

**WHAT KEEPS TEACHERS MOTIVATED? AN  
EXPLORATION OF TEACHERS' DESIRE TO LEARN  
AND DEVELOP IN THEIR PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE**

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## **ABSTRACT**

During this explorative journey, I investigated what keeps teachers motivated to learn and develop in their professional practice. I employed Bell and Gilbert's (1994) model which encapsulates and examines the personal, professional and social aspects of teachers' development. Within this interpretive paradigm, I offered an understanding of what the impetus for change entailed - from their personal and professional self on their practice and what sustains teachers to continue to negotiate the changes in their daily work.

Employing participatory methodology as my methodological research approach, I portray and interpret data that was generated from the teachers' stories. The methods used to produce the data included life story interviews, photographs and drawings. By composing and reconstructing my participants' stories, I show how the personal and professional aspects of teacher learning are interactive and interdependent. By retelling stories we can foreground crucial processes in teachers' development and show what motivates them to learn and develop in their professional practice. Through the reconstructed stories, these particular teachers in this study were able to, through particular social relations and practice, create new meanings and definitions to their professional identity and responsibilities as teachers in a changing schooling context.

The findings of the study indicate that within their school context there were many challenges with which teachers were confronted. However, the teachers in this study chose to uplift, inspire and motivate themselves. Although they followed prescribed policies and curriculum, they engaged in certain relationships and enacted certain practices that went beyond their teaching responsibility.

The teachers' initial frustration and restlessness had led to a personal change in their attitudes, values and beliefs. There was an inner desire to bring about change in the personal meanings and definitions of teacher self. Through particular practices and relationships, new thinking, new ideas, new interests and new meanings about the teacher self were invoked. It was through the creative use of these social spaces that teachers cultivated new ideas and new meanings of the kind of teacher they wanted to be for a South African classroom.

The teachers engaged in innovative ways in terms of their professional development to bring about change. The teachers indicated that their identity as a teacher was linked to being a learner

and a researcher. In addition, the relationships of love and care towards learners brought new meaning to their teacher self. It translated into what they were doing in their relationships with learners and the subject/s they taught - this, became a deeply rewarding engagement between the teacher and their work.

In response to my main research question, what keeps teachers motivated? These particular teachers were not blind to complexities they faced on a regular basis but against all odds worked within the complexity. Imbued with renewed vigour, hope and love they forge ahead.

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## **DECLARATION**

I declare that this dissertation is my own work and it has not previously been submitted for a degree at this or any other university. All reference material contained therein has been duly acknowledged.

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Signature of Student

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Date

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Signature of Supervisor

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Date

## **DEDICATION**

This thesis is dedicated to my mother, Mrs Moganayagie Chembayah and my late dad Mr Kurrappanundan Chembayah. You are the inspiration in my life and have always encouraged me to follow my dreams. Your sacrifice and guidance has contributed greatly to my success.

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## **LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS**

BEd HONS	Bachelor of Education, Honours Degree
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
CPTD	Continuing Professional Teacher Development
C2005	Curriculum 2005
DoE	Department of Education
HED	Higher Education Diploma
IQMS	Integrated Quality Management System
KZN	KwaZulu-Natal
MEd	Master's of Education Degree
NAPTOSA	National Professional Teachers' Organisation of South Africa
NSE	Norms and Standards for Educators
OBE	Outcomes-Based Education
RNCS	Revised National Curriculum Statement
RNS	Revised National Statement
SACE	South African Council for Educators
SADTU	South African Democratic Teachers' Union
SPED	Senior Primary Education Diploma

## CHAPTER 1

### SETTING THE SCENE FOR THIS STUDY

#### **Why do I keep going?**

Why do I keep going on?

If not for the child

Where would I be?

This is God's calling

Just for me

Why do I keep going on?

If not for the child

To see them grow wings

And fly through this life

To see them grow a heart

And find that life is more

Than just about me, myself and I

Why do I keep going on?

If not to change this country, this world

To help mould young minds

To change the eyes of the young

To the evils of the world

To open this generation

To the possibility that the power

To achieve beauty lies in their hands

Why should I stop going on?

There simply isn't a reason

Pam (August, 2010)

#### **1.1 Introduction**

This poem, written by one of the participants of this study who teaches in the Mafukuzela Gandhi Circuit in KwaZulu-Natal (KZN), speaks of one who is committed to 'keep going' and

her political commitment, to the educational experience and social change. Teachers, like Pam, need to adopt different and personal ways for learning and development so that they can change. They need to change in a way to manage the policy shifts being undertaken to reform the South African educational landscape. Therefore, this study asks “*What keeps teachers motivated*” and it engages critically on the topic through the lives of three teachers who teach in one particular school.

At present, teachers in most public schools in KwaZulu-Natal are confronted with complex and challenging issues on a daily basis. Teachers are confronted with “issues that may range from high failure rates (Moletsane, 2004:202) to, as Samuel (2008) and Pithouse (2004), claim issues around policy changes and curriculum transformation.

According to Moletsane (2004:201), “within this present context of schooling teachers are caught in a paradox”. The author states that “on one hand teachers are expected to do something to address each and every crisis and on the other hand our society including the government often articulates feelings of disappointment in the teaching profession and very little faith and respect for what teachers are doing and can do”. This statement captures the essence of what is taking place in schools today.

## **1.2 Political Context**

Under apartheid, White, Indian, Coloured and African children experienced a differentiated education system that was separately administered and funded (Johnson, Monk & Hodges, 2000). Since then, South Africa has gone through a period of unprecedented political change. Changes in the country were the result of political struggles to address issues of equity and justice among the people of South Africa. After the first democratic elections in 1994, there were numerous demands on government to deliver on their promises, especially towards providing conditions for growth and development and unifying a divided society. There was growing pressure to change the former education system.

Against this background, post 1994, saw a proliferation of new policies and changes in the education system and this has had a major impact on education and schools (Ramrathan, 2007). According to several educationists, such as Parker & Adler (2005), Johnson, Monk & Hodges (2000), Ramrathan (2007), and Swart & Oswald (2008), the South African government, post-1994, were concerned and committed with educational reforms.

The South African government, according to Parker & Adler (2005:60), “constructed time frames for the development and implementation of the new curriculum”, and this produced many challenges for teacher education and development. A key challenge for the new government was the transformation of the school curriculum as the government, post-1994, had inherited a complex education system with eighteen departments for different provinces, former homelands and population groups (Harley & Wedekind, 2004). The new constitution, re-constituted a new education landscape, bringing together different teachers and classroom practices under the control of one administrative body in each province. There was a major political shift to transform the “pedagogic identities of existing teachers and to produce new teachers capable of implementing transformation of ideals” (Parker & Adler, 2005:159).

### **1.3 Policy implementations to improve education in South Africa**

Given the legacy of the past system, post1994, policies were implemented to improve education in South Africa. The National Policy Framework for Teacher Education and Development (2007), Curriculum 2005 (C2005) (DoE, 2000) and the Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS) (2005) were crucial in this trajectory of change. All teachers are governed by these policies, as they strive to understand them and promote their implementation in their practice.

### **1.4 The National Policy Framework for teacher education development**

The Department of Education (DoE) explains that the objective of the National Policy Framework for Teacher Education Development (2007:1) was “designed to equip a teaching profession to meet the needs of a democratic South Africa in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and for this policy to bring clarity and coherence to the complex matrix of teacher education activities.... and preparation to self motivated professional development”. In addition, “the policy framework aims to provide an overall strategy for the successful retention and professional development of teachers and also aims to ensure that there is a community of competent teachers dedicated to providing education of a high quality”. One of the principles underlying the policy framework is that it is the responsibility of the teachers to take charge of their own development. This policy looks at teachers and attempts to bring about equity in terms of policy and provision (Saloojee, 2009).

### **1.5 Revised National Curriculum Statement**

C2005 was launched in March 1997. According to Harley & Wedekind (2004), with the

introduction of the new democracy, C2005, based on Outcomes Based Education (OBE), was introduced in schools as a transformative curriculum and signalled a shift from the apartheid curriculum. According to Ramrathan (2007), C2005 was a political strategy to show change. This curriculum focused on a learner-centred approach. There were different competencies and different roles that were expected from teachers. Sayed (2004), points out that the DoE outlined Norms and Standards for Educators (NSE) (2000), providing a detailed account of what a competent teacher is expected to be. “This policy identifies seven roles for teachers in South Africa. They are meant to be learning mediators, interpreters and designers of learning programmes, leaders, administrators and managers, scholars, researchers and life-long learners, play community, citizenship and pastoral role and be learning area specialists” (Sayed, 2004:258).

Predictably, the pressures of changes in the curriculum and the overload experienced by teachers had led to a rejection of transformation policies. Morrow (2007) asserts that the seven roles ignored the conditions in which the majority of teachers in South Africa worked and that as a result they became overwhelmed with their roles and what was expected of them. Swart & Oswald (2008:92) argue that “the aftermath” of a contentious and problematic period of implementation of curriculum policy, such as OBE, was still evident in schools and especially among teachers. The process of trying to bring the South African Education System in line with envisaged transformation policies was clearly complex and challenging.

## **1.6 Contextual reality**

The transformation process, driven by policy changes, remains complex and challenging and has served to complicate the work of teachers. Teachers experience feelings of insecurity about innovation. They encounter anxiety in their role as implementers of policy and when their conventional identities as teachers were challenged they were perplexed (Ramrathan, 2007). In addition, there was the view that schools and teachers were not ready to implement OBE in the school system. Apart from this, the policy was seen as having critical shortcomings. A ready and competent teaching force and a system for continued professional development and monitoring were clearly absent.

What are researchers saying about the inevitable de-motivation of teachers to manage the necessary educational shifts for schooling? Lieberman & Pointer Mace (2008) question what is it about teachers’ work that causes de-motivation? Teachers’ pressures were compounded by issues from all sides. Swart & Oswald (2008:91) argue “the pessimism and negativity about

teachers and change expressed in the public domain focused on what the teacher cannot do". Teachers had to bear the brunt of such negativity, and take the blame for failed implementation of policies. This contributed to, according to Bell & Gilbert (1994:483), "feelings of frustration and further that the frustrations may have led to teachers developing a cynical view towards new initiatives." Little consideration was given to understanding how teachers were expected to respond collectively to challenges in a changing context of schooling (Ramrathan, 2007). Capper, Fitzgerald, Weldon & Wilson (2000) argue that teachers deal with continual change relating to the content and technology of the learning process, and that the knowledge that the teacher is expected to have is therefore, continually changing. Teachers are constrained to learn to change their roles and practices on the basis of reflective practices. This calls for a need for ongoing commitment to development and re-development. Therefore, my study focuses on teacher motivation, exploring what kinds of work teachers want to pursue and what kind of teachers they want to be.

Research corroborates this impression, showing that the transformation process had a negative effect on teachers' morale, commitment and trust. It also revealed that many felt that the new education policies were difficult to implement without suitable resources and trained teachers. According to, Jansen (2001), Samuel (2008) and Swart & Oswald (2008) teachers were of the opinion that the new curriculum made different demands on them, demands for which they were not adequately trained. These new pressures were different to those experienced during the apartheid era, when the policy demands were less challenging and one-dimensional.

Change in the curriculum, Sayed (2004) argues, had a crucial effect on teachers and their work and also brought about significant re-thinking about teachers' work. In addition, the author points out that the new seven roles of teachers, as stipulated in Norms and Standards for Educators (2000), attempted to move teachers away from their customary roles as transmitters of knowledge and recognized, instead, the multi-tasked nature of the teaching profession. He further argues that there was a gap between the seven roles envisaged and the actual classroom practices. Teachers were not able to fulfil their roles as expected, and this led to their demotivation.

The disappearance of the teacher, as Harley & Wedekind (2004) described, summed up the erosion of the teachers' authority in the classroom. In the same vein according to Jansen (2001:243), "the image of the teacher was challenged and undermined....suddenly, and without warning the teacher disappeared, young minds took charge of their own learning and occupied the centre of what was to become a learner centred education". He argues that teachers became

facilitators of a new pedagogy. For many, becoming a facilitator in a learner-centred classroom posed problems of adjustment. In addition, teachers had to do away with the textbook and rely on their own resources which, in many instances, were non-existent. To be fair, these policies were not entirely ill-advised.

However, constant changes in policy created a bewildered teaching force in a context exacerbated by insufficient time for training and crash courses that used an uncritical cascade system. According to Samuel (2008:6), “central authorities in their enthusiasm to ensure the transformation of the education system...tended to demand transformation from the teachers without adequate recognition of where teachers were”. In essence, there was a “mis-match between what teachers were trained for and the demands of their practice” (Harley and Wedekind, 2004:200).

What will keep teachers motivated? NSE (2000) and the SACE (2005) are asking particular things of teachers. Teachers are required to change how they see themselves and are expected to change how they do things. According to Capper, Fitzgerald, Weldon & Wilson (2000), teachers today are required to learn new ways of helping students achieve their goals and teachers, especially teachers like the one who wrote the poem and the differences that are informing her personal and professional self, thinking and actions.

