has been done to equip teachers to challenge and teach issues related to homosexuality and homophobia in class. Helleve et al. (2009) found out that teachers often view homosexuality as deviant or immoral and are reticent to deal with the issue in their classrooms due to cultural and religious opinions.

According to Morrel (2002) the learners who are homosexuals are living at a knife's edge due to the violence that gets perpetrated around and against them. Msibi (2012) termed anyone who feels marginalised by mainstream visions of sexuality as queer. Ghaill (1994) highlights that the negative experiences experienced by queer learners range from verbal abuse to physical violence.

According to Hendrick (1988) these learners have social, emotional and also cognitive negative experiences. The teachers themselves demonstrate homophobic attacks to

some learners. Some of the girls alluded that teachers often tell them to stop being tomboys (Msibi, 2012). Being a tomboy is viewed as leading to becoming queer. More than stopping girls from being tomboys they accentuate that heterosexuality is the only type of relationship they consider to be real and promote it. The teachers are seen as being essential in spreading the idea that homosexuality is communicable inasmuch that straight learners were seen as being vulnerable to being infected by queer learners (Msibi, 2012).

Teachers are the main role players in the education system whose role is to educate learners and the community members through learners about homophobia so that no discrimination takes place in the school but they are the ones who are perpetrators. If they effectively teach them, they will not live under the fear that queer learners will influence the straight learners. They also should be affording support to these learners who are victims of homophobia (Msibi, 2012). Inclusion is concerned with including and respecting all the learners irrespective of their differences and recognition of their similarities and also give focus on how to overcome the challenges that will prevent them from performing at their full potential  (Values in action, 2011).

 All faith leaders and politicians were urged by Former Archbishop Desmond Tutu to stop persecuting people based on their sexual orientation or gender identity. He further said that everyday people live in fear because of who they love (http//www.glad.org., 2010). The suspension of 300 girls by staff who claimed that the girls are lesbians was slammed by his commission for gender equality at a KwaZulu-Natal high school (Times Live online, 07/03/2010).

**2.7 Gender**

**2.7.1 Gender and sexual orientation**

 The emotional, romantic or sexual attraction to men, women, both genders, neither gender, or another gender is referred to as sexual orientation (Values in action, 2011). People are attracted to different kinds of sexes, others to same sex and are called homosexuals, others do not get attracted to any person and these are called asexual. Sexual orientation includes gender identity where other people identify with the gender of the opposite sex whereby a man with a male anatomy would feel more like

a woman or a woman with a female anatomy would feel more like a man and this is called transgender identity (Values in action, 2011).

## 2.7.2 Gender and sexual violence and harassment

In cultures where men are seen as the head of the family, women's interests are not given equal status, resources or opportunity. With sexism, men oppress woman because they are seen as lesser than men (DoE, 2011). The constitution of South Africa states that on the basis of gender no one can be unfairly discriminated against (DoE, 2011). Other forms of human rights violation like bullying, sexual abuse, gender discrimination exist in communities and in schools and one of the ways to combat this is to form peace clubs which will help learners by giving them skills which will help them with skills to improve relationships inherent in conflicts that affect young learners, teachers and society (www.mcc.org).

DoE (2011) states that on the basis of race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, ethnic origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, language or birth people should be equally and fairly treated and not be discriminated unfairly against (DoE, 2012).

## 2.8 Theoretical framework

To uncover the ways in which individuals and groups participate in the construction of their perceived social reality is the major focus of social constructionism. Looking at the ways social phenomenon are created, institutionalised, known and made into tradition by humans is also involved (Berger & Luckmann, 1991). Socially the issues of sexuality are deeply discussed. Instead of viewing sexuality education as an historical and social phenomenon, social constructionism views human meanings of sexuality but is also instrumental in constructing reality as originating in socially shared constructions. Within the framework of social constructionism, language is not simply a means through which we express ourselves

Social constructionists view language as organized into discourses that are socially and historically constructed (Burr, 1995; Burton, 1999). In the constructionist

paradigm the researcher is the key element, seen as a fore producer of knowledge and hence required to be reflexive and critically aware of language (Horrocks, 2010) According to Ian Hacking (2000) social constructionism of reality is a theory that examines the development of socially constructed and jointly constructed understandings of the world. The elements most important to the theory in this study are the assumptions that teachers rationalise their experience of teaching sexuality education by creating a model of social world and how it functions and that language is the most essential system through which teachers construct reality. The learners will construct their own knowledge of sexuality education based on the situations they encounter and problems they solve related to sexuality education. Gergen (1985) describes social constructionist psychology in terms of its quality, interests and principles, providing something of a 'manifesto' for constructionists is no more than a family resemblance.

### 2.8.1 Primacy of social process

Hacking (2000) has outlined the principal areas of broad agreements that surround social constructionism. He indicates that social constructionists argue that who we understand ourselves to be is a result of our socialisation. This brings about the understanding that the experiences the teachers have on the teaching of sexuality education are the products of social practices. The world is a social reproduction and transformation of structures of meaning, conventions, morals and discursive practices that principally constitute our relationships. This implies that language, both as the dominant carrier of categories and meanings and as the medium which provides much of the raw material for our activity, is central.

The teachers' experiences in teaching of sexuality education in schools are always constructed primarily through language. According to Loeber (1993) knowledge is an account of reality produced collaboratively by a community of knowers. Thus social constructionists focus on how meaning is created and suggest that knowledge is not only a social product, one has to historicise and contextualise the given description of reality.

## 2.8.2 Language and reality

Though language clearly sometimes has a performative and constructive function, descriptions of the teaching of sexuality in some way derive from the nature of reality itself. The use of interviews, focus group discussion and lessons observation in my study where the teachers used their own voices and personal accounts of their experiences in the teaching of sexuality education provided me with their own reality which was constructed around discourses. Language bears a more distant relationship to reality itself. Parker (1998) further states that language is not privileged but neither is it relegated to the status of an outcome or effect of social structure.

Language creates the world and frames the truths that can be told, therefore language can be analysed to uncover how categories are socially constructed. When man and woman interact, they reinforce essential gender difference and therefore maintain power differential. Men dictate what gets talked about and by whom. In other words, what is considered important in the conversation is constructed by men who direct conversation and women who accept this reality (Gergen, 1985). So as in the teaching and learning environment what is well thought-out as important, is what the teachers construct around issues of sexuality and the learners accept it as reality.

## 2.8.3 Historical and cultural specificity

History provides extensive evidence that cultures change overtime, while social anthropology demonstrates that they vary greatly from place to place. This means that the ways the teachers teach sexuality education, the things that inform the way they teach it and things that they would count as substantiation may also be different. Being real about constructionism leads me to accentuate that it isn't just the ways teachers teach sexuality education  that vary, the biasness of the actual living people that are constituted in and from those ways of teaching will vary along with the cultures that produce and sustain them (Cromby, 1999).

Social constructionism assisted me to analyse what informs their teaching of sexuality education and the impact of this on children's lives and the content itself. It has also assisted me to think of the structures for remediation as well as to give authentic feedback to relevant stakeholders who will lead to the arresting of teaching of

sexuality education based on cultural forces and biasness. According to Nightingale and Cromby (1999) some constructionists emphasize the significant differences that can be found even between neighbouring countries or the importance of cultural shifts that can occur within one lifetime and argue that any and all aspects of existence may be subject to enormous variation. Other constructionists simultaneously emphasize the consistencies and continuities that endure between and across cultures and argue that these commonalities must also be explained.

### 2.8.4 Knowledge construction

Denzin and Lincoln (1994) view knowledge and truth around the issues of sexuality as created and not discovered by the mind and support the view that being a realist is not consistent with being a constructionist. According to Berger and Luckmann, (1991) sexuality education concepts are constructed rather than discovered yet maintained that they correspond to something real in the world. This refers to the subjective experience of everyday life, how the issues of sexuality are understood rather than to the objective reality of sexuality. Steedman (2000) notes, most of what is known and most of the knowing that is done is concerned with trying to make sense of what is to be human as opposed to scientific knowledge. We actively seek to explore aspects of our world, in particular ways for particular purposes, and in so doing create knowledge which we then take as the truth about the world.

Other activities carried out for other purposes might have produced alternative 'truths'. So knowledge is inextricably linked to and emerges as a product of activity and purpose (Burr, 1995). However the greatest degree of this piece of reasoning would say that there can be no facts which are said to be true almost in every culture for all time. Some constructions are glad to agree or acknowledge this possibility while other constructions find it crucial to believe that some things are still more true or correct than others. According to Berger and Luckmann, (1991) the division of labour, the emergence of more complex forms of knowledge, are developed by people devoting themselves full-time to their subject. In turn these experts lay claim to novel status and claim ultimate jurisdiction over that knowledge.

The engagement of people with the social world brought about objective and subjective reality which has in turn influenced people into a fixed way of doing things usually when people do the action over and over again; it begins to be shaped into a pattern which can be reproduced without much effort. This assisted in explaining why teachers compromise content of sexuality education in the name of respect. It has become a norm that in a Zulu culture people don't call sensitive terms or things with their real names rather they create their own new terms for objects they cannot say and this sometimes is misleading, for example a male private part would be called 'sjambok'. According to Burr (1995), we gain our identity from society.

Socialisation takes place through significant others who mediate the objective reality of society, render it meaningful and in this way it is internalised by individuals and this is done through the medium of language. Through language thoughts are made possible by constructing concepts. It is then true that language makes it possible for teachers to convey sexuality content to learners. But without having acquired language skills, it will be impossible to convey it and one cannot be in a position to structure the way the issues of sexuality are perceived through communication. Berger and Luckmann (1991) uphold that we understand each other when communicating and do not have to explain terms used. They call this subjective reality.