## **1.7 Rationale**

Against this background, I want to understand what keeps teachers motivated in South African schools. My study focuses on teachers who are motivated to engage in their professional practice, given the demands placed on them and the political shifts they confront. I want to understand how teachers forge ahead to continue to do their work and solve everyday challenges in schools in KZN. Nieto (2003:7) argues that we could learn from these teachers about what makes for good teaching and learning. She asks: “What keeps these teachers going in spite of everything?” Similarly, I question how teachers sustain their commitment to teaching in the face of constant adversity and negativity (Pillay, 2003).

I reflected on my experiences of being a teacher that shaped my understanding of who I am. I became interested in undertaking research among practicing teachers and identified three teachers at my school who had many years of teaching experience and whom I had observed over a long period of time as displaying considerable dedication and passion for their work. My decision to focus on three such teachers was derived from a quest to show what motivated these

teachers and how they rationalized their lives and their jobs in relation to their everyday practice in the classroom. My dedication and interest prompted me to tell these particular kinds of stories.

In view of my own understanding of what it means to be a teacher today in a South African school, I have chosen to focus on the lives of three teachers who work in one of the schools in KwaZulu-Natal and who commit themselves to their teacher position and who derive a sense of fulfilment and pleasure from their work as teachers. I want to gain an understanding of what provides these teachers with the impetus to commit themselves to their learning and development to change and engage in new ways to improve their professional practice. I intend to explore the teachers' lives and consider how they construct their personal identity and pursue their daily practices that constitute and give meaning to their lives as teachers.

I feel a responsibility to carry out this research so as to contribute to the professional development of other teachers as well as myself. I want to interpret and conceptualize practicing teachers' narratives of their learning and development and their motivation to do so.

## **1.8 Context of study**

The context of my study is in one public school in the Mafukuzela Gandhi Circuit, in KwaZulu-Natal. The school I chose is well resourced and the facilities are in keeping with most public schools in that district. The school receives limited government funding and only a small percentage of learners pay school fees. Therefore the school embarks on a number of projects such as the Debutante's Ball and Fun Run to sustain it self and to collect much needed funds. The school caters for two classes of about thirty-five students per grade, from grade one to grade seven. Learners attending school are from middle to lower income homes. The medium of instruction at the school is English. Afrikaans, Indian languages and Zulu are also offered as first additional language and second additional languages respectively. The majority of the learners are Indians and there are also African and Coloured learners at the school.

## **1.9 Participants**

I have chosen three practicing teachers who commit themselves and show determination to forge ahead in spite of the daily adversities with which they are confronted. The participants' narratives are discussed in chapter 4.

## **1.10 Research questions**

The general research question that guides this study is: What keeps teachers motivated?

To elucidate this, I have chosen two specific critical questions:

1.10.1 What is the impetus for change in one's professional practice, as derived from the **personal self**?

1.10.2 What is the impetus for change in one's professional practice, as derived from the **professional self**?

By posing these critical questions, I want to understand the interaction between the personal and professional self. I want to understand what keeps teachers motivated by focusing on teachers' own voices and stories. For the first critical question, I question what happens at the personal level to propel teachers to change. Is it their attitudes, beliefs and values that contribute to teachers' need to engage meaningfully with their professional practice?

For the second critical question, I explore how teachers work and how they construct and disseminate knowledge, I look at collegial influences, such as belonging to a community of teachers, their understanding of their responsibility as teachers that contribute and provide the impetus for change in their professional practice

## **1.11 Methodology**

### **1.11.1 Participatory methodology**

In this study, I employ the participatory approach to portray and interpret three teachers' lived experiences and understand how these experiences might have led to their being motivated. Through this methodology, I explore the meanings teachers give to themselves. What inspires them to continue to commit themselves to teaching, given that teachers seem to experience a sense of fulfilment and pleasure in spite of adversity and bad publicity (Pillay, 2003). The reason for choosing the participatory approach is that the study wishes to foreground teachers' voice, to understand teacher motivation. Narrative methods such as life story interviews, drawings and photographs were used to gather data about these teachers' lives and experiences (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). The methods provide the rich data and show how these particular teachers learn and develop in their professional practice.

## **1.12 The thesis overview**

It is in the context of these issues that this study explores the impetus for change in the teachers' professional practices as derived from both the personal self and from the professional self.

### **Chapter 1**

In this chapter the study introduces the research topic, political context, policies implemented, rationale and the significance of the research, as to what keeps teachers motivated. It is an exploration of teachers' desires to learn and develop in their professional practice in relation to the changes the country was undergoing in terms of education. There was a need for teachers to engage in new learning and development to manage these changes and the study provides the context for this exploration.

### **Chapter 2**

The first section, Section A, provides a literature review on teacher professional development as part of continuing professional development for teachers' learning and development. Section B of this chapter looks at factors affecting teacher motivation, the definition of motivation and discusses teacher motivation in relation to teacher learning and development. Section C outlines the theoretical and conceptual framework of the study.

### **Chapter 3**

This chapter outlines the research methodology used in this study. I describe the methods used to produce data and indicate how the data was analysed. Ethical considerations were also discussed in this chapter.

### **Chapter 4**

This chapter details the teachers' narratives of their lived experiences of what it means to teach in a South African school.

### **Chapter 5**

This chapter provides a critical discussion of the narratives, to elucidate the impetus for change in the teachers' professional practice from the personal self.

## Chapter 6

In this chapter the impetus for change in one's professional practice from the professional self is considered.

## Chapter 7

Conclusion: The study attempts to sum up the perspectives on the research questions as gleaned from the data, and suggests recommendations for transformation.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

My study is about what keeps teachers motivated. It is an exploration of teachers' desire to learn and develop in their professional practice. I want to understand the motivation of practicing teachers within their continuing professional development (CPD). Fraser, Kennedy, Reid & Mckinney (2007:154) states "the importance of CPD for the teaching profession is increasingly acknowledged in countries throughout the world", including South Africa. Therefore, within this context teacher learning and development are important dimensions for understanding teacher motivation. I want to understand what these two important concepts for practicing teachers are in relation to their work and how one sustains one's commitment to it. The first section looks at the concepts of teacher learning and what researchers have written about them.

The second section focuses on factors affecting teacher motivation, an explanation of motivation and finally teacher motivation in relation to teacher learning and development. The third section outlines the theoretical framework of the study.

#### **2.2 Section A:**

##### **2.2.1 Teacher learning and professional development leading to teacher change**

In this literature review, I examine the concepts of teacher learning and professional development.

In order to understand teacher motivation, we need to define teacher learning and development. According to Evans (2002:130), "defining or interpreting teacher development is essential to those who are concerned to categorize work in the field within clear parameters". Hargreaves (1994), Evans (2002) and Fraser et al. (2007) argue that the concept of teacher development is unclear and vague and that little attention is directed to it. There is a need for further critical discussion so that definitions of teacher development may be accepted, rejected or amended.

Evans (2002:130) has come up with her own interpretation and definition of teacher development. She states that "teacher development involves two distinct aspects of teachers' professional lives: professionalism and professionality". She argues "Professionalism is the

status-related elements of a teacher's work and professionalism may be seen as the ideological, attitudinal, intellectual and epistemological dimensions related to the practice of the profession". In addition, Evans (2002) identifies two elements of teacher development: attitudinal and functional development. Each element reflects change. Attitudinal development, according to Evans (2002), is seen as a process whereby teachers' attitude to their work is modified. Functional development may be seen as a process whereby teachers' professional performance may be improved. Further, attitudinal development, Evans points out, incorporate two change features: intellectual and motivational. These, she argues refers to teachers' development in relation to their intellect and their motivation. For instance a teacher who becomes more reflective and analytical would be manifesting intellectual development and one who becomes highly motivated would be manifesting motivational development (Evans, 2002).

Fraser et al. (2007:157), in their study "explore the idea of teachers as learners by discussing accounts of learning and the process of continuing professional development (CPD)". They examine existing models of professional learning and development and suggest that "teachers' *professional learning*, whether intuitive or deliberate, individual or social, result in specific changes in the professional knowledge, skills, attitudes, beliefs or actions of teachers and *teachers professional development*, takes place over a longer period of time, resulting in qualitative shifts in aspects of teachers' professionalism".

Evans (2002:134) states that "teacher development is an individualized process while one teacher may develop practice from knowledge gained at courses and another may gain nothing from the course but may be influenced through discussions with colleagues". She further states that teacher development occurs when one recognizes weaknesses in their practice.

Guskey (2000, cited in Moletsane, 2004), defines professional development as involving systematic efforts to bring about change in the classroom practices of teachers, in their attitudes and beliefs and in the learning outcomes of the students.

At this point there is a need to, according to Fraser et al. (2007:157), locate both professional learning and professional development within a more general concept of "teacher change". They suggest that "teacher change" can be described in relation to learning, development, socialization, growth, improvement, implementation of something new or different, cognitive and affective change, and self study. According to them, "forms of CPD and professional learning may therefore be better understood as manifestations of particular change strategies and therefore professional change can come about through a process of learning between teacher

knowledge, experience and beliefs and in addition their professional actions”. I am arguing that there are teachers who are de-motivated and cannot make the change but yet on the other hand there are teachers who need to learn and develop so that they can change. In other words, there are teachers who can manage policy shifts and for them learning and development is taking place and they can make the change.

Sikes, Measor & Woods (1985) consider how teachers adapt or seek to change situations, and how they manage their roles and constraints. They argue that teachers personally adjust to any situation. In their study, the concept of “critical phases” has emerged as an important one, where particular events are deemed as important in the trajectory of teachers’ careers and in the development of their identities. This research indicates that there are “critical incidents” in an individual’s life around which important decisions revolve. These often involve selecting particular kinds of actions, which lead in a particular direction. Strauss (1959, cited in Sikes, Measor & Woods, 1985), refers to these critical incidents as “turning points”. They may take different forms, with the occurrence of misalignment, surprise, shock, anxiety, tension, or self-questioning leading to the attempt to “try out a new self”. The issues raised are not new to teaching; they have been raised many decades ago as is evident in their study.

In a study on experienced science teachers’ learning, in the context of Education Innovation, Henze, Van Driel & Verloop (2009:197) found that “learning and development took place in different ways”. They found that different types of professional development activities should be offered, from which teachers can choose their preferred way of learning. Development seems to take place in various ways. For instance, the study shows that teachers may join regional networks, become designers of educational materials, or become teacher educators and researchers. So there was clearly something in their professional practice that motivated these teachers to change and to improve their performance as teachers.

An essential finding in Swart & Oswald’s (2008) study is that the participants indicated that they regard their identity as teachers to be directly linked to the challenges of being a learner in a changing South African education system. They further added that change in the education system calls for re-learning of their professional teacher identity and require the teacher to develop new understandings of their workplace community. “Changes, thus implies a journey of learning” (Swart & Oswald, 2008:96). So experienced teachers have become apprentices in learning, in order to accommodate the dynamic diverse learning needs of the children in their classrooms and which resulted in a changed teacher identity.

## **2.3 Section B:**

### **2.3.1 Factors affecting Teacher Motivation**

There is a major focus on the deterioration of teachers' roles, and of the de-professionalization of teachers, which leads to teacher de-motivation. Hargreaves (1994:117) is a key exponent in this field, "stating that many reforms reduce teachers to the status of low-level employees". Education reformers have responded to the crisis in education by offering solutions that either ignore the roles of teachers in preparing learners to be active and critical or they suggest reforms that ignore the intelligence, judgment and experience that teachers might bring to the fore. These views are elaborated on by Aronowitz & Giroux (1985).

The main function of teachers today seems to be to implement reforms and policies in compliance with the authorities. As Jansen (2001:243) points out, "the sole requirement of teachers was bureaucratic and political compliance with state education". While reforms may be well intentioned, they may also undermine the historical and cultural specificity of school life. Thus, there is a failure to recognize the central, mediating role that teachers could play. There is a strong criticism that, "today, teaching is technicised and standardized in the interest of efficiency and management" (Hargreaves, 1994:117) and in addition, he states teachers' work is becoming routinised and de-skilled, more like de-graded work of manual workers. Teachers are deemed less than the professionals that they are supposed to be. Critical attention is drawn to the "increasing tendency to reduce teacher autonomy in the development and planning of curricula and this is evident in the production of pre-packaged curriculum materials that contribute to a form of de-skilling among teachers. The pre packaged curriculum is dictated by people who are removed from the context of the classroom" (Aronowitz & Giroux 1985:28).

Aronowitz & Giroux (1985:23) also argue that "pedagogy is about implementation and teaching is technicised and standardised in the interest of efficiency and management" and further that "a uniform and standardized curriculum, that teachers are expected to implement, ignores the cultural diversity, historical background of schools, and the challenges and difficulties of dealing with less-privileged learners". Crucially, according to Aronowitz & Giroux (1985:29), the "notion that students come from different histories, different experiences, linguistic practices, cultures and talents are ignored".

In addition, there is the further criticism, by experts such as Hargreaves (1994:118) "that teachers' work has become increasingly intensified, with teachers being expected to respond to greater pressures and to comply with multiple innovations" and in addition he states, "teachers

are pre-occupied with administrative, assessment tasks and have little time to connect with their students” and he states emphatically that “the intensification of teacher’s work leads to lack of time to re-tool and keep abreast in one’s field; it creates chronic and persistent overload and leads to an impoverishment in the quality of service”. Handling complex issues in the class and outside the class make teachers exhausted and impacts negatively on the success of teachers. Therefore, motivation has a vital role in the job of teaching.

### **2.3.2 Definitions of Motivation**

Motivation is defined as “some kind of internal drive which pushes someone to do things in order to achieve something” and “motivation is used to define the success or failure of any task and undertaking” (Suslu, 2006). The author argues that to be motivated means to be moved to do something and that unlike unmotivated people who have lost impetus and inspiration, motivated people are energized and activated to the end of their task. In addition, he states that “interest, curiosity or a desire to achieve are the key factors that compose motivated people and arousing interest is not enough to be motivated as this interest needs to be sustained and therefore states that motivation can be intrinsic or extrinsic”.

Fritz & Smit (2008) argue that intrinsic motivation is when people have choices about how to complete tasks in their activities, opportunities for self direction and when they receive feedback. Carr (2005, cited in Fritz & Smit, 2008) argues that intrinsic motivation relates to self esteem which is how the individual looks at themselves and that people with a high self esteem will succeed with tasks that they undertake.

### **2.3.3 Teacher Motivation**

What are researchers saying about teacher motivation? In reviewing the literature, issues that were fore-grounded against the background of this research, I explored how teachers in our context are motivated and still forge ahead and appear to teach with commitment, enthusiasm and dedication. In other words, what keeps teachers motivated and what propels them to learn and develop in their professional practice.

Fritz & Smit (2008) argue that teachers in South Africa may feel trapped, with little opportunity to redeem themselves and to feel empowered, if they are constantly criticized and scrutinized. We need to move away from research that is fixated on negative stories and focus on alternative stories, stories that empower, enrich and motivate. There is clearly a need to focus on

alternative discourses, to change the education landscape in South Africa.

Nieto (2003:7), in her studies, asks: “What keeps dedicated teachers in the classroom and what helps good public school teachers to persevere, in spite of all the deprivation and challenges?” Her work suggests a ‘counter narrative’ to what it conventionally means to be a teacher. For her study, she looked at teachers who believed in the young people they taught. She believes that, after working with practicing teachers, she has come “almost full circle”. As Nieto (2003:19) points out:

*My faith in the power of teachers is not what it was when I first began teaching. It is now tempered by deeper understanding of the limits of personal commitment and hard work on the part of the individual teachers. I believe more strongly than ever in the power of teachers... Teachers are active agents whose words and deeds change lives and mould the future for better or worse.*

Hooks (1994) argues that teacher motivation for her stems from the fact that it was crucial for her to be an active participant and not a passive consumer in the classroom. In addition, she points out, education can only be liberatory if we all claim knowledge of it. This system, she argued called for active participants, to link awareness with practice and to focus on holistic approach to learning whereby knowledge was not derived only from books but how to live in the world. Similarly, Nieto (2003) in her study, also stated that teachers need to think deeply about the craft of teaching and the process of learning and that they are not just technicians who write good lesson plans and use collaborative groups effectively, although this is a part of what they do. She further adds that this is a serious undertaking that requires attention and thought and teachers must devote time and energy to their teaching and development. The author argues that they must have expertise and confidence in the work they do and teachers must engage in writing, research and work with others, to produce curricula and must engage in reflection and action, to empower students with skills and knowledge.

In her study, Pithouse (2003) draws from Dewey’s (1934) construct of artistic experience as a theoretical framework on which to build an appropriate conceptualization of the kind of teaching that sustains personal satisfaction. She argues that Dewey makes it clear that the work of art is not the finished piece that is produced by the artist but rather sees the work of art as an active artistic experience from beginning to completion.

Pithouse (2004) also draws from Dewey’s conceptualization that artistic experiences are forms of everyday life experiences, and that certain teaching experiences are memorable because they

magnify certain aspects of our lives as teachers, just as artistic experiences shed light on daily life. Therefore, she maintains that these artistic experiences feed a teacher's professional and operational growth. Similarly, I want to explore the hunger teachers have for their subject matter and to show how they had transformed their teaching experience into artistic experiences. In addition, Dewey (1934) also argues that the artist's hunger to show her love for her subject matter to her audience can transform an unremarkable experience into an artistic experience. In addition, a useful theoretical tool that can help to think about teacher learning is Dewey's (1963:25) notion of "educative experience". He argues that there is an "organic connection" between personal experience and education and further states that education through experience does not mean all experiences are educative. He believes an experience that obstructs or harms the development of further learning can be mis-educative.

Pillay and Govinden (2007) highlight the way teachers may work creatively within the constraints of the South African education system and against negative impressions that present counter-narratives of teacher's success, resistance and inventiveness. Through stories they recognize the impetus for change and transformation. In other words, there are powerful ways in which teachers can recreate themselves and become agents of change. They argue change and movement may form the very basis on how these teachers move from what is, to what could be.

#### **2.3.4 Theories and models of teacher learning and development**

Evans (2002) uses a conceptual framework and unpacks other researchers' definitions of teacher development and then interprets her own version. In contrast Maistry (2008) draws from Wenger's "community of practice" framework and one of the assumptions from this model is that learning will be enhanced by participation in a community practice. In another study, Shulman (2004) argues that efforts at schools must create conditions for teacher learning as well as student learning and the main findings of his study is that collaboration, reflection and deliberation helps teachers to work together and supplement each other's knowledge. On the other hand, Lieberman and Pointer Mace (2008) focus on the re-conceptualisation of professional learning where teachers are involved in learning communities. Guskey (2002), portrays the sequence of events from professional development experiences to the change in teachers' attitudes and perceptions. His model of teacher change is that professional development leads to change in teacher's classroom practice, change in student learning and change in teacher's beliefs and attitudes. One of the findings of this study is not the professional development but the experience of succeeding that changes teacher's attitudes and

beliefs. In their study Fraser et al. (2007) explores the idea of teachers as learners by looking at a range of accounts of teacher learning and the process of continuing professional development (CPD). Actually, Fraser et al. (2007:157) states “given the complexities of professional development, professional learning and professional change, it is argued that any evaluation or interrogation of CPD programmes and models need to be able to take into account the range of complex factors impacting CPD. We therefore suggest a composite framework drawing on three different ways of understanding CPD”. He further adds “the importance of using three different lenses is the combined insight gained is more relevant and important than using one framework”. The main finding of this study is that a socio- cultural interpretation of teacher learning and change is offered and a rich and varied landscape for teacher development is emerging. This study is similar to Bell & Gilbert’s (1994) aspects of professional learning which includes personal, social and professional aspects that are inter-related. In other words, these two studies are capturing similar dimensions as Fraser et al.(2007:160) argues “one of the key reasons for viewing models of professional learning through different lenses is that it allows us to look at individual examples in a more comprehensive and complex manner”.

Therefore, for this study I am arguing for Bell & Gilbert’s (1994) three aspects of professional learning related to teacher motivation and the impetus for change. In the next section, I will discuss their model of professional development.

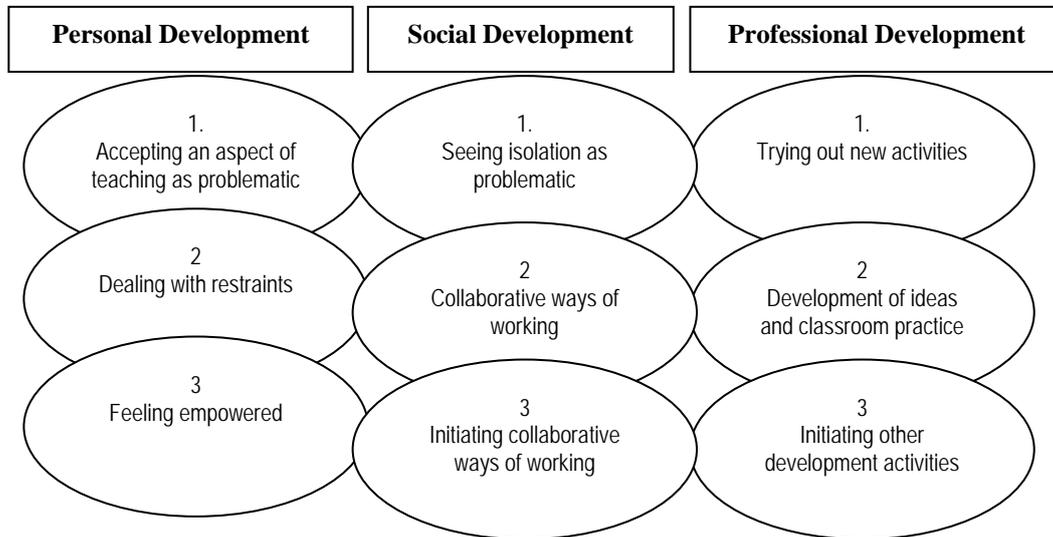
### **2.3.5 Bell and Gilbert’s model of professional development**

I have selected to use as part of my conceptual lens, Bell & Gilbert’s model that was used in New Zealand over a three-year period. This model is based on the personal, social and professional development of the teacher. Other researchers foreground aspects of teacher development but Bell & Gilbert encapsulates and examines different aspects into levels thereby giving a more ‘rounded’ three dimensional interpretation. Basically their model discusses teacher development as professional, personal and social development and is categorized into nine levels.

Bell and Gilbert’s model describes the finding on teacher development in which a few science teachers in New Zealand began developing their teaching to include learners’ thinking and the constructivist view of learning.

A diagrammatic representation of the model is given below.

### Teacher Development



**Adapted from Bell & Gilbert (1994:486)**

Most teachers are concerned about their teaching and are continuously finding various, innovative and new ways to improve students' learning. According to Bell and Gilbert (1994), these teachers, with their commitment to professional development, attend teacher development workshops, meetings and conferences, and in-service courses. They also study for university qualifications, talk with other teachers or read professional articles to get new ideas. However, many teachers feel a sense of frustration when they are unable to experiment with new teaching activities, or devise new curriculum materials, even after attending in-service courses. These teachers find themselves constrained to teach in the same way that they have been accustomed to, often using new materials but adapting them to traditional ways. So the issue, as Bell and Gilbert (1994: 483) argue, is "how to organize professional practice and development programmes in such a way that supports change". I am using Bell & Gilbert's three aspects of professional learning to understand the complexity of professional development, professional learning and teacher change.

#### **2.3.6 Personal development: Bell & Gilbert's Framework**

The impetus for change here originates within the personal aspect of professional development, and may be encouraged or restrained by a number of factors. These factors relate to attitudes, beliefs and values that contribute to a teacher's identity, and this in turn, contributes to teacher

confidence. According to Bell and Gilbert's Framework, there is something happening at the personal level that prompts one to say: "I can better myself". This tendency motivates teachers to change (Bell and Gilbert, 1994).

Bell & Gilbert (1994:485), in acknowledging the need for change, argue that "teachers are seeking new teaching suggestions that work and new theoretical perspectives from which to think about their teaching" and that teachers want to feel better about themselves as teachers. This personal development may have been as a result of school development discussions and initiatives or as a result of the individual teacher's deliberation.

### **2.3.7 Social development: Bell & Gilbert's Framework**

Presently in schools, instead of building a culture of professional learning, teachers are faced with a "culture of compliance" (Lieberman and Pointer Mace 2008:227). In other words, instead of teachers learning from their colleagues, they are given a script that restricts them to a narrow curriculum, often unsuitable to their classrooms. Instead, teachers are given a one-size-fits-all set of professional workshops that deny them variability on how to teach. This prevents teachers from supporting their peers and deepening their knowledge about students. However, I feel that much can be done to support a different way of thinking about professional development. The findings in many studies show that teachers can develop in a community, and can learn how to facilitate the learning of others. Learning communities in schools and networks across schools are an important and viable way of thinking differently about professional development.

### **2.3.8 Professional development: Bell & Gilbert's Framework**

According to this dimension, teachers adopt the role of researcher as they value finding new and more information. In addition, they also adopt roles as learners, and view their professional development as learning and not as being remedial. Teachers, in this way, engage in cognitive development and the development of classroom practice. Cognitive development, according to Bell & Gilbert (1994) includes:

- Clarifying existing concepts and beliefs.
- Obtaining an input of new information by listening and reading.
- Constructing new understanding by linking new information with the existing ideas.

With the respect to the development and improvement of their classroom practice, teachers may:

- Obtain new suggestions for their activities
- Consider and plan alternative strategies for use in their classrooms.
- Adapt and use the new activities in the classroom.

Therefore, within the interpretive paradigm in which my study is located, I want to use Bell & Gilbert's (1994) model to understand teacher motivation from three dimensions: personal; social and professional. In other words, how do teachers learn and develop in their professional practice?

## **2.4 SECTION C: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

I wanted to read Bell & Gilbert's (1994) model from the interpretive paradigm which allowed me to understand three dimensions of development. I wanted to understand how teachers make sense of their personal; social and professional development.

Cohen, Manion & Morrison (2009) refers to the research paradigm as the way of looking at the world. A paradigm they maintain can be defined as the lens or set of beliefs and assumptions through which we look at the world. The main paradigms are the positivist, interpretive and the critical paradigms. Cohen, Manion & Morrison (2009:26) state that within positivist paradigm, researchers "strive for objectivity, measurability, patterning, construction of laws, rules of behavior and observed phenomena (context and participants) is important". According to them, the interpretive / constructivist approaches have the intention of understanding the world of human experience whereby meanings and interpretation are important. In the critical education paradigm, according to Cohen, Manion & Morrison (2009:26) "expressed intention is deliberately political and the emancipation of individual is key and the main issue is not to understand situations but to change them". In my study, I want to understand the individual teacher's world and their experiences.