**2.8.5 Realism and relativism**

Social constructionists all agree that social processes, particularly language, are central to everyday life experience. They all endorse notions of historical and cultural change, and accept that knowledge and activity are intimately related (Cromby & Nightingale, 1999). The main criticisms levelled against social constructionism can be summarised by its perceived conceptualisation of realism and relativism. It is accused of being anti-realist, in denying that knowledge is a direct perception of reality (Andrews, 2012). This criticism of social constructionism not recognising an objective reality is both widespread and common, that nothing exists beyond language (Burr, 1995). Realism is the doctrine that an external world exists independently of our representations of it.

These representations include perceptions, thought, language, beliefs and desires as well as artefacts such as pictures and maps, and so include all the ways in which we do or could know and experience the world and ourselves. Relativism repudiates this doctrine, arguing that since any such external world is inaccessible to us in both principle and practice, it need not be postulated or considered (Searle, 1995). There is an increasing tendency within qualitative research to adopt the relativist position which poses a question to the usefulness of the findings generated from studies using this method, given that the multiplicity of accounts produced can each claim legitimacy. If all are legitimate and given the logical conclusion of relativism, then there is no reason to prefer one account to another (Andrews, 2012). This means that then the wrapping ups of research constitute just another account which cannot claim to have priority over any other account.

Agreeing to realist stance ignores the way the researcher constructs interpretations of knowable and independent reality while relativism leads to the conclusion that nothing can ever be known for exact, are that there multiple realities and none having priority over the other in terms of claims to represent the truth about social phenomena. Andrews (2012) maintains that because there are multiple realities, there are multiple interpretations of those realities. Craib (1997) ridicules social constructionism for its alleged position on the realist-relativist argument and view it as confronting collective belief rather than a theoretical position. He further claims that social constructionists embrace change in order to avoid having to defend or justify their position on anything.

## 2.9 Conclusion

Chapter two presented a review of related literature from international, national and local studies on the experiences of teachers in teaching sexuality and HIV/AIDS, how societies view sexuality and challenges related to sexuality, teenage pregnancy, sexuality and culture and homophobia. Finally, the gap concerning teacher training, cultural beliefs and religion needs to be bridged because there is a need for comprehensive and effective sexuality education for young learners in South Africa which cannot be overemphasised. In my view it is evident that teachers have limited

information on teaching issues of sexuality which is seen to bring discomfort to teachers.

In this chapter I have also discussed the social constructionism theory which is concerned with how knowledge of sexuality education is constructed and understood. Language is the tool teachers' use around the issues of sexuality and it creates the world and frames the truths that can be told. Thoughts are made possible by constructing concepts by means of language. All constructionists endorse notions of historical and cultural change, and accept that knowledge and activity are intimately related. Lastly the distinction between realism and relativism was arrived at where it appeared that realism is a set of guidelines that agree that the external world exists independently of our representations of it and relativism denies these guidelines.

The next chapter will provide a detailed discussion of the research methods and data collection instruments that were used. The qualitative research approach which provides an in-depth discussion of sexuality proved suitable for my study.

# CHAPTER THREE

## RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

### 3.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the research design and methodology utilized in this study to understand how the teachers from three schools in the lower South Coast of KwaZulu-Natal experience the teaching of sexuality in the Foundation Phase. I used a qualitative research design and data was produced through individual interviews, a focus group discussion and classroom observations. According to MacMillan and Schumacher (1997) qualitative research is inquiry in which researchers produce data in face to face situations by interacting with selected persons in their settings. It helped me to describe and analyse teachers' individual and collective social actions, beliefs, thoughts and perceptions by extracting in-depth information from teachers about how they perceive and experience the teaching of sexuality in the Foundation Phase.

The chapter also discusses the selection of participants for this study, location of the three schools, the research questions, and the data production techniques comprising of a focus group discussion, individual interviews and observation. The method of data analysis used in this study together with the ethical considerations taken, validity and reliability issues and the limitations of this study are further discussed.

### 3.2 Type of study

Qualitative research is concerned with the understanding of social phenomena from the participant's perspective. The understanding is achieved by analysing the many contexts of the participants and by narrating the participant's meaning of the events and situations (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006). Holloway and Wheeler (1996) uphold that qualitative research studies systems or people by interacting with them, observing the participants in their natural environment and by focusing on their meanings and interpretations as opposed to a quantitative research design where the researcher separates himself from the world being studied.

My study is qualitative whereby the emphasis is placed on qualities of entities and processes and meanings that are not scientifically examined or measured in terms of quality, intensity, amount or frequency (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). When one embarks on a qualitative research in a natural setting the researcher becomes an instrument for the data production and gathers words or pictures and analyses them. The researcher also seeks answers questions that emphasise how special experience is created and given meaning (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). According to De Vos (1998) a qualitative approach is concerned with people's perspective of the world and therefore generates insight rather than statistical analysis.

Cresswell (2008) acknowledges that qualitative research is defined as an enquiry process of understanding a social or human problem based on building a complex, holistic picture informed with words, reporting detailed views of informants and conducted in a natural setting. The research process and the researcher can be used as an essential tool in regaining participants' self distinctiveness when investigating thin-skinned areas such as HIV/AIDS, rape and homosexuality within ethnic minority groups where participants are reluctant to talk about what they went through because they have fear of stigmatization.

### 3.3 Research questions

The study was guided by the following research questions:

- What are the experiences of teachers in teaching sexuality education in the Foundation Phase?

- What informs the way they teach?

- How does this influence their teaching of sexuality education in the context in which they teach?

## 3.4 Research site

My research site was in KwaZulu-Natal in the lower South Coast, Port Shepstone. The study was conducted in three different schools which are Mandisa, Mbhisho and Masenge primary schools (pseudonyms).

Mandisa Primary School is in the south of Port Shepstone near the Eastern Cape border. It is in a rural low-cost government housing area occupied by citizens ranging in age from 20 to 45 years. Electricity has recently been installed. Some families are child-headed. Mbhisho and Masenge primary schools are situated inland of Port Shepstone. Most of the parents there are single and live on social grants. Though it is very fertile land, very few families live on subsistence farming. They belong to different political parties and are also from different social backgrounds, since there are isiXhosa and isiZulu-speaking people, and foreign immigrants who are locally called amaKwerekwere. They come from different countries like Zimbabwe, Somalia, and Ghana. Mandisa Primary School is about four years old and the other two are about twenty years old.

Figure 1 depicts the area where Mandisa Primary school is situated, in a low-cost government                                                                                                housing



area.

**Figure 1. Mandisa Primary School, situated in a low-cost government housing area.**

Figure 2 depicts the area where Mbisho Primary School is situated. The community members build their own houses and practise subsistence farming. The road is gravel and when it rains it becomes muddy which makes it difficult to travel from point A to point B.

**Figure 2. Mbisho Primary School, situated in an area characterised by subsistence farming.**

Figure 3 depicts the area where Masenge Primary School is situated. People also practise subsistence farming and build their own houses. There are bushes which help the community members with fire wood.



**Figure 3. Masenge Primary School, situated in an area characterised by subsistence farming.**

All three schools are in the Ugu District in Port Shepstone. The local government is represented by ward councillors and traditional leaders. The area is rural and has a large number of unemployed people, which results in a high level of poverty too. All the three schools cater for Grade R to Grade Seven. The Foundation Phase teachers are all women and some of them obtained their qualifications through distance learning. They do not live in the vicinity of the schools. The children walk to school every day. Some of them walk a long distance (about three kilometres) and some walk a short distance (about two hundred metres). They walk in the morning and in the afternoon.

Christianity has a great influence, since ninety percent of the community members are Christians. They instil Christian values to their children. Most of the houses are built of bricks and blocks, and some are low-cost government houses or RDP

(Reconstruction and Development Programme) houses. They have prepaid electricity and water, but some families cannot afford this and rather collect firewood from the nearby forests, use candles for lighting and get water from the stand pipes, which often dry up unnoticed. Young women and men are no longer encouraged to take part in traditional practices like virginity testing (*ukuhlolwa kwezintombi nezinsizwa*). The three schools benefit from the National Schools Nutrition Programme (NSNP) which partly helps to alleviate malnutrition in learners. Only black children attend these schools. They are all no-fee schools, meaning that the parents do not have to pay for their children's education. It is free. In the community there are also a number of HIV/AIDS victims who benefit from the health care from one clinic.

The reason why I chose these schools is that they are less than fifty kilometres apart and my home is also within that distance. I was a teacher for ten years at Mbhisho Primary, so I am familiar with the lifestyle of that community. I also have a sound knowledge of the three schools because they are under my supervision since I am their subject advisor.

## 3.5 Sampling method

According to Cresswell et al. (2011) when people have the same characteristics, they can be the participants in purposive sampling because they will possess the relevant information or data that is needed for a specific study. In my study I used a non-probability method where purposive sampling was used. I sampled nine Foundation Phase teachers from the three schools who have been teaching in the Foundation Phase for at least a minimum period of three years and above because I assumed that they would have had sufficient experience in teaching sexuality in the Foundation Phase. The teachers were sampled because they were likely to be knowledgeable and informative about the teaching of sexuality in the Foundation Phase which is the phenomenon the researcher was investigating, (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006). This is why I decided to use a purposive sampling in my study in order to get specific participants for the study and get the richest possible data and answer my research questions.

In purposive sampling which is a feature of qualitative research the researcher hand picks cases to be included in the sample on the basis of their judgement or their typicality or in possession of the characteristics being sought. In most cases purposive sampling is used in order to gain access to the people who have in-depth knowledge about particular issues (Cohen et al., 2007). Since my sample size was nine teachers from all three schools, in each school the sample comprised of one grade one teacher, one grade two teacher and one grade three teacher. This ensured the equal representation of all the grades in the Foundation Phase.

## 3.6. Biographies of the respondents

The following responses were captured during individual interviews.