### **2.4.1 Interpretive paradigm**

Cohen, Manion & Morrison (2009: 21) maintain that the interpretive paradigm is characterized by a concern for the individual and the central essence of this paradigm is to understand the world of the human experience. Therefore, the interpretative paradigm will allow me to understand how teachers make sense of their personal and professional development and the social spaces in which teachers choose to create new ideas for engaging with change. In addition, I want to understand how teachers make sense of the need to change in order to

improve and relate to change in their work environment. My focus is what motivates teachers to learn and develop in order to improve their work given all the changes that are taking place. I am arguing that there is a personal and professional impetus to learn and develop. Bell & Gilbert's (1994) aspects of teacher learning will help me understand how teachers learn and develop in their professional practice.

In this study, the main purpose is to understand what keeps teachers motivated and there will be minimal manipulation of participant's responses through the use of different qualitative techniques to acquire verbal descriptions. The aim of each of the techniques is to capture the richness and the complexity of the behaviour that occurs in natural settings from the participant's perspective Schumacher & McMillan (1993). In this study, I use Bell & Gilbert's (1994) model which is being used from the interpretive paradigm that calls for a particular kind of methodology. I used a methodology that would help me produce rich data and which would cover the personal, social and professional development. Therefore, in order to capture the rich and complex issues that motivation requires, I used the participatory methodology.

#### **2.4.2 Participatory methodology**

This methodology offers the most appropriate way of representing and understanding the learning experiences and opportunities of practicing teachers. In my study, with the three teachers, I hoped to show how they resisted and revised as Richie and Wilson (2000:89) argued "the limiting caricature – like images of teaching and learning that surrounded them". I therefore hope to understand what the impetus for change from the personal and professional self in their professional practice was and what motivated and sustains teachers to continue to rewrite and redefine their teacher self for improving and changing their professional practice. I had chosen life story interviews, photographs and drawings as particular kinds of data that would provide me with a rich understanding of the teachers' desire to improve themselves and these methods would be discussed in the methodology chapter.

#### **2.5 Conclusion**

In this chapter, I presented, in the first section, different concepts and ideas about teacher learning and development. The findings were discussed within continuing professional development. The second section looked at teacher motivation in relation to teacher learning and development. The third section outlined the theoretical framework for this study.

In the next chapter, I discuss the research methodology, which I developed for this study on, “what keeps teachers motivated”.

## CHAPTER 3

### METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I outline the methodology that I had selected for the study. Through the exploration of the lived experiences of three teachers, I offer an understanding of what gives them the impetus to learn and develop and re-think their professional practice. My research is, therefore, an attempt to portray, interpret and conceptualize teachers' stories of their teaching experience. I want to focus on what motivates them in their work. In this way, I hope that my research offers an understanding that would lead to a better [teacher] world (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000:61). In South Africa, this world presently may be described as complex and challenging and that teachers are confronted with issues on a daily basis. Issues range from high failure rates (Moletsane, 2004) to issues around policy changes and transformation (Pithouse, 2004). Many teachers are frustrated as Bell & Gilbert (1994:483) point out "that even after attending an in-service course for example, they feel unable to use the new teaching activities, the new curriculum materials or new content knowledge to improve the learning of their students". Within this context I want to understand what keeps teachers motivated to learn and develop in their professional practice.

#### 3.2 Questions to be answered in the research

The critical questions to be asked in this study are:

- What is the impetus for change in one's professional practice from the personal self? I explore what happens at the personal level to propel teachers to change. Is it their attitudes, beliefs and values that contribute to their teacher identity and confidence?
- What is the impetus for change in one's professional practice from the professional self? This will include how they 'see' themselves as teachers and as a member belonging to a community of teachers, their knowledge, attitudes and values.

### **3.3. Interpretive Paradigm**

This study locates itself within the interpretive paradigm. The interpretive paradigm will allow me to understand, how the teachers make meaning of their lives as teachers. According to Cohen, Manion & Morrison (2009:21) the interpretive paradigm is characterised by a concern for the individual and that the central essence is to understand the world of the human experience. In my study the area of concern was the teacher. I needed to understand the complex and challenging world of their human experiences from the teachers themselves. Within the interpretive paradigm, I tried to understand how teachers think and feel and what the impetus for change was, from the personal and professional self.

In this study, I used Bell & Gilbert's (1994) model of teacher learning, which was being used from the interpretive paradigm and that called for a particular kind of methodology. I used a methodology that produced rich data and covered the personal, social and the professional development. Therefore in order to capture the rich and complex issues that my study required, I used the participatory methodology. The participatory methodology offered the most appropriate way of representing and understanding the learning experiences of the teachers.

### **3.4 Participatory Methodology**

In this section, I discuss reasons for choosing the participatory methodology as a research methodology and also to elaborate on the research methods chosen. I chose the participatory methodology as it was the most appropriate methodology in assisting me to gather data for my study. The participatory methodology allowed for a deeper understanding of what was shaping and constructing the teachers as part of their professional growth. This participatory world view allows as Heron & Reason (1997) claim researchers to join with fellow human beings in collaborative forms of inquiry. Therefore in this study, I offered teachers opportunities to work collaboratively to tell their stories so that I was able to explore and make sense of their teacher self. My intention was to allow the teachers to talk openly and freely about their experiences.

Heron & Reason (1997) claim that by means of collaboration, the participants' views are taken as a contribution to understanding the situation and that the teacher's voices are heard. In this study the participatory methodology allowed for adequate dialogue between the researcher and the teachers thus ensuring that the teachers' voices were heard. Within this methodology it allowed the researcher to join with fellow humans with the view of understanding their experiences. Hamilton, Smith & Worthington (2008), claim that the participants' world is interpreted and made personally meaningful by the researcher. Therefore in my study this

methodology allowed me to portray and interpret the teachers' experiences and to understand what motivated the teachers to learn and develop.

According to Katsui (2007) within the participatory methodology, the researched people are active participants rather than passive objects of the research and that they share their inputs based on their own experience with the intention of contributing towards a sustainable and positive change. Similarly, the teachers in my study were active participants who shared their stories and constructed their personal and professional identity as teachers.

In my study, the research methods I chose helped me to gather relevant data from the teachers. The methods I chose included life stories interviews, drawings and photographs.

### **3.5. Research methods**

According to Connelly & Clandinin (1990:5), "a number of different methods of data generation are possible as the researcher and participants work in a collaborative relationship". In this study, the research methods used were life story interviews, drawings and photographs. These methods highlight different dimensions and angles to the teachers' personal and professional identities which assist me in gathering relevant data in understanding how they engaged in reconstructing their lives in their school setting. In the next section, I discuss the three types of research methods used in my study.

#### **3.5.1. Life story interviews**

According to Plummer (2001:17), "the world is crammed of human personal documents". He maintains that people keep diaries, send letters, take photographs, write letters, make tapes and record personal dreams. All of these expressions of personal life are thrown out into the world by millions and they are all, in the broadest sense, "documents of life".

At the heart of personal document research is the life story, an account of one person's life in his or her own words. Life stories come through biographies, letters, journals, interviews, and obituaries. Their stories can also exist in many forms, short or long, past or future, specific and general, ordinary and extraordinary. Plummer (2001:19) maintains that life stories are "denoted by a plethora of terms: life stories, life histories, life narratives and self stories".

In addition, Plummer points out that in a life story interview, the interviewee is the storyteller, the narrator of the story being told, whereas the interviewer is a guide in this process. The two

become composers or collaborators in constructing a story. A life story is a narrative about a specific or significant aspect of a teacher's life. "A life story may revolve around a turning point in one's life" (Chase, 2005:652). In the same vein, I had chosen the life story for this study to highlight a significant aspect of the teachers' lives and that aspect was the participants' teacher training and their teaching experiences. A story is the fundamental way in which people capture their experience. Dewey (1963:25) aptly explains that "human beings enter into experiences and their experiences, in turn, do something to them". Therefore, the main methodological strategy in my study was the life story interviews used to generate data about the teachers' lives and experiences (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990).

How do researchers invite interviewees to become narrators and to tell their stories? Researchers should frame the interviews with broad questions about the focus of study. It requires preparation before the interviews, and knowing what is "story worthy" in the researcher's setting? Accordingly, the researcher should develop broad questions that invite others to tell their stories (Chase, 2005). For this study, I interviewed three teachers in one school. The interviews were un-structured and I had basically prompted the teachers with a few leading questions and allowed them to narrate their stories about a specific period in their lives, namely their teacher training and their teaching careers. Initially, I was concerned that the teachers may feel uncomfortable about relating their stories to me. However, as the interviews progressed, the teachers felt relaxed and were open about various aspects of their lives as teachers.

The interview took place individually with each teacher in his or her classroom after actual teacher contact time. The procedure involved three, one-hour sessions with each teacher, which was recorded on tape. The interviews contained questions regarding their professional training, early experiences as teachers and their roles and responsibilities as teachers. I also probed how and why my participants came to tell their stories in a particular manner, time and place, and what some of the consequences and meanings of their story telling were. Another research method that I used was the use of photographs.

### **3.5.2 Photographs**

The importance of image cannot be over-stated. According to Clandinin (2007:281), "What use is research without image and story"? Visual inquiry, she argues, affords another layer of meaning to research. . In addition they state "experiences differ from person to person, and that each has a different angle of vision that touches on common world". As individuals compose

their lives they tell stories of those experiences. One way in which individuals tell their stories is through the photographs they take and through photographs that others take of them. Plummer (2007:59) correctly states that photographs have become “central life documents”. By selecting and using photographs, I was able to make meaning of the participants’ experiences visually and find out what matters to them through the photographs. It also meant that teachers were able to include in the story symbols that were produced by them and open to multiple and different interpretations (Pillay, 2003).

Visual methodologies, according to Wood, Olivier and de Lange (2009:111), “allow participants to communicate in a meaningful way about the issues they experience in their lives” and that these are therapeutic as the participants are fully involved and engage in fun activities. Furthermore, they state teachers choose photographs from their school album records. These could be photographs of their work space, or of new ideas that they implement in their classrooms. For instance, they could be photographs of individuals, or paintings, or of some object that shows that they are motivated and driven. In my study, photographs from the school records were chosen to illustrate how these particular teachers make meanings of their lives.

The use of photographs was relevant as it gave the teachers an opportunity to look at appropriate photographs that gave meanings to the teacher self. Their photographs invoked memories and enabled the participants to tell their stories and share their experiences as teachers. The photographs promoted dialogue and discussions on what it means to be a teacher. It fitted well within the participatory methodology as it allowed the researcher to understand the participants’ world by becoming part of it. Their images allowed for a better understanding of the teacher self. I probed the choice of photographs and the meanings they conveyed. Researchers have found that photographs are a powerful tool to encourage active participation from teachers. Weber (2004) argues that we see and communicate through images and images create meanings.

### **3.5.3 Drawings**

In my study, drawings were the final research method used to collect data. The use of drawings was to create narrative portraits of the three teachers and this “enabled me to go beyond the spoken word and offer a different kind of description of their world in which they happened to be” (Pillay 2003:72). The issue of teacher voice was also critical and the research methods chosen allowed for the participants’ voice to be fore-grounded.

I used drawings to capture particular experiences of practicing teachers in and through a different strategy beyond the discourse of language. In this study, drawings were used to

complement the life story interviews. The teachers' images and feelings were depicted in the drawings. The use of drawings allowed me to gain an insight and access to their thinking and their world. Their drawings enhanced and made available less clearly available practices and discourses that teachers adopted in their lives as teachers. The drawings appealed to the teachers as they were allowed to be creative and express themselves freely. Although the participants' voice remained dominant, the use of drawings allowed for a more relaxed, calm and fun atmosphere. Through drawings the participants were allowed to convey issues that were important to them and the drawings also captured particular moments of the teachers' lives. Therefore a careful prompt encouraged the participants to explore, by means of drawings aspects of their life that was meaningful to them. The drawings fitted well within the participatory methodology as it allowed the participants to express themselves freely and to give meaning to their teacher self. It was participatory in nature as both the researcher and the participants were able to construct and understand what was important to them.

### **3.6 Ethical considerations**

Ethical considerations are a fundamental part of the entire research process and as Clandinin & Connelly (2000:170) state "needs to be narrated over the entire research process". The main ethical issues, according to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2009:382), "revolve around informed consent, confidentiality and the possible consequences of the life story interviews". These were discussed with the participants in my study. I had formalized the research process with letters of consent, explaining the purpose and process of the research to the principal of the school where the teachers taught and to the teachers themselves. I also obtained consent from the Department of Education to undertake this research study. In addition, participants were informed that participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw from the research process at any time. Furthermore, they were informed that the research methods included life story interviews, drawings and photographs and these would be used in this study to collect data about what gives the teachers the impetus to commit themselves to their professional practice.

Qualitative methods promote a high degree of trust between the researcher and the participants and this research process therefore places a special responsibility on the researcher to not abuse the trusting relationship (Chase, 2005:657). In this study the participants that I had chosen were my colleagues and they felt free to tell their stories and in this way I was able to capture rich data, relevant to this study. Being a researcher as well as a teacher in the same school did pose challenges as far as confidentiality and anonymity were concerned, as everyone in school was aware that I was involved in a research study and they also knew who my participants were.

Therefore, these concerns had to be negotiated with the participants and I had to ensure that respect and trust prevailed between me the researcher and the participants at all times. Also, I was selective of the data used as Clandinin & Connelly (2000:173) state “it is our responsibility not to cause harm to our participants”.

At the heart of my fieldwork, were the lived stories that were related by my participants and it was important that all participants exercised their agency and voice within this relationship. Also, it was important that as a researcher I listened first to the participants’ stories and ensured that it was the participants who first told their stories and not me. This by no means meant that I was silenced in the research process but that I had given the time and space for teachers’ voice within the relationship. In this way, the study gained the authority and validity that it required (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990).

In addition, I ensured great care and respect for the participants at all times. Although I had rich data at my disposal I had decided to omit certain information that would incriminate the participants. Ethical issues emerged when I compiled transcripts and gave them back to the participants for approval. Transcripts that the participants were not in agreement with were changed and amended accordingly. As Clandinin & Connelly (2000:173) state “we needed to be thoughtful of our research participants as our first audience and indeed, our most important audience, for it is to them that we owe our care to compose a text that does not rupture life stories that sustain them”. One of the challenges in my study was that there was a great probability that information was withheld because of fear of exposure of such information. However, I had respected the participants’ decisions and did not probe further regarding certain issues.

With regards to confidentiality and anonymity, the participants in my research study were assured that neither their names nor their school would be mentioned in the data. They were assured that their privacy would be protected and that pseudonyms would be used while transcribing and writing up data. However, I realized that because I was a teacher at the same school as my participants, the use of pseudonyms would offer virtually no protection for the participants within my school. Also, the teachers consented to the use of their photographs which was taken from existing school records. Clandinin & Connelly (2000:174) rightfully state that, “In most qualitative research, issues of anonymity appear and reappear. Even when we guarantee anonymity, it is not at all clear that we can do so in any meaningful way”. I had also assured my participants that any article or report published from this research study would be presented in such a way that the anonymity of the school community and individuals would be maintained. Furthermore, all the information, such as the consent forms, audio tapes and

transcriptions would be stored in the School of Education and Development Department at the University of KwaZulu-Natal for a period of five years.

### **3.7 Selection of participants**

I had selected to conduct the research in the school where I was also a teacher as this allowed me easy accessibility to the participants. I took into consideration the intensive nature of this study, which included three one-hour sessions with each participant.

How many participants should be involved in the research study? Would a large number of participants guarantee representativeness? According to Cohen, Manion & Morrison (2009), this is not the case as they explain that a researcher can include 450 females and still not be representative of the female population. Therefore, for this study three participants were identified.

How were the participants selected? Sampling refers to the process used to select a portion of the population for the study. Qualitative research is generally based on purposive sampling, which, simply means that participants are selected because of some defining characteristics that make them the holders of data crucial to the study. So my sampling decisions are made for the explicit purpose of obtaining the richest possible source of information to answer the research questions. I had chosen purposeful sampling, also known as purposive sampling, for my study. Purposeful sampling entails the researcher selecting particular elements from the population who would provide “rich data” on the topic under scrutiny (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2009).

Arriving at this sample of teachers was a daunting task especially considering that the teachers in this particular school were my colleagues and some were my friends. However, a decision had to be made and my interests rested in the understanding and interpreting my study. Therefore, I selected teachers for their knowledge in teaching methods, pedagogy, thought processes and their position within the school and I had chosen teachers who had considerable experience in the teaching profession. Their teaching experience ranged from sixteen to twenty six years. Furthermore, I had selected one male and two females, as men and women have different kinds of teaching experiences (Sikes, Measor & Woods, 1985). I had selected teachers who I believed would provide new insights and who were committed, positive and dedicated for developing my study. However, many questions surfaced when I undertook to conduct the research process. Would I be able to obtain the ‘rich data’ that my study required? Would the participants share with me personal information about their lived experiences? Do they have the time to engage in their life story interviews? Eventually, as the research planning progressed, I

had come to the realization that it was important for me to select subjects who were willing to share their time and lived experiences with me.

### 3.8 Whose stories did I choose to tell?

The three participants, whose teaching experiences ranged from sixteen to twenty six years, teach in the intermediate phase in a primary school in the Pinetown district in KwaZulu-Natal. The main selection criteria for participation of the teachers were that they were active in classroom practice and willing to participate in the research. These particular teachers were singled out for their commitment and enthusiastic stance in the classroom.

**Table One: The final sample of teachers and the variables that were considered in arriving at the selected teachers.**

Sample	Teaching experience	Phase	Gender	Qualification
Simon	25	Intermediate	Male	Senior Primary Education Diploma, (SPED), Higher Education Diploma (HED)
Tina	26	Intermediate	Female	SPED,HED, Bachelor of Education, Honours Degree ( BEd Hons)
Pam	16	Intermediate	Female	SPED,HED,BEd Hons

Simon, Tina and Pam are pseudonyms for the three teachers who were drawn from one school in KwaZulu-Natal. The study attempted to show how the teachers' personal stories shaped who they are and what they were doing with regards to their professional practice. The following paragraphs describe each of the participants:

#### **Simon**

Simon is an Indian male who has three children and has been teaching for 25 years. He is a Head of Department at his school and presently teaches Mathematics, Afrikaans, Technology and Physical Education. He is passionate about sports and encourages students and colleagues to

be involved and active in sporting activities.

### **Tina**

Tina is an Indian woman who is a mother of two children. She has been teaching for 26 years in this particular school. She presently teaches Mathematics, Natural Sciences, Technology, Social Sciences and Afrikaans. During the period of the research study she had successfully completed the BEd Hons Degree.

### **Pam**

Pam is also an Indian woman who is a mother of two children. She has been teaching for 16 years. Pam has completed her BEd Hons degree and is presently studying towards a Master's of Education Degree. She teaches Mathematics, Social Sciences, Technology, Afrikaans and Natural Sciences.

## **3.9 Data analysis**

From the initial stage of my study I was overwhelmed with the huge volume of data. Deciding what was relevant and important to my study was a daunting task. However, as I progressed, a clearer picture emerged around my focus. The data was sorted and classified according to categories and themes. They were strongly influenced by Bell & Gilbert's (1994:494) framework whereby "professional learning can be thought of as comprising personal, social and occupational aspects that are inter-active and interdependent". Initial categories were re-defined and as I progressed I then tried to identify broader common themes to explore these teachers' desire to learn and develop in their professional practice. The data was analysed into teacher narratives (Refer to Chapter 4). In chapter 5 and 6 I re-constructed the narratives into new stories that were unique in terms of these teachers' personal, social and professional development. The thematic analysis is discussed according to Bell & Gilbert's (1994) model which encapsulates and examines different aspects of personal, social and professional teacher development into levels thereby giving a more rounded three dimensional interpretation. Within this framework, my analysis shows that there is something happening at the personal level that prompts teachers to improve themselves. Within the social development, through particular relationships with learners and colleagues, teachers had re-worked their understanding of their work as teachers. Within the professional dimension, teachers enacted certain practices that gave new meanings and definitions to their teacher self. These findings and analysis was presented thematically, as they were gleaned from the life story interviews, drawings and

photographs.

### **3.10 Risks, dangers and abuses of narratives**

Connelly & Clandinin (1990:10) argue that narrative and life go together and so the main attraction of narrative as a method is its potential to use life experiences, both personal and social, in relevant and meaningful ways. They believe that one can “fake the data” and write a fiction and also use the data to narrate a deception as easily as a truth.

Therefore, it is important that researchers respond to criticism either at the level of principle or with respect to a particular writing. Connelly & Clandinin (1990:10) argue “it is too easy to become committed to the whole, the narrative plot, and to one’s own role in the inquiry and to lose sight of the various fine lines that are threads in the writing of a narrative”. Therefore, for this study my writing was considered as a study piece as a result of the following:

- The reconstructed teachers’ narratives were presented in written text composed from data produced through life story interviews, photographs and drawings.
- There was much factual information presented during the life story interviews, which were tape-recorded, coded, categorised and thematically developed for each story.

### **3.11 Trustworthiness**

I had used a combination of strategies because Saloojee (2009) states, it enhances the issue of trustworthiness, credibility and transferability. The strategy triangulation helped to increase the agreement on the interpretation between the researcher and the participants. According to Cohen, Manion & Morrison (2009:141), “triangulation may be the use of two or more methods of data collection in the study of some aspect of human behavior”. In essence, triangulation was used to clarify meanings and verify interpretations. In other words, I had used multiple methods in an attempt to map out and explain the rich data derived from my participants. The different methods allowed me to be accurate in my data analysis.

With regards to trustworthiness, rigour and plausibility, the life story interviews, photographs and drawings excavated lived stories of the lives of teachers (Pillay, 2003). I was aware that the stories that were constructed may be damaging to the teachers, therefore, I felt obliged to send the completed data analysis to the participants for their approval. I felt it was important to know whether the research findings would be trustworthy. Conducting these member checks were crucial as it contributed to the trustworthiness of the narrated stories. It was my responsibility to

ensure that the narratives were captured according to the participants' voice.

### **3.12 Limitations of the study**

My study was to understand, "What keeps teachers motivated"? I undertook to look at the lives of three teachers in one school in South Africa. The findings by no means can be generalized to all schools and furthermore each person is unique. However, there are important lessons to be learned and the findings in this study could motivate teachers to change and to learn and develop in their professional practice. Another limitation was the availability of participants as meetings, parent's visits and interruptions from learners took up their time. This was because the life story interviews were scheduled after the teachers' contact time in the afternoons. However, the sessions were re-scheduled but took a longer period of time to complete. In addition, the South African Democratic Teachers' Union (SADTU) Strike Action of July 2010 was a huge challenge. This meant that I had no contact with the participants for about four weeks as they were on strike.

### **3.13 Conclusion**

In this chapter, the research design and research methodology were discussed to explore the lived experiences of three teachers from one of the schools in KwaZulu-Natal. In the following chapter, the narratives of each teacher will be represented as re-constructed teacher narratives.

## CHAPTER 4

### NARRATIVES OF TEACHERS

#### 4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I offer a reconstruction of the narratives of three practicing teachers. These narratives cover their teacher training at College and University, their early teaching and learning experiences at school to current post apartheid South African schooling. The narratives of the teachers provide the biography of their careers as practicing teachers. I have mostly used the actual spoken words of the teachers yielded during data collection. I present the three stories in such a manner that foregrounds the teachers' positions and practices and the sense of "fulfilment and pleasure" that they cultivate for and from their work. The intention is to find out what gives these teachers the impetus to commit themselves to their professional practice. In other words, I explore their construction of their personal identity and their daily practice, to determine what constitute and give meanings to their lives as Saloojee (2009:84) states "the stories that teachers present set the scene for research and provide narratives on how they consciously and unconsciously constructed a life through the telling, and how they made sense of their lives in particular context".

I have used chronological signposting to assist in the reading and understanding of their stories, and to provide a sequence for their narrative in so far as:

- Professional training
- Early teaching experience
- Teaching in the present context
- What keeps teachers going?

Each of these re-constructed stories was written in the first person genre.

The three stories are titled:

Simon : Teaching is part of my social responsibility

Tina : Teaching is about resisting rigid ways and seeking alternative ways

Pam : Teaching is God's calling for me

I begin with a story narrated by Simon.

Simon tells the story you are about to read. Simon is an Indian male, who is 46 years old and has been teaching for more than 25 years.

## **4.2 Simon's story: Teaching is part of my social responsibility**

### **4.2.1 Professional training**

I completed my teacher training at the Springfield College of Education. My specialisation was determined according to my matriculation results and therefore I specialized in Humanities in the Senior Primary Phase.

### **4.2.2 Early teaching experience**

My early teaching was characterised by *chalk and talk* and I dominated the lesson. The system of education under which I trained dictated such methods. I started teaching Physical Education and Humanities in a secondary school. The turning point was in 1989 when I was transferred to a primary school to teach English. Initially, the adjustment was difficult and slow after having taught in a high school. Once I managed the transformation, teaching learners in primary school was most satisfying and enjoyable. Learners displayed a desire to engage as opposed to learners in the secondary school. However, it was frustrating to use the same traditional methods of teaching.

My son entered primary school in 1995. This was also a turning point because as a parent I examined my son's books and reflected in the work I was doing as a teacher in my classroom. Self-introspection made me more aware of my role as a teacher and to realise my moral obligation to teaching. Every time I had questions relating to his work, I reflected on my own work and I tried to answer the very same questions I had for his teacher.

I obtained my Higher Education Diploma in Mathematics. This gave me a bigger and brighter perspective of my role as a mathematics teacher. It made me question methods, how to teach and to evaluate, and to embark on more innovative and creative methods of teaching.

My promotion to the position of Head of Department was another turning point in my career. I needed to guide and motivate teachers as well as learners within my department. This meant I had to keep further abreast with new and innovative methods of teaching and learning and convey relevant information to colleagues to empower them into becoming better and more effective teachers.

I was declared in excess in 2003 meaning that my services was not required in that particular school and I was transferred to many schools from 2003 to 2007. My experiences at a Model C School was both enriching and frustrating. The work ethics at the former Model C Schools were of much higher intensity and I constantly found myself on the back foot. As my stay progressed, I was able to get on track and thereafter manage fairly well. The resources available at these schools also enhanced the quality of the teaching and the learning process. My subsequent visits to other schools gave me an opportunity to encounter a variety of management and leadership styles. I have taken cognisance of good management and leadership techniques and used them to my benefit as a head of department.