Teacher 1: Nthabiseng

Gender: African female

Experience: The teacher has eight years of teaching experience in four different schools. She has taught grades one, two and three. She has not taught Life Skills-sensitive topics effectively because she was avoiding humiliation in saying 'secret' words describing how HIV/AIDS is acquired (sexual intercourse). She also discovered that irrespective of the way she taught, most of the learners were affected by HIV/AIDS and were victims of rape. "I could not be frank with learners because we are watching the community we are serving and the parents at the same time making sure we do not perpetrate the rape by talking about it all the time."

**Teacher 2: Tholi**

**Gender: African female**

**Experience**: She has taught for sixteen years in different schools. Grades taught are grade one, two, four and five. "Previously I used to feel embarrassed when I had to explain what rape is because once you start those topics the learners start laughing unstoppably and I just leave those topics and hope that they will hear from other learners. The fear that I normally have is what if they teach each other wrong information". She mentioned that it would have a negative impact on children's lives previously. But now that CAPS has very little to teach, they don't have a problem.

**Teacher 3: Parker**

**Gender: African female**

**Experience**: She has sixteen years of teaching experience in four schools teaching grade three and five. She mentioned that because of the training she got (distance learning) it was not easy to handle some topics correctly. She did not have the necessary expertise to handle parents if they had questions, so to make life easier for her she did not teach topics which she was not comfortable with.

**Teacher 4: Thando**

**Gender: African female**

**Experience**: She has nine years of teaching experience teaching Grade R and Grade Three. She mentioned that when she talked about kissing and sex, learners began to laugh and she could see that they did not understand the dangers so she had to be strong enough to tell the learners the relevant information no matter how sensitive it was. When she became serious they also started to be serious. "I cannot compromise content because this is killing our kids. We fell into trap because we did not have information so let us not do it to these young ones". She also indicated that the Department of Education has let them down because they teach more because they see the need, yet the policy requires too little to be taught on sexuality in the Foundation Phase.

**Teacher 5: Nomsa**

**Gender: African female**

**Experience**: She has twenty-one years of teaching experience in two schools. She has taught Grade One. This teacher indicated that sexuality education is too advanced for the children's minds. "We are afraid of parents because some parents hide that their kids were sexually abused so if you teach about it and the abuse is mentioned you have to take necessary steps like telling the police" but she said sometimes they deal with those sensitive topics because of the media and not as a requirement from the CAPS document which mandates what to teach. "Miss the way we teach it is because we care about these little ones, we don't have the back up from the parents or from the policy. Parents are too supportive on the wrong things and they deny important things that affect their children".

**Teacher 6: Thembi**

**Gender: African female**

**Experience**: She has six years of teaching experience and trained as a teacher through distance learning. "I don't want to lie; I am scared of parents to talk about sexuality related things because learners will tell their parents what the teacher has taught them. We also lack necessary skills to teach these things appropriately. In workshops we do not get individual attention because time is always limited. But we need to be trained not thrown in the deep end expected to swim". She also pointed out that CAPS has filtered some of the crucial information because the learners are now exposed to numerous challenges related to sexuality.

**Teacher 7: Nophehl**

**Gender: African female**

**Experience**: She has sixteen years of teaching experience and is still training as a teacher through distance learning, so she is still under qualified. She mentioned that the problem she normally encounters is to use the correct terminology in the class and that she does not get support from other colleagues. Some parents give them support and some don't.

**Teacher 8: Kwenzi**

**Gender: African female**

**Experience**: She has five years of teaching experience and has taught in the intermediate phase at a multi-racial school and now she is teaching Grade Three in an African school. She also indicated that the big challenge is using actual words or terms, especially those related HIV/ AIDS transmission and the way the disease is transmitted. The community is shaped by Christian values

**Teacher 9: Mvume**

**Gender: African female**

**Experience**: She has ten years of teaching experience. She is currently teaching Grade One and is the head of department in the Foundation Phase in her school. "Other teachers are not supportive if you experience a challenge in your class it will be your challenge. For Grade Ones there is not much covered in the curriculum yet our children are exposed to all sorts of abuse. You will find yourself teaching what learners need even though it is not in the curriculum because we see the need".

Having a Christian church at the gate of the school says it all. Christian values shape the thinking of the community.

## 3.7 Data production techniques

In qualitative research, researchers use an assortment of strategies for production of data. This will help to gather first-hand information and shed light on the phenomenon being investigated. These strategies include observation, case studies, focus group, individual interviews etc. According to Morse and Richards (2002) data is not collected but made and collecting data implies that data pre-exist ready to be picked up like apples from a tree. They also acknowledge that the process of making data as collaborative, and ongoing which is jointly negotiated by the researcher and participants requiring a tremendous effort on the part of the researcher.

### 3.7.1 Focus group discussions

The focus group discussion strategy is based on the assumption that group interaction will be productive in widening the range of responses, activating forgotten details of experience and realising inhibitions that may otherwise discourage participants from disclosing the information. Many researchers argue that focus group discussions produce data rich in detail that is difficult to achieve with other research methods, but it may happen that some participants experience focus groups as threatening and one should be attuned to this possibility and should observe the focus group process carefully (Cresswell et al., 2011). In this case the teachers may have been shy or embarrassed in disclosing sensitive information on sexuality or on how they perceive teaching of sexuality.

Cresswell et al., (2011) state that in focus group discussions participants are able to build on each other's ideas and comments to provide an in-depth view not attainable from individual interviews. Unexpected comments and new perspectives can be explored easily within the focus group discussion and can add value to a study. According to Lewis (1995) the purpose of the focus group discussion is to obtain information of a qualitative nature from a restricted number of people, as most focus groups consist of six to twelve people. The researcher is responsible for the quality of

data achieved, ensuring that the conversation is balanced, dialogue stays more or less on the topic and not trapped on one point for too long (Morse & Richards, 2002).

According to Cresswell et al. (2011), conducting just one focus group discussion is not advised as you are seeking alternative perspectives. In my case I had one focus group discussion with eight members from the three schools which are Mbhisho, Masenge and Mandisa primary school (pseudonyms). One participant could not turn up for discussion. A popular format for the focus group discussion is a funnel structure where you would start with a broad and less structured set of questions to ease participants into the situation (Cresswell et al., 2011). In this way the researcher will be in a position to learn their general perspective and to take off the pressure from the process where they will actively debate issues. So in this study, the set of questions was constructed around issues of sexuality like homosexuality and homophobia, playing sexual games (*bhati mayipatile or ngize, ngize yo).*

All the participants got a chance to first introduce themselves and share their experiences in teaching life skills. The conversation was tape recorded after obtaining the approval from the participants. For additional supplementary techniques notes were taken after group discussions to increase the validity and credibility of the entire study.

When I asked about how they would feel if they had to teach homosexuality in their grades, one participant asked "who will teach that when because we have the content to teach each and every week for life skill?" The second quickly responded and said "but guys seriously we should be teaching these things because these kids of today know everything even if we don't teach them but they see them on television every day". Another lady who was sitting quietly and showed that she had no interest in what was happening said "miss (referring to me) once you have finalised that you want this thing to be taught at school, make sure you have capacitated teachers fully not these one day or weekend workshop that you usually conduct and you expect us to do wonders. And you teachers, parents will have to know that you also teach 'generations' at school not one plus one".

I learned from the last speaker that she was excluding herself in everything that was discussed. I anticipated that working with her was not going to be easy. Cresswell et al. (2011) say that one of the distinguishing characteristics of focus group discussions is that we combine oral data with observation as a data gathering technique. I gave them a case study of Mr. Mdingi and asked questions and they had different views concerning Mr. Mdingi's character.

### 3.7.2 Individual interviews

According to Cresswell et al. (2011) an interview is a two way conversation in which the interviewer asks the participant to produce data and to learn about the ideas, beliefs, views, opinions and behaviours of the participant. Interviewing is the interactional exchange of dialogue whereby meaning and understandings are created in an interaction that is a coproduction involving the researcher and the interviewee (Mason, 2000). The process of 'face to face' interviewing is undoubtedly the most common method by which qualitative data is produced in educational research (McKay, Messner & Sabo, 2000). The aim of a qualitative interview is to obtain rich descriptive data that will help you to understand the participant's construction of knowledge and social reality (Cresswell et al., 2007).

According to Cresswell et al. (2007) the semi-structured interview is commonly used in research projects to corroborate data emerging from other data sources. I chose to use semi-structured interviews because it allowed for the query and clarification of answers so that it was easier to identify new budding lines of enquiry that exactly related to the phenomenon that was studied and query them. As I sought to understand how the teachers find the teaching of sexuality in their classrooms the issues of parents, training and workshops, came to light and it gave me space to question it. I also had to guide them back to the focus of the interview. My study therefore used semi-structured interviews with teachers.

### 3.7.3 Observations

Observation is the systematic process of recording the behavioural pattern of participants, objects and occurrences without necessarily questioning or

communicating with them. As a qualitative data gathering technique, observation is used to enable the researcher to gain a deeper insight and understanding of the phenomenon being observed (Cresswell et. al., 2007). This calls for a researcher to therefore be mindful of his or her unfairness and again be objective as opposed to subjective. Cresswell et al. (2007) state that in qualitative research they also accept that the researcher can learn most by participating and /or being immersed in the research situation being observed. A researcher relies on careful observation as he or she initially explores several areas of interest at a site searching for patterns of behaviours and relationships.

In some social scenes the participant observer produces the data entirely by observing the scene as it occurs, such as a class lesson or a board meeting (Cohen et al., 2007). According to De Vos (2010) it will never be possible to report on everything that is observed. The use of videos and tapes will contribute towards objectivity. In this study lessons on sexuality in grades one, two and three were observed. I had to record even the gestures teachers made towards the answers given by the learners. I have noticed that the lesson observation built a positive relationship between the participants and I, such that some were asking me questions at the end of the lesson as to how they could improve if there were gaps identified. Some were confessing that they were really scared because they are not used to classroom visits or lesson observations. I always reassured them.