#### **4.2.3 Teaching in the present context**

The goals and approaches of Curriculum 2005, a shift from the content-based teaching and learning to an outcome based one, was intended to counter-act the emphasis on rote learning. The outcome based education was complex and required high levels of skills and competence which were lacking in many teachers. This system further intensified the workload of teachers and the use of new terminology and acronyms further challenged teachers. There was a lack of strategy by most teachers to improve the learner's performance in the classroom as teachers implemented a common curriculum, which did not consider the diversity of learners.

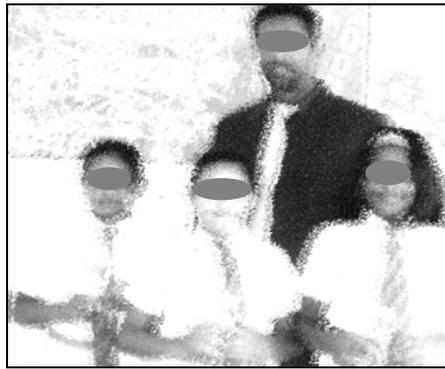
The Revised National Curriculum statement is more practical and has been streamlined. I have tried to develop the image of a teacher who encourages critical thinking, debate and intellectual discussions rather than someone who knows many facts. For me, the important thing is the love and respect I have for the children and therefore I derive fulfilment and joy in the classroom.

#### **4.2.4 What keeps teachers going?**

As a state paid teacher, one is duty bound to continue with one's work of educating children. As a parent of three children, I feel it is ethically and morally incumbent on me to deliver a sound and acceptable standard of teaching to my learners. I would find a situation unacceptable if de-motivated and uninterested teachers taught my children. As an individual I derive a sense of satisfaction and accomplishment observing my learners progress from the unknown to the known.

Currently, there are numerous factors in the profession that has allowed teachers to become frustrated and de-motivated. I have decided to focus on the positives instead and this has allowed me to stay above my game. I derive a lot of joy and pleasure from seeing my learners

improve their skills, thus enabling them to empower themselves.



*Figure 1: Learners thirst for knowledge and success keeps me motivated*

Learners display an unquenchable thirst for knowledge and their success keeps me motivated and pro-active (*Refer to figure 1*). I have developed a habit of reading and researching information in my learning area so that I can be best equipped to fulfil my obligation as a teacher. I have also developed a tolerance for mistakes and failed ventures. These have been my most powerful conscience-provokers. They have allowed me to stop and review my attitude and my behaviour towards my learners. I have gained more in my teaching career through my failed experience than from my accomplishments. I am never afraid to try out new methodology. Therefore, I have developed a habit of reading and researching information. The sense of satisfaction and fulfilment I experience through my learners accomplishment in their daily lives gives me this insatiable appetite to go on despite the barrage of negativity engulfing the profession. For instance, learners who were unable to read previously are now able to identify words and read as a result of an intervention programme.

#### **4.2.5 Conclusion**

Simon narrated his story with passion and excitement. He responded enthusiastically to the probes in the interview schedule.

### **4.3 Tina's story: Teaching is about resisting rigid ways and seeking alternative ways of being a teacher**

Tina is an Indian female teacher who has been teaching for the past 26 years. She believes every teacher should be thoroughly prepared before entering the classroom.

#### **4.3.1 Professional training**

I initially planned to become a teacher and trained at the Springfield College of Education. I specialised in Mathematics in the Senior Primary Phase. At college a one-dimensional approach was adopted and information was cascaded using the top-down approach whereby the students were passive and unquestioning.

#### **4.3.2 Early teaching experience**

In my early experience as a teacher I knew that there were several factors I had to consider for there to be successful teaching and learning. The teacher should be organised and plan lessons well and ensure that when you enter the classroom you are thoroughly prepared. I have to understand discipline which is an integral part of the learning process, and with classroom discipline you will encounter many organisational problems. I have to understand where the learners are coming from as many of them sitting in classrooms have parents who do not know how to read or write. Learners are poor and many have parents who are unemployed and are uneducated.

Basically there were more issues with paper work and window dressing where teachers had to produce results to impress and to give good figures that indicated a good pass rate. These included percentages, number of failures, average mark and the median mark. We were to give a good image as this information was sent to the department.

#### **4.3.3 Teaching in the present context**

We were given policy documents and these were forwarded from the Department of Education. There was a constant change in requirements. At first it was OBE which later changed to RNCS and then RNS. So many people require so much. It's more a paper chase that anything else, together with a lack of development from people who were coming up with policies and expectations but not giving us teachers practical solutions on how to handle specific areas. Information was merely being cascaded through our schools irrespective of the needs of our

community or learners.

For example in mathematics, in a 60 minute period, we need to compartmentalise into warming up activity of 10 minutes to review homework, 10 minutes remedial work, 10 minutes problem solving and 15 minutes for correction. This is highly impractical and is a major challenge since you target one area which results in you neglecting the other areas. If you want to do justice in the classroom and want children to understand concepts then this leaves you with no time to tackle major issues of teaching. New concepts like milestones were confusing and the expectations were so much that it was not possible to complete them.

There has to be many social interactive activities both at school and outside. This would enhance teacher learning. This can be in the form of workshops, cluster meetings, discussions among colleagues and comparisons made between schools. We cannot isolate only to the teaching profession. We need to step outside to understand the dynamics of teaching. Forming cluster communities among schools is certainly a positive step in enhancing mathematics. It is good to form clusters in regions as this allows you to hold discussions on what works in the classrooms, collaborate on challenges and also results in consensus on the subject matter.

I use a variety of assessment methods, such as evaluating workbooks, assignments, project work, participation in class and formal testing. I also believe that the assessments used must cater for the various aspects of the learners' abilities and I use many assessment tools to get a holistic view of the learner. These ongoing assessments are an advantage as one can see the progress and development of learners.

#### **4.3.4 What keeps teachers going?**

My reshaping comes from my experience in the classroom, my school environment, my home environment and my inter-action with people in general. Conversations with ex-learners who are now adults have also helped in re-shaping me as a teacher. Constant self-reflection is my key to change. Reflection goes beyond what happens in the classroom, which of course is also pivotal to my re-shaping. In conversations with my ex-pupils, I have learnt how my attitude and communication skills have impacted either positively or negatively on their lives. I have also learnt how some peers have impacted negatively and are remembered for this. My ultimate goal in the classroom is to enhance the thinking skills of my learners and to shape their lives in a positive way. Therefore, whether I watch a movie, read the media, improve my professional qualification or interact with peers and learners, I am always reflecting on my position as a teacher.



***Figure 2: Motivation through student achievement***

My motivation for improving my learning and development is through observing my learners' achievements (*Refer to Figure 2*). I have a diversity of learners in my classroom. Many are second language English learners who are unable to read much or are shy to communicate as a result of language barriers. My motivation and challenge is to see them working against their barriers and becoming self confident young people. I had some heartening experiences with a few such learners and this keeps me highly motivated. For instance I had this very weak learner in Grade 4 whom I initially recommended to repeat the grade. However, after a change of heart I passed him. The following year I was his mathematics teacher and he was in Grade 5 when he barely passed his first mathematics test. I highlighted this positively to his peers. That was the turning point in his academic performance in mathematics and by the end of that year his average was around eighty percent. This turnaround was a valuable learning experience as I realized that praise gives hope and hope can change people's lives. Another instance was teaching a second language English learner how to read in Grade 5. At the end of that year this pupil thanked me for making an impact on her life because she now wanted to read so many interesting books.

Did I learn from my colleagues? Yes. Every colleague in my school has made an impact on my learning. I am constantly reflecting on my methods of teaching, my relationship with learners and my organizational skills. I look at my colleagues positive attributes and I make a mindful decision not to initiate their negatives. For instance, a teacher has exceptional organisational skills and practices but military style discipline. Whilst I tried to imitate his skills, I tone down my discipline methods, as I believe learning cannot take place without discipline. However, extremely severe discipline, I believe, is somewhat de-humanising to a learner.

Within the classroom, the progress I see in many of my learners is what motivates and sustains me. It gives me pride and confidence in my work when a learner is able to carry out instructions completely on his own, complete classroom exercises with some degree of success and shows a growing enthusiasm for the subject. It has also motivated me to specialise in special needs and inclusive education studies so that I can make an even greater positive impact on those with learning barriers.

I am continually changing my teaching methods by reading relevant curriculum and policy documents, attending workshops organised by the department and my union, belonging to cluster committees for learning areas, networking with peers in school and from other schools. Therefore, I am confident because of my knowledge of curriculum issues and many years of experience. I look at my learners as I would my own child. I am well prepared for my lessons, organized, firm yet able to exchange a few light hearted words with my learners. I am prepared to learn even from my learners and am constantly self evaluating. I am attentive to learners and sensitive to their emotions.

#### **4.3.5 Conclusion**

Tina's story is revealing as it gives us a nuanced understanding of how she is resisting and avoiding being classified in rigid, stereotypical ways, and seeking out alternative ways of being a teacher.

#### **4.4 Pam's story: Teaching is a calling**

Pam has been teaching for over 15 years and feels strongly that teaching is a calling as she enjoys being with children and is passionate about making a difference in their lives.

##### **4.4.1 Professional training**

I am of the opinion that God gives us a certain purpose in life. My purpose was to become a high school teacher of English. My specialisation was determined by my matriculation results. I completed my teaching degree at the University of Durban-Westville. I trained to be a teacher in the secondary school phase but was placed in a primary school.

##### **4.4.2 Early teaching experience**

I entered the teaching profession in 1995 when the traditional method of teaching was still being used. At that time, I was teaching learners in a class that was known as Standard Four (now Grade six). Since I had been teaching English, Afrikaans, Geography and Music in Standard Four, training in Curriculum 2005 did not reach me until 2001. I continued to use the old record books: forecasts, journals, preparation files, mark files and test files.

Topics came from the schemes of work provided by the department. These were recorded in the journal. Although lessons included discussion, research and projects, assessments were only based on formal tests. There was no group work, pair work and different forms of assessment were used. Children had to only complete assessments in an individual capacity without the support and assistance of another learner.

##### **4.4.3 Teaching in the present context**

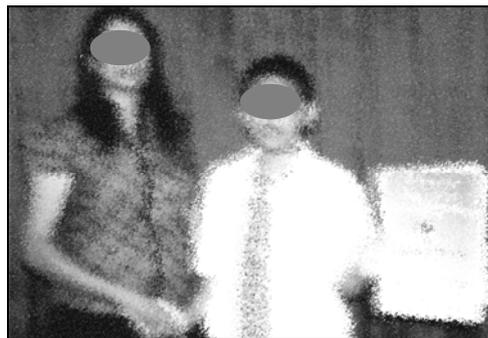
I decided to further my education because I always felt drawn towards assisting learners who were experiencing barriers to learning. When I considered the large number of learners in each class who had such enormous gaps in the learning process and who passed from one grade to another without making any meaningful progress, I felt saddened. This had motivated me to further my studies. I completed my BEd Honours Degree specialising in Inclusive Education. This was the most fulfilling, rewarding and functional training I have ever received because I took what I had learnt into the classroom and saw how it had a positive impact on the child who had barriers to learning. I saw children change from being totally lost to being able to communicate.

In addition, I feel development is continuous and that teachers need to be updated with the latest knowledge to keep up with new trends. One's knowledge base is always growing each year. It's imperative that teachers sharpen their skills, learn new techniques and new approaches. Within the present context our teachers are not given access to many opportunities granted to us. There are too many responsibilities placed on us. Our responsibilities are burdensome and we find that there is too much expected of us. Our work load is constantly increasing. There are more administrative tasks allocated to teachers and less time to actually teach. In terms of supporting teacher development, there is no constructive support from district level and the department. Support also depends on the infrastructure and presently our school has many financial constraints. There are not enough funds available for teacher development.

Currently, there are too many learning areas that I teach. I am also compelled to teach learning areas in which I am not qualified and trained in and I do not have the expertise and confidence to teach learning areas such as mathematics.

#### **4.4.4 What keeps teachers going?**

There is a danger of working on your own as you are unable to see your own shortcomings but others will be able to identify them. When you become aware and observe what others are doing, you get inspired and develop new innovative ideas. As teachers we tend to work in isolation. I feel change is good. At meetings, at ward level, I learn and am inspired by other teachers. Collaborating about milestones, assessment standards and assessment tasks gives me more clarity and insight.



***Figure: 3 Learners excelling in activities give me the impetus to go on.***

Also, being able to change a learner's abilities in the classroom for the better is what drives me, and learner's excelling in activities gives me the impetus to go on (*Refer to Figure 3*). I stay here for the child, for the ones that matter the most. I put aside my own wants and needs and develop strategies so as to enhance learning among the learners. And in serving the learners, I

believe I am serving God. This for me is the greatest satisfaction of my life.

#### **4.4.5 Conclusion**

Pam's story shows her emergence as a teacher who was drawn to make a difference in the lives of her students. Her belief is that God has brought her to the understanding of who she is and what she wants as a teacher.

#### **4.5 Concluding the three narratives**

Narratives of experience as Connelly and Clandinin (1990:2) state can serve as tools for self-reflection and change. The three teachers' narratives presented in my study, provide readers with a deeper insight into the teachers' practices and experiences. Simon, Tina and Pam constructed their narratives through telling their stories and showing how they each made sense of their careers in their particular contexts. The data presented through their narratives show their uniqueness as teachers and commonalities while highlighting their challenges, emotions and inspirations.

## CHAPTER 5

### ANALYSIS

#### 5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the data findings of the life story interviews of three teachers I had chosen for my study is analysed, “What keeps teachers motivated?” - An exploration of teachers’ desire to learn and develop in their professional practice. The teachers’ stories were narrated in response to the critical question, “What is the impetus for change in one’s professional practice from the personal self?” Therefore, through this analysis, I discuss how teachers make meaning of their personal development and how, using the lens of the interpretative paradigm, their narratives show change.

The framework that I use to analyse the data is derived from Bell & Gilbert’s (1994), model who have expounded on the personal, social and professional development of the teacher and the model lucidly encapsulate and grade key aspects of teacher learning.

The teachers who were interviewed were initially frustrated and had a low self-image. Is there an impetus for change here and what forms did this take? In other words, is there something happening at the personal level that is prompting one to say, “I can better myself”? According to Bell & Gilbert (1994:485), “personal development involved accepting an aspect of teaching as problematic, dealing with their restraints and feeling empowered about themselves”. The personal development of the teachers is considered along the following lines:

- Accepting aspects of teaching as problematic
- Dealing with restraints
- Feeling empowered

#### 5.2 Accepting aspects of teaching as problematic

According to Bell & Gilbert (1994:485), teachers may reflect on their experiences either positively or negatively. They point out that teachers may, in their initial development, encounter professional dissatisfaction or problems. Teachers may harbour private perceptions about their experiences, and gradually engage with teacher development that leads to change.

Bell and Gilbert argue that the teachers may experience frustration if they are unable to engage in new teaching activities, or use new curriculum materials or new content knowledge to improve the learning of their students. It was common for teachers to fall back on teaching strategies that worked for them in the past. Ironically, when teachers experience frustration, this creates the impetus for change. Against this broad background, there are two images of the teacher that may emerge:

**Teacher as a transmitter of knowledge:** Within this conceptualization the teacher “cascades” knowledge to the learners, who were regarded as empty vessels waiting to be filled (Bell and Gilbert, 1994).

**Teacher as an implementer of curriculum:** Here, the teacher rigidly follows departmental prescriptions and becomes an implementer of the curriculum.

### **5.2.1 Teacher as a transmitter of knowledge**

The dominant teaching style of the teacher within the traditional approach, as Hooks (1994) claims, is where a one-dimensional approach exists, where the teacher cascades information to the learners. In other words, these teachers are transmitters. In this type of education there is no active participation of learners. In essence, it is teacher-centred, with the teacher as the focus.

In my study, each of the participants saw their early teaching and teacher training experience as being crucial in their formation and development as a teacher, as the following excerpts illustrate:

#### **Learners were regarded as empty jugs.....**

*Simon: My early teaching was characterized by the following:*

*Chalk and talk: the teacher, where I did most of the talking and elicited a few points from the learners, the teacher dominated this method. Learners were regarded as empty jugs that needed to be filled with a lot of information. I was the Supreme Being in the class. The system of education under which I was trained at that time dictated such methods of teaching.*

### **I was the main focus**

Pam: *I entered the teaching profession in 1995 and the traditional methods of teaching were still used. Traditional methods of teaching implied I was the main focus as far as transmitting knowledge.*

### **Teacher dominated the classroom**

Tina: *In my initial years of teaching, the teacher dominated the classroom and did not allow for discussion, as this created noise in the classroom and management would see this as no teaching-taking place. Methods of teaching were mainly chalk and talk. Text books were used as the main source of information. The teacher imparted information.*

For Simon the dominant teaching styles were transmission and “chalk and talk”. The traditional role of the teacher was teacher-centred, where the student was merely passive and unquestioning. Learners were compared to “empty jugs that needed to be filled with information”. Basically the teachers were cascading information. They did not allow thinking and questioning in their classes. In other words, they encouraged regurgitation of facts, and rote learning was sanctioned. Tina mentioned that teachers discouraged discussions, as it was perceived that it created discipline problems. Management would view the lack of control in the classroom in a negative way. In other words, the quiet, disciplined class meant the teacher had good control of his class and that effective learning was taking place.

Within the traditional approach, the textbook was the main source of information. Little (1994) claims that textbook-centred teaching left no room for active participation on the part of the student. Hooks (1994) also criticises the absence of liberatory education, within which critical thinking, analysing, active participation and questioning are valued. She bemoans the fact that traditional teachers act as dictators and enforce their dominance. Tina, in the study, observed this from her experience.

Teachers were still adopting traditional methods of teaching, as mentioned in their data. It is ironic that in a new democratic dispensation, teachers were still adopting the old methods of teaching that were pervasive during the apartheid era. Pam, in the study, was restricted and adopted the traditional, dogmatic and authoritarian approach (*Refer to figure 4*). As Dewey (1963) states, this is an example of mis-education, as it obstructs the development of further

learning.



*Figure 4: Traditional and authoritarian teacher*

Teachers were adopting the traditional methods of teaching, and they were not satisfied. They were often frustrated and searching for something new. This is illustrated in the following excerpts:

#### **De-motivated and frustrated**

*Simon: I was becoming de-motivated, using the same old method of teaching and was not happy with how I was teaching.*

*Tina: I felt I was going through the motion with no proper guidelines from the department. I was looking for a new approach.*

*Pam: My lessons were boring, results were not improving and I was frustrated. This frustration was intensified even more as learners were not responsive.*

It is clear from the above data that teachers were becoming frustrated and unhappy. Simon's words, "de-motivated" and "using the same old method" indicate that he was not satisfied and was looking for something new. Fraser et al. (2007:157) suggests that "teacher change can be described in relation to learning, development, growth and implementation of something new or different". For Tina, there was unease and discomfort that she was going through this process with "no proper guidelines from the department". Inevitably, this type of frustration gradually

puts pressure on teachers to change and see their work differently.

### **5.2.2 Teacher as an Implementer**

The professional dissatisfaction that teachers experienced was clearly caused by the pressure on teachers to conform to the Department's prescriptive policy and curriculum shifts. Teachers had to follow rigidly what the Department instructed and thus became mere implementers of curriculum.

#### **“Curriculum too broad, complex and confusing...”**

*Pam: Teachers became curriculum developers as C2005 was too broad, confusing and non-directive. This led to my frustration as I felt I did not have the skills to attempt this.*

From Pam's comment, we see that she vacillates between pressure to conform and be directed and the prospect of claiming her freedom. As she mentions, “C2005 was too broad, confusing and non-directive”. Teachers had to develop and adapt the curriculum as there were no clear directives on what was required. Teachers' comments show up the contradictions in their positions and roles, and in their responses. It is clear that although Pam was afforded the space to use her own initiative and be resourceful, she was not accustomed to this way of working. In addition, the curriculum was extensive and Pam shows confusion. Simon also expresses his frustration and ambivalence:

#### **New terminology and use of acronyms challenged teachers**

*Simon: The goals and approaches of C2005, which was a shift from the content-based teaching to an outcome-based one, were to counteract the emphasis on rote learning. However, the outcomes-based education was complex and required a high level of skills, which was lacking in many teachers and new terminology and the use of acronyms further challenged teachers. However, I had to still implement curriculum although I experienced difficulty with it.*

In Simon's opinion, C2005 was to draw attention away from “rote learning”. He also re-iterates that, in actual fact, it was complex and teachers lacked skills in implementing the new curriculum. For a start, the “new terminology” and “acronyms” were challenging for him. For

Simon, in trying to create a system to improve teaching and learning, the curriculum led to teachers becoming more stressed. The short training courses did not really equip teachers with the necessary skills. Teachers felt ineffective as they grappled with implementing C2005. Jansen's (2001) assertion that, "suddenly and without warning the teacher disappeared... and became a facilitator of a new pedagogy". This rightfully expresses the sentiments of the teachers. For these teachers, there were feelings of frustration and dissatisfaction about being implementers and facilitators of the curriculum. According to Bell & Gilbert (1994:486), "professional dissatisfaction may come about when teachers do not feel competent or confident to implement the curriculum and when teachers feel stagnant with respect to their own growth and learning". For instance, Tina illustrates this in the following excerpt:

**I don't think this system is working – it was fragmented and demarcated**

*Tina: For example, in mathematics, in a 60-minute period, according to policy, we need to compartmentalise into warming up activity [of 10 minutes], to review homework [10 minutes], remedial work [10 minutes] and problem solving and correction [30 minutes]. Therefore, this is highly impractical and a major challenge, as the dynamics of the class is not taken into account. The news concepts, for example, the "milestones" were confusing, and the expectations were so much that it was not possible to complete all the stipulated milestones in one particular lesson. I don't think this system was working. Everything was so fragmented and demarcated. I became dissatisfied.*

Typically, teachers were seen as implementers, and had to follow rigidly what the Department instructed. Also, there were issues with the curriculum. For one, it was too compartmentalised. This is illustrated in the above excerpt. As a result, teachers felt disillusioned because there was too much to be done in a restricted time frame and this led to dissatisfaction among the teachers. Tina's experiences of the compartmentalisation of teaching mathematics show that it was a frustrating time for her. The routine preparation resulted in teachers not being free to teach mathematics the way they saw fit and proper. Tina is obliged to first meet the requirements of the Department. How effective the actual learning is, is immaterial. The teacher is only a vehicle for imparting information and the importance of the teacher is not taken into account. Basically, teachers were implementers and this resulted in teachers becoming frustrated.

Bell and Gilbert (1994:486) refer to this state of affairs where teachers felt incompetent and lacking in confidence as "professional dissatisfaction". Teachers were expecting to find new, workable, teaching strategies, and new theoretical perspectives with which to think about their

teaching. They wished to improve the learning in their classroom and to feel better about themselves. They wished to experiment and put new ideas into action. Bell and Gilbert (1994:486) refer to this as “personal development that may have taken place as a result of individual teacher’s deliberation and initiative”. Yes, there are conditions that militate against such creativity. Teachers’ work has become intensified, as Tina’s narrative of the compartmentalisation of teaching mathematics illustrates. Teachers have to deal with increased pressure and expectations. Yet, they are not adequately trained, and lack skills in implementing OBE. Hargreaves (1994:117) argues that “teachers’ work was becoming more routinised and deskilled and teachers were controlled by prescribed programmes, mandated curricula and step-by-step methods of instructions”.

The teachers in my study expressed their dissatisfaction clearly. For instance, Simon sees the OBE as complex and requiring higher order skills, and Tina explains that the C2005 was too broad. In keeping with Bell and Gilbert’s (1994) framework of what happens at the personal level, these particular teachers were aware and accepting of a professional dissatisfaction and frustration. However, they did come to the realisation that there had to be an impetus for change from the personal self.

### **Teacher as a docile worker**

Even when teachers are docile, just obeying whatever is prescribed and instructed from the Department, they are aware that this is not satisfactory. The following excerpts illustrate this:

#### **Docile and restricted**

*Simon: What is clearly evident today is lack of strategy by the teacher to improve learners’ performance in classroom. For instance, the teacher tries to deal with less-privileged students and student diversity. Implementing a common curricula, for every child does not take into account the diversity of learners, their history, cultures, different experiences and talents.*

*Pam: There is a tendency to reduce teachers’ autonomy in developing and planning of curricula as we get a “pre-packaged – one-size-fits-all” curriculum material and this result in a standardised medium of instruction.*

*Tina: We were given policy documents and these were cascaded from the*

*Department of Education. There is constant change in requirements. From OBE, to RNCS and changed to RNS. It's more a paper chase than anything else. People who are coming up with policies and expectations but not giving us practical solution on how to handle specific areas but are merely cascading information through our schools irrespective of our communities.*

Teachers are rendered docile and restricted, with the Department of Education making all the decisions and cascading a common curriculum to the schools. This state of affairs is criticised by Simon, who bemoans the fact that the “diversity”, “talents”, “cultures” and “history” of the learners are ignored. The policy documents, RNCS and IQMS, place great emphasis on inclusivity and diversity of learners in the classroom. Simon explains that we are dealing with classrooms that are multi-cultural and multi-linguistic; they are also diverse in terms of multi-levels of performance. His argument is in keeping with what Aronowitz & Giroux (1985:28) claim, that a “uniform curriculum ignores cultural diversity, historical background and other challenges”. Untrained and unskilled teachers are expected to cope, and even thrive, in such situations when they are clearly ill-equipped for this.

For Pam, the old curriculum was irrelevant and outside the experiences of teachers and learners. The curriculum did not cater for diversity, and the context of learning was based on the experiences of those in power.