## 3.8 Validity and reliability

To validate data, in my study I used three methods of data production. They were observations, focus group discussions and individual interviews with the teachers. There had to be a quality of balance which is fairness, ensuring that all participants' voices were obvious in the text. Omission of participants' voices reflect a form of bias and inability to act affirmatively with respect to conclusion and ensuring that all voices in the study had a chance to be represented in any text and their stories treated fairly and with balance (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). This is evident where the direct words uttered by the teachers about their experiences in teaching sexuality related issues are used. Validating data means ensuring that it is confirmable, dependable and can be generalised. Cresswell et al. (2011) state that the goal of qualitative research is

not to generalise findings across a population. Rather a qualitative approach seeks to provide understanding from the participants.

In qualitative data validity may be addressed through honesty, depth, richness of scope of data achieved, the extent of triangulation or objectivity of the researcher (Cohen et al., 2007). According to Cohen et al. (2007) triangulation may be defined as the use of two or more methods of data production in the study which is also called a multi-method approach. In triangulation, a researcher may address the same topic as that which is addressed by another but through different question setting methods and data to gain a different perspective (Morse & Richards, 2002). They also disagree that using different theories to interpret the same data is not triangulation.

### 3.9 Ethical issues

The researcher is ethically responsible for protecting the rights and welfare of the subjects who participate in a study, which involves issues of physical and mental discomfort, harm, and danger. Most studies require that informed consent be obtained from the subject, their parents or a relevant institution, and laws are in place to protect the confidentiality of the data and the privacy of the subjects (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006). Consent was obtained from all the participants of the three schools, that is, from the principals and the teachers. Ethics concern morality of human conduct, which refers to the choice and accountability on the part of the researcher throughout the research process (King & Horrocks, 2010).

The respondents or participants were given the right to withdraw from the study at any given time. They were also informed about the purpose of the study and the process of data production. King and Horrocks (2010) settled the following principles which directed me when tackling ethical issues: Respect for persons which demands that individuals must participate voluntarily having adequate information about what involvement in the research will entail including possible consequences, Beneficence which entails securing the well-being of participants and lastly Justice which denotes fairness, fair distribution of benefits and burdens of research. All the participants were guaranteed to remain unidentified; that is why their real names were not used in order

to protect their identities but rather false names. Ethical clearance was obtained from the University of KwaZulu-Natal after thorough investigation.

## 3.10 Limitations

One of the limitations I encountered when conducting my study was the issue of language since the interview was conducted in English but I could hear from the responses that they were responding inappropriately and were easily getting carried away, however I made every effort to simplify questions and even used isiZulu and this of course impacted on time factor. One of the participants did not turn up for the focus group discussion.

There was a lot of noise from other learners from other grades during lesson observations. In qualitative data, validity may be addressed through honesty, depth, richness of scope of data achieved, the extent of triangulation or objectivity of the researcher (Cohen et al., 2007). Even though the study was done in Ugu District with Foundation Phase teachers teaching Life Skills, the results cannot be generalised since the contexts in the district are not similar to each other so we cannot generalise the findings to the whole population of Ugu District.

## 3.11 Data analysis

According to De Vos et al. (2010) the purpose of conducting a qualitative study is to produce findings and qualitative analysis transforms data into findings. Data analysis is also the process of bringing order, structure and meaning to the mass of collected data (De Vos et al., 2010). The purpose of data analysis is to make sense of data from the perspective of the participants' definitions of the situation, noting patterns, themes and regularities (Cohen et al., 2007)

When data collection was completed, it was then organised into coded data. Depending on the methodological frame of enquiry and the corresponding aim of the analysis procedures, a researcher may go the conventional straightforward "qualitative coding and categorising" route. This means that the data are divided into small units of meaning, which are then systematically "named" per unit  (coded according to what a unit of meaning signifies for the researcher) and then grouped together in categories

that contain related codes (Elizabeth et al., 2004). Kruger and Welman (2001) view coding as a crucial step as it changes data into meaningful information. Transcripts were analysed using thematic content analysis. In thematic content analysis, themes are identified once data is reduced to contextual form and then discussed on the basis of systematic scrutiny (Kruger & Wellman, 2001).

Some of the themes identified in my findings were:

➢ Cultural influence and beliefs versus curriculum necessities

➢ Teacher's fear of parents.

➢ A lack of support from school management teams and proper training.

➢ Children are too young for sexuality education.

## 3.12 Conclusion

In this chapter I have discussed the methodology that I used in my study. I have also delineated how appropriate the qualitative approach was for my study. I also discussed the selection of participants for this study, location of the three schools, the research questions, and the data production techniques comprising of a focus group discussion, individual interviews and observation. The method of data analysis used in this study together with the ethical considerations taken, validity and reliability issues and the limitations of this study were further discussed. In the next chapter I will present and discuss the findings of this study in the light of relevant literature and the theoretical framework that underpinned this study.

<div align="center">**CHAPTER FOUR**</div>


<div align="center">**DATA PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**</div>

## 4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter discussed the research design and methodology used in the study. I also outlined the use of the qualitative approach and its fitness for this study, using the theory of social constructionism to assist me in analysing Foundation Phase teachers' views on teaching sexuality education and what informs their teaching of sexuality education. I also elucidated why data was collected through a focus group discussion, semi-structured individual interviews and observations.

This chapter presents a discussion and analysis of the data collected through semi-structured interviews, a focus group discussion and lesson observations conducted with nine Foundation Phase teachers from three different schools in the Margate Ward, Port Shepstone in the Ugu District. It is centred on how the nine teachers from the three schools (Mandisa, Mbisho and Masenge) view the teaching of sexuality and what informs their teaching of sexuality.

### 4.1.1 The following themes emerged from the data I collected:

1. Cultural influence and beliefs versus curriculum necessities.

2. Teachers' fear of parents.

3. Lack of support from school management teams and appropriate training.

4. Children are too young for sexuality education.

In this chapter I present the voices of teachers from the individual interviews, the focus group discussion and from the lessons observed in the rural schools in Ugu District. Individual teachers are given pseudonyms to protect their identities.

## 4.2 Responses from individual interviews

To obtain an understanding of these teachers' experiences, during the individual interviews [Appendix 1A, Interview schedule for teachers] I asked the following questions:

1. What do you really think is the most difficult problem in teaching sexuality education in your class?

2. How do you try to solve those problems without compromising the content to be taught in your grade?

3. Do you have relevant resources for each topic?

4. In what ways do other colleagues show their support to Foundation Phase teachers?

5. What is the attitude of the parents towards the content of sexuality education?

6. Are learners free to ask sensitive questions? How do you handle sensitive questions outside the topic of the day?

The understanding of the teachers was that sexuality education is all about sex education which is not applicable in the Foundation Phase. From their responses, it was evident that the teachers are all the product of social processes. This was evident when Thando commented and said, "Jesus Christ we can't teach that in this community, we won't compromise our values as blacks, '*sizobizelwa komkhulu*" meaning that we will be called to the tribal authority". The world is a social reproduction and transformation of structures of meaning, conventions, morals and discursive practices that principally constitutes both our relationship (Hacking, 1999). A subset of teachers believed that certain aspects of the interventions addressing sexuality contradicted their own values and beliefs, such contradictions also have the potential to reduce the fidelity of the intervention's implementation (Kibombo et al., 2008).

**4.2.1 Cultural influence and beliefs versus curriculum necessities**

Kwenzi said, *"I am from a Christian family where most of the children come from and the parents don't know what the curriculum covers so I rather stick to the teaching of the proverbs 22 verse 6 which reads: train the child in the way he should go and when he is old he will not depart from it and this is the way we were raised as well"*.

For Kwenzi it is clear that her religious beliefs influence or affect the teaching of sexuality education in her class. This response coincides with the views by Tayob (2010) that the different social contexts and cultural as well as religious beliefs shape or determine the way the teachers make their choices regarding what they are going to teach and how they are going to teach it. The loyalist societal systems inherited from the culture of amaZulu, who have very strong religious beliefs, still haunt teachers even today.

According to social constructionism life is understood in terms of the meanings the people attach to the experiences they go through (Woolfolk, 2007). Kwenzi's response echoes the constructionist perspective. Kwenzi is possibly paying attention to the arrangements of the environmental inputs which are necessary for building up an accurate representation. She favours the ideas of the community, which is how she shapes her style of teaching. Since the children are the products of social processes and are exposed to community beliefs, it makes it easier for her to impart her religious beliefs, which at some stage sabotage the offering of the relevant curriculum.

Nthabiseng gave her account and said, *"We do teach sexuality education things in grade two because we feel it is for the benefit of the children who are faced with rape, abduction, HIV/AIDS even though CAPS has not provided any sexuality content for grade two learners. We only choose topics that we will be comfortable with when teaching from grade one and three content"*.

Nthabiseng's account tells me that even though some teachers compromise the teaching of sexuality in their schools due to cultural influences, others like her are willing to take a risk and go the extra mile and teach sexuality education stimulated

by the needs or challenges the learners are faced with (HIV/AIDS, child abduction, child sexual abuse and the like) irrespective of what the demands or beliefs of the community are.

This is affirmed by Iyoke, Onah and Onwasigwe (2006, p.81) who indicate that "teachers in Enugu urban village were willing to offer sexuality education to adolescents under their care irrespective of their religion, sex or marital status"; however, he recommended that "teachers in Enugu be given necessary special training in the teaching of sexuality education and that it be officially incorporated into the school curriculum in Enugu preferably as part of moral studies". These Enugu teachers took a stand to teach sexuality education irrespective of their religion, sex or marital status and without possessing the necessary qualifications because they understood the urgency in teaching the subject.

No matter what the curriculum offers or what it does not, some teachers understand this urgency, as learners are faced with the mammoth reality of being victims of sexuality-related issues such as rape, pornography, HIV/AIDS, child abduction and sexual violence matters.

### 4.2.2 Teachers' fear of parents

Thembi explained that, "*I think the most difficult problem when teaching sexuality education in my class is the fear of the unknown. I don't feel free to call other words because of the fear of the response from the parents*".

Thembi's explanation reiterates what Ohman (2000) said, that "humans prefer situations they are accustomed to instead of unknown ones". It is thus not surprising that some teachers would not use words unknown to them. Moore (1993) indicates that "the socially constructed reality is the only reality for its disciples".

Nophehl explained and said, "*The most difficult problem is that sometimes I can't name the sexual organs by their real names as learners are coming from different homes where they use different names for sexual organs. So other learners might think I am teaching them vulgar language and tell their parents at home*".

Cultural taboos affect the way we communicate. This was observed by Bowers (2007) who found that if people feel uncomfortable with certain words, it doesn't have to be swear words; it might be bodily functions or the names of genitalia, or indeed, saying "kill" and "people" at an arms fair - they may go to great lengths to avoid using them, Bowers adds by explaining that this includes not entering into discussing of a particular subject at all. According to Tayob (2010) reality that falls outside of the socially constructed one is not reality. The words Nopehl is supposed to use in class and in her lesson are taboo. Her reality has different words.

Kwenzi pointed out that, "*Parents are protecting their children from exposure to allegedly being corrupted by sexuality education issues which is dangerous and immoral to talk about*".

Van Niekerk (2008) concurs with Kwenzi in saying that instinctively parents always seek to protect their young from "corrupting influences" and he is another theorist who believes that parents have the primary concern which is safety and protection of their children. This state of affairs then becomes a recurring phenomenon. Mkumbo (2012) claims that in traditional societies socially constructed ways cannot be deviated from. Anyone who does is looked at with suspicion. As children are socially constructed they are then viewed as in need of protection by parents rather than as children who have the right to relevant information about their own bodies and their sexuality.

It is apparent that some teachers are aware that there is a need for them to teach sexuality education in their classrooms but they don't get the support from the school management teams regarding the buying of resources, which is a pre-requisite in active learning or learner-centred classrooms. On the other hand there is a noticeable fear of parents' reactions directed to teachers in response to the offering of sexuality education to their children. Teachers resort to skipping the topics that challenge them rather than acquiring the relevant skills to undertake the effective teaching of sexuality education in the Foundation Phase.

The community as the custodian of moral values has generationally transferred the saga of silence on sexual matters (Pretorius, 2005). Through language it is easy for parents to convey their thoughts about how they feel about sexuality education being

offered to young learners. Recent findings by Kibombo et al. (2008) suggest that Ugandan teachers do not feel comfortable discussing sexuality and reproductive health issues with students due to a fear of parents' reactions, nor do many feel that they have sufficient training or resources to deliver sexuality education effectively.

### 4.2.3 Lack of support from school management teams and appropriate training

Nophehl explained again and said, *"Another thing that makes me to lose courage in teaching the subject is the background of learners. Sometimes when you teach about HIV/AIDS and the learners quickly draw their conclusions to say that child is HIV positive and sometimes the lesson gets out of hand and we sometimes don't have skills to handle that. I sometimes decide to close the topic because I don't know what to do".*

Mvume's account was as follows: *"As much as we would want to teach sexuality education the correct way, one of the reasons I feel affects the teaching of sexuality is the way we were trained. Some of us were trained through distant learning some of us went to tertiary institutions full time and others were not even trained so we do not treat the same topic the same way and sometimes we do not know how deep we must go with the particular topic so we end up teaching less in some topics and over teaching other topics, considering the needs of learners. If we can be capacitated, on how to teach sexuality education surely, we can teach it with confidence".*

Mkumbo (2012, p.149) confirms the above statements:

> Though teachers may support the teaching of sexuality education and the inclusion of a number of topics in the school curriculum, they may not be comfortable and capable of teaching all the key sexuality education topics. This was particularly the case with regard to homosexuality and other controversial topics. This implies that adequate preparation in a way of training is required for teachers if they are to handle sexuality education in the classroom situation effectively.

Teacher training does pose a challenge in terms of the uniformity of the quality of teaching and learning experiences of both teachers and their learners (Moletsane, Hempson & Muthukrishna, 2004). Francis (2012, p.317) admits that "There are many

stumbling blocks to adopting a sexuality education approach; an example is a lack of adequate teacher training to effectively and openly deliver sexuality education when we need to". Gergen (1992) distinguishes between two views of knowledge that are primarily exogenic (world centered) and endogenic (mind centered). He states that the exogenist is likely to stress the importance of knowledge in the individual's ability to adapt to or succeed within the complex environment.

Mkumbo (2012) states that educators are faced with a great difficulty when it comes to the teaching of sexuality education because it is an unwelcome topic to other teachers and sometime those who teach it are not trained and often feel uncomfortable with the content and the pedagogic style. It is evident that there is dissimilarity between what the curriculum demands and what the teachers are doing. Their failure to handle the lesson when it goes out of hand undoubtedly illustrates that learners are confused by the teachers or teachers themselves are confused.

Van Rooyen et al. observe that teachers act in loco parentis and should therefore bear a mandate to teach according to what the culture of the particular community in whose service the school stands needs (Van Rooyen, 1997).

Teachers mentioned that the way they teach the content of sexuality education really impacts on learners later in life because it is not easy to communicate freely with the young learners who do not fully understand sexuality education terminology that is rather far above their level of maturity. The main thrust of sexuality education in schools is to promote a normed personal life for a child and to enable him or her to become a morally independent, accountable, dedicated and responsible man or woman and later be a father or a mother (Van Rooyen, 1997). "Teachers and learners find it difficult to communicate about sexuality and gender and this limits the possibilities of addressing important issues relevant to HIV/AIDS" (Bhana, 2007, p.432). Most of the teachers pointed out that the most difficult part in teaching the young ones sexuality education is sexuality education terminology.

The elements most important to the theory are the assumptions that human beings rationalise their experience by creating a model of the social world and how it

functions and that language is the most essential system through which humans construct reality (Hacking, 2000).

Thando commented and said, "*We do not have relevant resources to teach our learners sexuality education, we don't have even the first aid kit. How can we then successfully teach it?*"

Thembi also agreed and said, "*The issue of resources is critical at our school because Life Skills is not treated as the important subject usually there is no allocation for this subject. The subjects that are taken seriously are those which write ANA (Annual National Assessment) only*".

Goldman (2008) also confirms this by saying: "In Australian schools, the design, planning, quality, implementation and effectiveness of comprehensive sexuality education is frequently limited by factors such as the marginalisation of the subject and varying resourcing in areas such as staffing and funding". Gergen (1992) emphasises the importance of resources where the learners will be exposed to books and lectures which is favoured by the exogenic perspective as it is through these means that the individual can acquire vast amounts of information not otherwise available to direct observation.

Parker: "*What resources do we need for teaching sexuality education? Condoms and pictures of naked people? Grade 3 will laugh unstoppably if I can bring a condom in class. Those kids are forward and parents will fight with us when they hear that*".
Mvume: "*Yes guys we need to bring a condom to class to show our learners so that they know it. You will be surprised that grade one learners were found during break time playing with condoms, blowing them with their mouths some putting water inside and drinking. So if we teach them they will know. We also need gloves, injections, razor blades, charts yha*".

Problem solving in the constructionist classroom is crucial. Basic methods of enquiry are used by the students to ask questions, investigate a topic and use a variety of resources to find solutions. The emphasis here is on learning through social

interaction which is promoted by the availability of teaching and learning resources to enhance teaching of sexuality education.

According to Venderstaeten (2001) the social interaction between the teacher and the students is viewed as having an asymmetrical structure, where by teachers have to establish and defend their authority. He further maintains that there is a normalisation process in the classroom through which standards are set for polar dimensions such as good/bad praise/reprimand and succeed/ fail and those students meet such expectation from the teachers by adaptation or deviate from them.

*Nophehl commented and said, "I don't want to lie, I will not bring a condom to my learners. I'd rather jump that part which wants me to do that, you know the parents in this area they will confront me. Remember (referring to her colleagues) Dolly's case."*

This teacher explained that one teacher was teaching about sexual abuse in a Grade Four class and some learners indicated that Dolly was raped but she did not tell the police so the parents came to the school and confronted the teacher.

### 4.2.4 Children are too young for the sexuality education content

Research that was done by Mkumbo (2012) in Tanzania showed that "71 percent of the teachers in the urban district and 94 percent of the teachers in the rural district indicated that sexuality education should begin at primary school level between Class 4 (age 10) and 7 (age 13)".

Tholi said, "*We as black people it is not easy to talk about sex related matters with young children or even with your peers naming those big words. We believe it is being disrespectful. So maybe using the nicknames of parts of the body also affect the teaching of sexuality education*".

This is an example of culture being a teaching barrier (Woolfolk, 2004) which Gonzalez, Moll and Amanti (2005) claim can be used to enhance teaching and learning. In the sense that teachers compromise the given content of sexuality education in favour of their culture in this way their culture becomes an obstruction.

Again cultural knowledge, prior experiences could be used to make sexuality education learning more appropriate and effective for learners. Culture could also create bridges of meaningfulness of sexuality education between home and school experiences as well as between academic abstractions and lived socio-cultural realities.

Some teachers are frightened of talking about sexual activity to learners and that parents will accuse them (teachers) because they feel it is inappropriate for them (teachers) to talk about sexuality education to learners who are so young (Francis, 2012). Francis (2012) further argues that the way adults construct youth, children and innocence in South Africa influences the kind of information that is seen as appropriate and relevant for youth. They are often referred to and visually constructed as children in need of protection rather than as youth who have the right to relevant information about their own bodies and their sexuality.

*Nthabiseng indicated that, "Parents also worried that teachers will open the eyes of their children because children would want to experience what they are taught yet they are not matured enough to handle strong language from sexuality education lessons".*

Goldman (2008, p. 416) argues this by saying "children in many countries are maturing earlier, that is, and they are reaching puberty earlier than in previous generations". He further states that he believes that the social factor influencing the effective delivery of sexuality education is parental concern about their young people's education and also about young people's sexuality. Ineffective delivery causes measurable troubles and outlay to young people through early unwanted pregnancies and abortion, Sexual Transmitted Infections (STIs) and loss of education and life opportunities (Zalaznick, 1994).

**4.3 Responses from the focus group discussion**

To obtain an understanding of these teachers' experiences, during the focus group discussion, I used a case study [Appendix One B - Focus group discussion schedule]

**Case study**

Mrs. Mdingi, a Grade Three teacher came to class one Friday to teach on 'Keeping my body safe'. She had a chart of a naked boy and a girl showing all the parts of the body. After the lesson was over, the educator distributed small pictures of naked boys to girls and girls to boys.

**4.3.1 Questions based on the above case study**

1. **What type of a teacher do you think Mrs Mdingi is?**

2. **If your child was in Mrs Mdingi's class how would you feel about her distribution of small pictures to the class? Why?**

3. **What, in your opinion, was she promoting? What are your thoughts on what she was promoting?**

4. **If you were to teach keeping my body safe to the above class, how would you go about doing it?**

The focus group discussion strategy is based on the assumption that group interaction will be productive in widening the range of responses, activating forgotten details of experience and realising inhibitions that may otherwise discourage participants from disclosing the information.

**4.3.2 Cultural influence and beliefs versus curriculum necessities**

Teachers expressed their apprehensions that they face vilification and bitterness from parents which results in teachers facing complications in teaching sexuality education to young children. Several authors (Paulussen et al., 1994; Nakalema & Oshi; 2004; Matthews, Boon, Flisher & Schaalma, 2006) have recommended that teachers' attitudes and confidence about teaching sexuality education be assessed prior to engaging them in the delivery of sexuality education programmes (Mkumbo, 2012). It is also apparent that the lack of training on sexuality education issues might do non-repairable damage to the minds of young learners (Zalaznick 1994).

Mvume gave account by saying, "*Mrs Mdingi does not have the qualities of a good teacher and that of a good parent. She also does not respect somebody else's body because she could have had a paragraph explaining more about ways of keeping the body safe.*"

Nopehl expressed her concern and said, "*I think Mrs. Mdingi is not a good teacher because the learners are still young to know other genders in naked pictures. She should have given boys pictures of naked boys and girls the pictures of naked girls*".

Almost all the teachers pointed out that the values and morals of their upbringing, including their religious affiliations, have a huge impact on the way they feel about teaching sexuality education in their schools. In most African countries the issue of silence is compounded by both cultural socialisation and spiritual or theological perceptions (Khathide, 2003). Conversations about sexuality were only about gender roles, and anything more than that was discouraged, barred and treated as humiliating. This is illustrated by Thando's response below:

"*What we knew was correct is what was culturally and religiously appropriate, so we cannot fell comfortable overnight to talk openly about those things.*"

Thando depicts that as a product of the same society. The reality of sexuality education that is acceptable to them as teachers is that which is jointly constructed within the society. Anything outside that is treated as incorrect and unacceptable.

### 4.3.3 Teachers' fear of parents

Thando said, "*Those learners should know that their bodies are the temple of God and should be respected and what I don't like in her action is that boys will make fun of girls. This is why the parents are sometimes fighting with us as teachers. Parents don't want their kids to know these things. Even myself if I was a parent I wouldn't want that to be done to my child.*"

Parker's statement was, *"I am totally against what Mrs Mdingi did. I don't know what behaviour she was promoting but it can encourage learners to be eager to see private parts of opposite sex"*.

The duty of the school as part of national and provincial education systems subscribing to the principle of universal education is to develop all the children's knowledge, skills, attitudes and values, rationality and understanding to the fullest degree possible and support children to develop their own choices (RSA, 1996). Teachers are trusted to be the best sources of knowledge and skills in all education systems.

According to Francis (2012, p.317), "There are many stumbling blocks to adopting sexuality education programmes for example parental objections to content which could be seen to encourage sexual activity in youth and a lack of adequate teacher training to effectively and openly deliver such a broad programme". Teachers have raised concerns about parents' or guardians' objections to sexuality education being taught to their learners at an early age. History provides extensive evidence that cultures change over time, while social anthropology demonstrates that they vary greatly from place to place. This means that the ways the teachers teach sexuality education, the things that inform the way they teach it and things that they would count as substantiation may also be different. It is clear that Mrs Mdingi in the case study comes from a different culture with different beliefs as far as sexuality education issues are concerned.

*"I am scared of parents because there is a big possibility that those pictures were taken home".* This is a concern from Kwenzi.

*"Parents also worried that teachers will open the eyes of their children because children would want to experience what they are taught yet they are not matured enough to handle strong language from sexuality education lessons".* This is Nthabiseng's concern.

They also stated that they face criticism and resentment from other staff members and parents in connection with the teaching of sexuality education and related sexuality

issues. The lack of support from parents especially hinders the proper delivery of sexuality education in the Foundation Phase. Social constructionists argue that the world we experience and the people we find ourselves to be are first and foremost the product of social process (Hacking 2000). This leads to the understanding that teachers rationalise their experience of teaching sexuality education by creating a model of the social world and how it functions and that language is the most essential system through which they construct reality.

Mvume commented and said, "*Sometimes you teach about rape and it appears that a child in your class is a victim of rape. If you follow it, the parents would tell you to back off*".

Teachers are aware that their learners are faced with serious health issues like HIV/AIDS, sexual abuse and rape but there are social and cultural forces that contour the teaching of sexuality education. Such forces unswervingly compromise sexuality education content and they make it difficult to change the attitude of parents. The society expects the teachers to eliminate social ills like homophobia, teenage pregnancy, abduction of children, rape and the like but they don't allow the platform to do so. Instead they want teachers to conform to the societal beliefs. This has given rise to the confusion in teachers of what to teach and what not, and as a result there is no consistency in the teaching of the same topic in different sections of the same school. Surely learners will also act differently in the same situation because they were not taught the same way.

### 4.3.4 Lack of support from school management teams and proper training

Thembi suggested that, "*Miss if we can get the support from the School Management Teams (SMT) it would be easier for us to know that they are behind us if parents wrestle with us.*"

Mvume added, "*It is also difficult to get resources for Life Skills, buying the contents of the first aid kit is easier said than done. We improvise and if we fail, we fail*".

This was also observed by the South African Democratic Teachers' Union (SADTU) (2010) that schools and education fail to provide teachers with the necessary resources to enhance teaching and learning. The National Teachers' Union (NATU) (2013) lamented the situation where teachers are expected to perform 'miracles' in pursuit of quality education when they are denied the support they sorely need.

It is evident that in addition to the criticism from the parents and the impact of their upbringing, teachers lack support from the school, which also compromises and influences the way they teach sexuality education. If the school does not stand firmly united and preach the same 'gospel' of sexuality education, it will not be easy to combat the HIV/AIDS pandemic. It is clear that it is not easy for the school to illuminate issues of sexuality for society, as people are constructed within the practices in which they participate. The distinctive feature is that the school is also influenced by the society that surrounds it, which still rejects and is taciturn about sexuality. This shows that there are consistencies and continuities that endure between and across cultures (Nightingale & Cromby, 1999) and in this case it is between the schools, churches and the community.

Nthabiseng indicated that, "*Life Skills is not given much attention like Language and Maths which are part of ANA (Annual National Assessment), sometimes time for Life Skills is used to catch up for Maths and Language so nothing will catch up with you at the end if you don't teach it because it is not considered for progression at the end of the year*".

Nomsa said, "Sometimes *even us as teachers, we misinterpret the content through the lack of knowledge. The teacher would have taught learners rights and responsibilities. I think she is promoting bad behaviour which might lead to sexual abuse*".

Nthabiseng commented, "*In grade two we don't have the content for sexuality education for the whole year but I think what she did is beyond what the curriculum necessitates*".

This gives the impression that in the schools that do not monitor work, Life Skills that includes sexuality education is not taught, and in schools where work is monitored Life Skills is taught but it is not known how effectively it is taught because the teaching of sexuality education depends on the teaching of Life Skills as a subject in schools. It also emerged that time for networking for improving teaching is allowed for Language and Mathematics but not for Life Skills, and this has a negative impact on the subject and also decreases resilience. According to Berger and Luckmann (1991) sexuality education concepts are constructed rather than discovered, yet it is maintained that they correspond to something real in the world. This refers to the subjective experience of everyday life and how the issues of sexuality are understood, rather than to the objective reality of sexuality.

Kwenzi said, "We *also need training on sexuality education because these two-day workshops from the department of education are really not enough to effectively teach sexuality since we did not all go for formal training"*.

Mvume added, "*Sometimes principals forget to give us invitations for those workshops and we miss them. We really need empowerment on sexuality education"*.

Colleges of education were closed down after 2000 and training was taken over by the Department of Basic Education (DBE) and NPOs. Out of the nine teachers, three of them were trained through distance learning, five were trained as full-time students at tertiary institutions, and one teacher is still studying through correspondence. For current issues in education teachers rely on workshops organised by the DBE, NPOs and teacher unions. They unanimously agreed that these workshops are not enough and if the lesson gets out of hand they don't know what to do and sometimes leave things hanging to protect their dignity. There were also concerned that even these workshops are always conducted too late, and at the beginning teachers are not given any direction as to how to handle the content of sexuality education. Instead workshops are conducted to rectify mistakes or after the schools have raised their concerns. The deficiency in such support decreases the teachers' commitment to the subject and hinders good performance in both learners and teachers.

**4.4 Findings from lesson observations**

In a Grade Two class the lesson was about sexual abuse. Nomsa did not want the learners to use the nicknames for the private parts, like '*ikhekhe'* for a female private part and '*isoseji'* or *'itotolozi'* for a male private part, and a learner uttered an isiZulu name for a penis and said *'umthondo'.* At the sound of that word, the teacher screamed and covered her face with her hands for seconds. I realised that the teacher was frustrated because she wanted the learners to say the correct terms but she was not strong enough or ready to hear such terms from her Grade Two learners. To her it was a humiliation or an embarrassment, and her culture caught up with her.

In a Grade One class where the topic was Rape, Tholi wanted Grade One learners to explain what rape is. The learners said, *"Umuntu uyakuwisa agibele phezu kwakho"*, meaning "a person would push you very hard so that you fall down and climb on top of you". The teacher further asked, "If a person climbs on top of you, is that a rape?" The learners said, *"uyakukhumula"*, meaning that he takes off your clothes. The teacher said, "*If a person takes off your clothes he rapes you?"* The learners then kept quiet, innocently looking at the teacher.

These observations reveal that the teachers avoid as much as they can explaining issues of sexuality to their learners that will compromise their beliefs. Teachers would rather skip topics that challenge them and sometimes leave learners confused. There are reports from teachers who teach sexuality education that one of the most challenging aspects of teaching is handling the interaction with students through communication in general, but also specifically with regard to the language being used (Helleve et al., 2009). In many societies, religious beliefs and cultural values choke public discussion about bodily issues like puberty, sexuality, gender relationships, reproductive health and sexuality safety. Francis (2012) agrees with this statement when he commented that sexuality education is problematic in the South African context, where sex is still considered very much taboo and communities are often in denial about youth sexual activity.

Teachers also felt that teaching sexuality in general was culturally more challenging than teaching HIV/AIDS. The church ministers are not allowed to preach about sex

related matters but only heaven and God, and if they have to talk sex it is in hushed tones behind closed doors (Khathide, 2003). They are afraid that if the congregation or their superiors find them talking openly about sex they will be disciplined or suspended. It is clear that even the church ministers were left with no option but to be the vehicle of culture rather than being a mediator of the truth. Even the parents deny their responsibility of teaching and guiding their children about sexuality at home or at a parental level. Some parents have the hope that the school will assume that responsibility; ironically the media is increasingly bombarding children with higher grade sexuality education related matters. Helleve et al. (2009, p. 202) also discovered that "teachers tried not to challenge existing norms and values and tended to adapt their syllabus to avoid difficult sections such as the sexuality education component of LO. Teachers often view homosexuality as deviant or immoral and are reticent to deal with this issue in their classroom due to cultural and religious opinions".

According to Cottone (2012) the compelling concept in social constructionism is that of 'bracketed absolute truth' (also called consensuality), where a truth is held within a community as absolute. The data received from the research participants prominently displays the rigidity with which cultural knowledge (as socially constructed) is held. Cottone further claims that truths are never constructed outside of interaction, therefore truth is social. This idea implies that teachers cannot teach sexuality education by deviating from their cultural norms and expectations.

**4.5 Conclusion**

In this chapter I presented a discussion of the data collected through a focus group discussion, semi-structured interviews of nine teachers, and lesson observations in three primary schools in the Ugu District. I analysed the data according to the themes that emerged. It emerged that the teaching of sexuality in schools is far more strongly influenced by culture and beliefs than by curriculum necessities, and is also strongly influenced by teachers' fear of parents, a lack of support from school management teams and a lack of proper training. The above themes were discussed and the responses from teachers were also provided. Teachers pointed out that cultural influence has a huge impact on the way they teach sexuality education; hence this topic is still regarded as taboo. Their religious beliefs also prevent them as teachers

from performing at their optimum level, but above all it is the lack of support from the teaching personnel together with the criticisms from parents that leave them confused about what to teach and what not to teach or whether to follow the policy requirements or societal demands.

Their lack of relevant skills to teach sexuality education challenges their competency, especially when the lesson gets out of hand. As a result they sometimes leave or skip sensitive issues to maintain their dignity.

The next chapter presents a summary of the findings and suggests recommendations for the effective teaching of sexuality education in the Foundation Phase.

# CHAPTER 5

## SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 5.1 Introduction

The aim of sexuality education in schools is to encourage and enable a learner to ultimately become a sexually responsible man or woman (Loeber et al., 2010). In some cultures, especially in black communities, talking about sexuality is still avoided. Some teachers in the Foundation Phase are conservative and reticent because sexuality education is regarded as humiliating to talk about and has also been regarded as an activity for undisciplined people without self-control. However, teachers are the main role-players in teaching learners sexual responsibility, and how they teach is crucial so that learners are not adversely affected by poor foundational teaching during the early years of their schooling.

This study therefore looked at the experiences of teachers in teaching sexuality education and what informs the way they teach it in the Foundation Phase. It was guided by the following research questions:

- What are the experiences of teachers in teaching sexuality education in the Foundation Phase?

- What informs the way they teach and the influence it has on their teaching of sexuality education in the context in which they teach.

The participants' responses produced clear insights into teachers' experiences in teaching sexuality education in the Foundation Phase and what informs the way they teach it. It is evident that their teaching of sexuality is informed by their cultural influences and beliefs, rather than by curriculum necessities, and is also strongly affected by their fear of parents, lack of support from the school management teams, and inappropriate training. Teachers in this study also feel that the learners are too young for the sexual content. These factors that emerged have an impact on their teaching of sexuality education.

This chapter summarises the findings, provides a conclusion and makes recommendations. It fuses the primary findings and recommendations which will enable the teachers to improve the teaching of sexuality education in the Foundation Phase.

This study is a qualitative study of nine teachers' experiences of teaching sexuality education in the Foundation Phase in three rural schools (Masenge, Mbisho and Mandisa) in the Ugu District, on the Lower South Coast of KwaZulu-Natal. It was analysed through the theoretical lens of social constructionism, which proved suitable for my study since it offered me insight into how teachers' knowledge on sexuality and how they translate that knowledge in the teaching of sexuality is historically and culturally constructed. It also provided me with an understanding of what informs the way the teachers teach sexuality education and in so doing what impact it has on the lives of children and the content of sexuality education itself. It also appeared that talking about sex and sexuality-related issues is regarded as taboo.

## 5.2 Main findings

This section presents the summary of the main findings of this study. The findings will be summarized according to the themes that emerged. The following are the themes that emerged in this study:

1. Cultural influence and beliefs versus curriculum necessities.
2. Teachers' fear of parents.
3. Lack of support from the school management teams and appropriate training.
4. Children are too young for the sexuality education content.

## 5.2.1 Cultural influence and beliefs versus curriculum necessities

This theme is a major contributing factor which influences the way the teachers teach sexuality education in the Foundation Phase because it was evident that teachers themselves are the products of social processes, since they also feel uncomfortable talking about or teaching sensitive sexuality-related content. Teachers resort to skipping the topics that they feel will compromise their values or challenge them

rather than acquiring the relevant skills to undertake the effective teaching of sexuality education in the Foundation Phase. Helleve et al. (2009) explain the disregard shown by many teachers for the importance of puberty in the life of girls and boys, and the indecisiveness of departments of education in many countries regarding the offering and implementation of sexuality education, as educational avoidance.

The study found that the values and morals of the teachers' upbringing, including their religious beliefs, have a huge impact on the way they feel about teaching sexuality education in their schools. Very few teachers see the urgency of engaging with this topic; hence, learners are faced with the reality of being victims of sexuality-related issues like rape, pornography, and the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

Once you are called to a tribal authority, there are fines involved and also the citizenship of teachers in the local area under the rule of that tribal authority might be terminated and teachers may be expelled from the community. Definitely teachers will not afford to lose their citizenship and money because they do not conform to the standards of the society. Teachers cited their apprehensions and their facing vilification and bitterness from parents which results in teachers facing complications in teaching sexuality education. The only conversations allowed around sexuality were only about gender roles and responsibilities. Anything more than that was embarrassing and is discouraged. Teachers and parents see non-communication around sexuality as "respect". The socio-economic circumstances of the households also promote silence.

## 5.2.2 Teachers' fear of parents

The study revealed that there is a noticeable fear of parents' reactions directed at teachers in response to the offering of sexuality education to their children. Teachers prefer situations that they are accustomed to instead of unknown ones that will require them to name, for example, sexual organs, and teachers are fearful of the responses from parents. Parents always seek to protect their young from corrupting influences and they give infrequent, inadequate and inept sexuality education to their children, often due to their own ignorance or discomfort. The reality that falls outside of the

socially constructed one is not reality. Children are viewed as in need of protection by parents rather than as people who have the right to relevant information about their own bodies. The societies do not deviate from the ways that they have been constructed and that is why teachers are facing criticism and resentment from parents as well as from other staff members who are the products of the same society. It is ironic because the teachers are aware that their learners are faced with serious health issues like the HIV/AIDS pandemic and sexual abuse, but there are social and cultural forces that shape the way they teach, especially when they have to turn a blind eye to sensitive content.

### 5.2.3 Learners are too young for sexual content

Parents' reticence concerning sexuality issues promotes the vulnerability of their children, thus freeing the perpetrators. The parents' attitude is likely to perpetuate HIV/AIDS and teenage pregnancy, which are common in disadvantaged schools in rural, informal settlements, in low-cost government housing areas and on farms. Usually the rate of unemployment is very high in these areas and most teenagers are sustained by government child support grants. It is evident that some teachers are scared and think that they would be encouraging sexual activity among the learners, which would lead to parents placing blame on them since they feel that it is inappropriate to teach young children about sexuality.

### 5.2.4 Lack of support from school management teams and appropriate training

Teachers lack support from school management teams regarding the buying of resources, which are a pre-requisite in teaching sexuality education in an active or learner-centred classroom. When parents wrestle with them, there is no one else to turn to. There should be policies in place to try to address the ignorance in society and break the silence so that school and home preach the same 'gospel'.
The teacher training does pose a question in terms of the uniformity of the quality of teaching and the learning experiences of both teachers and their learners. Not all teachers possess the relevant teaching qualifications and some of them did not receive proper training.

This means that the learners don't get the same information for the same topic in the same grade in the same year, because teachers don't know how deep they must go with the particular topic. When the sexuality education lesson gets out of hand teachers do not possess the skills to redirect it correctly, and as a result learners are confused by the teachers or teachers themselves are confused. Yet the teachers are trusted sources of information and skills in all education systems, and children of school-entry age are able to judge the reliability and relevance of the knowledge they receive from such sources. This calls for teachers to be vigilant and very careful when answering learners' questions because learners who are directly affected by HIV/AIDS, rape and homosexuality will be embarrassed.

## 5.3 Possible recommendations

- There should be comprehensive programmes in place designed to address teacher incompetency, and empower them with skills and knowledge to address diverse learners' needs, thus striking a balance between the levels at which the teachers teach.

- Society, parents, teachers, NPOs, religious and traditional leaders, and subject advisors need to come together and empower one another with skills and knowledge concerning how and why sexuality education needs to be taught to young learners. This will assist in equipping the learners with the best and latest skills in making good choices in life and thus combating rape, the HIV/AIDS pandemic, and child abduction, as well as breaking the silence around sexuality.

- Within the community there have to be structures with parents, teachers, health workers and a police service component that work in partnership with the schools to make sure that the different cultural and religious belief systems and values are integrated when teaching sexuality in schools.

- There should be programmes to bridge the gap between the trained, semi-trained and untrained teachers to ensure the quality of the teaching and learning that is taking place in the same school, especially where sexuality education content is covered.

- The schools should create a situation to assist parents with parenting and child nurturing skills to enable the parents to understand child adolescent development and set home situations that will support children as students at an early age. This will enable the school also to understand the families better, which will make it easier for the school to decentralize the activities, for example parents take part in their children's learning by making sure homework is done, projects are completed on time, work is monitored and relevant support is given. Parents who lack parenting skills will have to be assisted to fulfil their roles as parents.

- There is a desperate need for schools to organize and take part in awareness campaigns where all sexuality-related challenges are brought to the learners' attention so that they don't become vulnerable, and so that they can break the intergenerational silence regarding sexuality issues.

- The content designers should take the learners' needs into consideration and ensure that there is enough content for all the grades in the Foundation Phase. That content should be clear on how deep or far the teachers should go with the particular topic. With reference to the Grade Two case, there is no sexuality content for the whole year yet learners are victims of sexuality-related issues.

- Life Skills as a subject in the Foundation Phase should be treated like Mathematics and Language, and be considered for progression, so that it is given the attention that is due to it.

## 5.4 Conclusion

In a nutshell the study discovered that the teaching of sexuality education in schools is largely shaped by the cultural and religious beliefs of both the teachers and the community. There is a clear need for a shift in the way parents look at sexuality education, at teachers and at their children, so that poor teaching of sexuality education does not disadvantage learners and will have a negative impact on the children's lives and the entire community. I hope that addressing the inconsistencies in teacher training and qualifications will bear positive results, because we cannot

expect teachers to be efficient if they are not properly trained or getting the support they need timeously.

There has to be a mutual relationship and understanding between teachers and parents, where the teachers and parents are willing to learn from one another, thus reducing the current friction between the school and the community. Such mutual understanding between parents and teachers will allow teachers to modify the way they teach and accommodate or consider the learners' needs irrespective of religious beliefs, sexual choices, or cultural differences. For every cloud there is a silver lining. If we can improve the attitude of the Grade Two teachers who did not have the sexuality education content for Grade Two but took upon themselves to use Grade One and Grade Three content to teach their Grade Twos, the recommendations can be quickly implemented.

Teachers cannot teach sexuality correctly if communities do not ensure that they break the silence around HIV/AIDS, homosexuality, rape, child abduction and other sexuality related issues. Breaking this silence will help young people to change or reduce risky behaviours, thus minimizing their vulnerability to rape, abduction, HIV/AIDS, teenage pregnancy and other sexuality-related challenges, and will also help them to make informed judgments about their sexual lives. It will also help young learners to avoid misguided and wrong information that will make them vulnerable to sexual abuse. Everybody in the community should believe that talking about sexuality need not lead to sexual corruption. This should also start in churches so that people will see that talking about sexuality-related matters in not a sin, because people have the notion that talking about sexuality-related issues is associated with evil supernatural forces.

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**APPENDIX ONE**

## A. CLASSROOM OBSERVATION SHEET

**Codes:**

: 5 = yes

: 4 = throughout the lesson

: 3 =more than required

: 2 =Partly

: 1 =Not at all

1. Is the classroom environment conducive to promoting the teaching of sexuality education?

2. Is the attitude towards the teaching and learning of sexuality education positive in both teachers and learners?

3. Is the sexual content/matter at the level of the grade?

4. Has the teacher been unsure of what to say on teaching certain aspects of sexuality or has the teacher rephrased certain terms around sexuality?

5. Has the teacher shown evidences of discomfort when teaching certain areas of sexuality or when questioned on certain areas by learners?

6. Was the teacher able to manage learners effectively when learners exhibited immature behaviour around certain areas of sexuality

7. Was there a repetition to emphasize important points?

8. Did the teacher at some stage confuse learners?

9. Was the lesson finished in the given time and did he/she reach the objectives?

Interview schedule for teachers

1. What do you really think is the most difficult problem in teaching sexuality education in your grade 3 class?

2. How do you try to solve those problems without compromising the content to be taught in your grade?

3. Do you have relevant resources for each topic?

4. In what ways do other colleagues show their support to Foundation Phase teachers?

5. What is the attitude of the parents towards the content of sexuality education?

6. Are learners free to ask sensitive questions? How do you handle sensitive questions outside the topic of the d

B. Focus group discussion

Case study

Mrs. Mdingi, a grade three teacher came to class one Friday to teach on 'Keeping my body safe'. She had a chart of a naked boy and a girl showing all the parts of the body. After the lesson was over, the educator distributed small pictures of naked boys to girls and girls to boys.

**Questions based on the above case study:**

1. **What type of a teacher do you think Mrs Mdingi is?**

2. **If your child was in Mrs Mdingi's class how would you feel about her distribution of small pictures to the class? Why?**

3. **What, in your opinion, was she promoting? What are your thoughts on what she was promoting?**

4. **If you were to teach keeping my body safe to the above class, how would you go about doing it?**

**LETTER TO THE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL**

<div align="right">

Box 111

Voortrekkerstrand,

Glenmore beach

4279

11 April 2013

</div>

The Principal

Mandisa Primary school

Muster

4278

Dear Sir

**<u>Request to meet with Foundation Phase teachers to gather information for a research</u>**

I am currently studying towards a Masters Degree at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. I am doing research on educator's experiences in the teaching of sexuality education in the Foundation Phase. I hereby request to be allowed to meet with Foundation Phase educators teaching Life skills. I will be meeting these educators by appointment. I will also make classroom visits for lesson observation purposes. The information gathered will be kept confidential.

Thank you

Yours Faithfully

Miss N.C. Ngeleka

………………………….

Contact: 083 523 0652

**APPENDIX THREE**

**A LETTER TO THE TEACHER**

<div align="right">

Box 111

Voortrekkerstrand,

Glenmore beach

4279

11 April 2013

</div>

Foundation Phase teacher

Mandisa Primary school

Munster

4278

Sir / Madam

**<u>Request for lesson observation and interview with you</u>**

Currently I am studying towards a Masters Degree at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. I am doing research on the teacher's experiences in teaching sexuality education in the Foundation Phase. I hereby request to observe some of your life skills lessons and to have an interview with you. The visits will be by appointment. I promise that the information gathered here will be kept confidential.

Thank you

Yours Faithfully

Miss N.C.Ngeleka

……………………

Contact : 0835230652

# APPENDIX FOUR

## INFORMED CONSENT FORM FOR THE TEACHER

I……………………………………………………………….(Teacher) give consent to Miss N.C. Ngeleka to visit my class for the purpose of lesson observation. I have been assured that information will be kept confidential and that my name will not be mentioned in the study or findings. I understand the information gathered is for Miss Ngeleka's study purposes. If I have queries, I will contact her on 083 523 0652.

SIGNATURE                          DATE                          CONTACT NO


 ……………………………………………………………..
        ……………………………..

# APPENDIX FIVE

## ACCEPTANCE LETTER

Mandisa Primary School

Muster

4278

11 April 2013

**TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN**

This is to certify that Miss N.C. Ngeleka has been allowed to do a study at our school from 3013. The arrangements have been made with the teachers in advance to accommodate her on the days indicated.
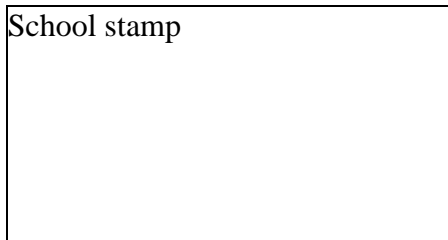
PRINCIPAL'S SIGNATURE                                    DATE


………………………….                               …………………………

| School stamp |
| --- |
| |
| |
| |

# APPENDIX SIX: ETHICAL CLEARANCE

**UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL**
**INYUVESI YAKWAZULU-NATALI**

17 February 2014

Ms Nombuso C Ngeleka (213569581)
School of Education
Edgewood Campus

Protocol reference number: HSS/0774/013M
Project title: Teachers' experiences in teaching sexuality education in the foundation phase in rural schools in the Ugu district

Dear Ms Ngeleka,

**Full Approval – Expedited**

In response to your application dated 02 July 2013, the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee has considered the abovementioned application and the protocol have been granted FULL APPROVAL.
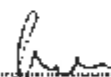
Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment/modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further 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

Dr Shenuka Singh (Chair)

/ms

Cc: Supervisor: Dr V Jairam
cc Academic Leader Research: Dr MN Davids
cc: School Administrator: Mr Thoba Mthembu