Education reformers have responded to calls to improve the situation. However, in doing so they have ignored, according to Aronowitz & Giroux (1985:23), “the crucial role that teachers play in preparing learners to be active and critical thinkers”, and they also “ignore the intelligence, judgment and experience” that teachers may bring. Thus, teachers are seen merely as implementing policies and reforms decided by the Educational Department. In other words, teachers have to rigidly adhere to policy from the Department. As Pam suggests, they have to implement a “one-size-fits-all” curriculum, irrespective of the peculiar needs of each learner. In addition, Tina mentions the “paper chase”. Aronowitz & Giroux (1985:24) draw attention to the “tendency to reduce teachers to either high-level clerks implementing the orders of others within the school bureaucracy or to specialised technicians”. It is clear that a self-fulfilling prophecy obtains, where teachers behave in the way they are imaged; yet they are often criticized for this very tendency.

However, and this is the point of this study, teachers do resist the ways in which they are constructed. They reconstruct themselves when they realise that the old methods were not working. This may become the impetus for them to change their personal self which, in turn,

motivates them to improve their professional practice.

### **5.3 Dealing with restraints**

According to Bell and Gilbert (1994:488), the second phase of personal development “involved dealing with restraints and then attending to feelings and concerns of behaving differently”. There are times when critical incidents, whether positive or negative, have wider and far-reaching repercussions or consequences. In this instance, Tina relates a very painful and poignant memory related to the harsh system of the old days and how she dealt with this particular problem.

#### **I left the principal’s office in tears**

*Tina: A newly appointed teacher was on probation in her first year of teaching and would only receive confirmation after a Department official visited her class. In my first year, a particular Department official found practically everything wrong with my teaching and compilation of record books. I left the principal’s office in tears after meeting with the official. However, this for me was a turning point as I was more determined and motivated to improve myself. With hindsight, many years later, when I recalled this particular incident, I realised that this incident will remain with me and make me determined to better myself.*

For Tina, her experience with the official was traumatic as he dwelt on the negative aspects of her work and had no words of encouragement about her teaching. She was unhappy about how she was treated. Once again, we see a dogmatic approach being adopted, where no supportive ethos is invoked.

In essence, this type of experience serves, as Pillay and Govinden (2007:5) argue, “to sometimes galvanize the teacher into a different mode of behavior”. Teachers may use such an experience as a platform for change. They may refuse to be relegated to the role of victim, and may try to remove themselves from debilitating situations. In Tina’s case her frustrations and restlessness propelled her to see herself differently. She rose above her negative experiences, to prove that she was capable and competent. Sikes, Measor & Woods (1985) suggest that how one adapts and seeks to change situations and how one manages one’s roles and constraints are important; and that critical phases and turning points actually make one to take particular kinds of action. In this case, Tina claimed the space to see herself differently, to re-image and re-

position herself, and reconstitute her identity as a teacher.

This is a powerful narrative, as indeed this whole study indicates, of the movement from identity-loss to identity-gain, of the dismantling of imposed power to a process of self-empowerment, of the transition from victim to agents of change. While this study is located within the teaching community, it is also applicable of what occurs in wider contexts, where the human spirit will not be diminished and daunted. The process of identity reconstruction may take place in obscure hidden places, such as in teaching, or may be played out on the wider stage of historical or political realities [the narratives of apartheid activists, Mandela is one such example]. Both types of narratives must be acknowledged and celebrated.

Similarly, back to my study, Simon's frustration led to personal development as a way of dealing with restraints. Simon relates one such incident:

#### **Finding myself on the back-foot**

*Simon: I was declared an "excess" educator in 2003 and was transferred to many schools from 2003 to 2007. My experience at a former Model C School was frustrating and enriching. Frustrating, because I got used to the work ethic at the school, which was higher intensity, and I constantly found myself on the back-foot. As my stay progressed I was able to get on track and manage fairly well. Also, my subsequent visits to other schools gave me an opportunity to encounter a variety of management and leadership styles.*

Being declared "excess" in his school was a frustrating experience for Simon. He moved from "school to school" as the need arose. Unpredictably, he explains that the experiences in these schools were actually enriching because these moments served to develop a sense of mission. As hurdles to be overcome, they propelled him to change and see himself differently, and search for a new self.

The initial frustration and restlessness he encountered because of the "work ethic" at the Model C School changed when he was able to progress and cope. The new experiences at the various schools were life-changing as he was developing as a teacher. Thus, Simon's experiences led to an attitudinal change. This is in keeping with Evans's (2002) study that attitudinal development is a process whereby teachers' attitude to their work is modified and has two change features, intellectual and motivational. This refers to teachers' intellect and their motivation to do better.

What is evident is that the negative experiences led to a personal change in Simon's attitude. Bell & Gilbert (1994:485) argue correctly "when a teacher is aware of a problem and experiences dissatisfaction, he is moved to take the initiative in different ways to address the situation".

### **Maintaining records that were irrelevant...**

*Pam: We received little training and were unequipped for curriculum change. This led to difficulties and in addition educators were inundated with loads of administrative duties. Educators spent long hours, working late at night trying to maintain records that were irrelevant. Amidst all of this I realised teaching is my calling and therefore I need to adopt a positive attitude.*

For Pam, her frustrations stemmed from the fact that continued curriculum changes brought many challenges too quickly for the educators. The curriculum focused on administrative records rather than the teacher delivering lessons in the classroom. What is evident is that more emphasis was placed on "trying to maintain records". Irrelevant records had led to her frustrations. However, for teachers such as Pam, feeling despondent and wanting to throw in the towel, according to Pillay & Govinden (2007), was not an option. Finding and creating a stable positive attitude within herself is seeing herself differently. Pam realizes that she was uncomfortable and what she was doing was wrong. By identifying that there was a problem, she was actually propelling herself to think differently about herself. These particular kinds of teachers were, in essence, as Bell & Gilbert (1994:486) state, "seeking new teaching strategies that work, new theoretical perspectives with which to think about teaching, to improve the learning in the classroom and to learn how to put new ideas into action. The personal development may have been as a result of school development discussions and initiatives or an individual teacher's deliberations."

### **Resisting and revising beliefs and practices**

In dealing with restraints, Simon, Tina and Pam experienced new meanings of the teacher self that they adopted. Being a non-traditional teacher and adopting non-traditional approaches of teaching and learning, they were resisting their traditional beliefs and practices. The following excerpts illustrate some of their resistance:

*Simon: My students queried to as why I don't give them enough notes like other*

*teachers do. The students were critical as they felt they needed the notes to learn for their tests. Whilst I require that at times they write up their own experiments and conclusion to their experiments and construct and build their own notes. But, my students don't like this, as this means that they have to think and write.*

Simon pointed out that his learners criticised him, when he was actually acting in their interest by making them independent learners. The teacher's task was to change the mindset of learners, so that they come to accept that actual experimentation, construction and thinking about their work and drawing conclusions were more beneficial than mere note taking. Thus, Simon was struggling in the classroom, as he wanted a more learner-centred approach. In essence, his learners, who were schooled in traditional, passive methods, opposed this. Similarly, Pam encountered similar practices, as the following excerpt demonstrates:

*Pam: We place a lot of emphasis on bookwork. For example, management and Department of Education may judge the teacher's performance on the quality of students' workbooks. Emphasis was placed on having a tidy book with worksheets neatly cut and stuck. Whether students understood the sections and lessons or not were immaterial. In some instances a brighter student assisted the slow learner with completion of worksheets and compilation of notes.*

Pam faces similar dilemmas as Simon. Teachers were judged purely on their ability to keep good records. Thus, meticulous workbooks, with worksheets cut and stuck neatly, denoted teacher excellence and competence. Teachers are confronted with choices. Do they continue to perpetuate inferior learning in the guise of efficiency, or do they take the less-travelled road and take risks? Pam gradually came to question the quality of teaching and learning that she was engaging in. The teachers realised that the way they were doing things was not working. In challenging what it means to facilitate student learning, Pam demonstrates her frustration and desire to engage in meaningful learning. This became the impetus for her to change and motivated her to come up with new meanings of teacher self.

The teacher's choices should be in keeping with good, critical, educational practice. Shulman (2004:514) argues "that we all know from our practice as well as from theory, active learning results in more enduring learning than passive learning" and that the first principle of effective learning for students and their teachers is the principle of activity. Active learning, according to him "is when the students are active – when they are investigating, talking to one another, sharing information and challenging one another's ideas."

The concerns mentioned by the participants in my study need to be addressed by the teachers in general, in order for personal development to take place. Bell & Gilbert (1994) argue that addressing and resolving the concerns have both a cognitive and an affective strand and addressing these concerns was most crucial if teacher development was to continue. The data in my study illustrates clearly that teachers were unhappy with the way they are put into straitjackets. This is quite different from the perception out there that teachers are apathetic and lacking in morale.

How, then, do teachers construct themselves? What is their attitude to their work? Is it seen merely as a job? In my sample, the teachers reconstruct how they see themselves in relation to learners, their work, their attitudes and beliefs. They give the teacher self a new meaning. And they seem to do this almost instinctively, with challenges keeping them motivated.

#### **5.4 Feeling Empowered**

The third element of personal development that takes place, according to Bell and Gilbert (1994:492), is when teachers were “feeling empowered to be responsible for their own development”. Developing a sense of trust is part of this personal development. In other words, developing a trust that things will balance themselves out over a longer period of time rather than in one lesson was important. For instance:

*Simon: I sometimes use new teaching strategies and spend longer time on one topic.*

As these particular teachers develop they concluded that being a teacher was about the way they think and the way they respond to the learner’s thinking in the classroom and it was not just about completing activities to fill up learners’ work- books.

So the impetus for change within the personal self is real, as teachers come to terms with what is required in their classrooms. It is also important to note that activity alone is not a precondition for learning. Shulman (2004:514) argues that “we learn by thinking about what we are doing.” Tina illustrates this point herself:

*Tina: Children learn not just by engaging or doing things but also by thinking about what they do. For instance, I give my students opportunities to think about why they got their problems or sums in a mathematics lesson wrong. I follow this up with a discussion of what went wrong and thereafter encourage students to*

*think about the right way of approaching a problem.*

Thus, what we see is Tina's impetus for change in the personal self, which leads her to move away from traditional methods to innovative methods. This results in learning and development for herself. According to Bell and Gilbert (1994:492), "when a teacher moved away from being a technician and adopted constructivist strategies, a teacher responded to learners, and gained, rather than expended, energy."

Personal development also involved dealing with negative feelings and concerns related to behaving differently in the classroom when one initiated the change process. Where mistakes and failed ventures occurred, teachers were inclined to learn and develop from them rather than throw in the towel. In other words, for these particular practising teachers - Simon, Pam and Tina - behaving differently in the classroom included the acceptance of failure, with the resolve to move on.

**"I have developed a tolerance for mistakes and failed ventures..."**

*Simon: I have developed a tolerance for mistakes and failed ventures. I have developed a habit of constantly reading and researching information in my learning area so that I can be best equipped to fulfil my obligation as a teacher. I have gained more in my teaching career through my failed experiences than my accomplishments.*

For Simon, he learned to cope with mistakes and failed ventures. These failed ventures have allowed him to gain more from them.

**To research or read more**

**Pam:** *I am of the opinion that a teacher must be well-versed in the subjects they teach. They must have knowledge of learning outcomes, assessment standards and have core knowledge of the subject. For instance, I may be teaching a lesson and may not understand what I am really doing and then decide to research or read more about a particular section and then re-teach and then I realize that it all fits in.*

Pam mentioned that teachers need to be thoroughly prepared, with topics that are well-

researched, before commencing a lesson. Personal development takes place when, according to Bell and Gilbert (1994:489), “teachers develop strategies to address these challenges in the classroom and attend to their feelings and concerns”. What is heartening is that Pam as well as Simon has decided to read further and research information to improve their learning and development. Personal development was taking place, and they were taking responsibility for it.

### **Trying to perfect my craft took time**

*Tina: Trying to perfect my craft took time. Initially I was depressed because of the hopelessness of the situation that infiltrated on the part of teachers and students. However, as a teacher I know that I had to make a difference and did not want to be a failure and give up but promised to excel and be the best.*

For Tina, her self-realisation revolved around doing something about the situation rather than letting the situation overwhelm her. She was seeking an attitudinal change. As Tina mentions, she wanted to “make a difference” and “excel”. What we see is that Tina had created, as Nieto (2003:11) argues, “an affirming climate in the classroom whereby teachers work hard to strengthen their knowledge and ability in the classroom”. As Evans (2002) also states, teacher development involves professionalism which includes a process whereby teachers’ attitude to their work is modified.

## **5.5 Conclusion**

So what is the impetus for change at the personal level? The thematic analysis above was derived from life story interviews with three teachers. Within the interpretive paradigm, I am offering an understanding of teachers’ desire to learn and develop in their practice from the personal self. So how are these teachers keeping themselves motivated from within the personal self? Are they still mechanical transmitters of knowledge and implementers of the curriculum, or are they dealing with constraints and becoming agents of change?

The study revealed that these particular teachers - Simon, Pam and Tina - were able to change certain practices. They were not content to accept their frustrations over adopting traditional methods of teaching and being implementers, where their work was “routinised and de-skilled” (Hargreaves, 1994:117). They set about searching for something new. In essence, their frustrations were actually putting pressure on them to change. These teachers realised that they

were stagnating with regards to their growth and learning. Hence, the change came about to overcome their frustrations and, as Bell & Gilbert (1994:486) stated, “Feel better about themselves”. They were persuaded to learn how to put new ideas, suggestions, and theoretical perspectives into practice to improve learning. Their personal development came about as a result of discussions, initiatives, individual deliberations and reflections.

Most importantly, the teachers’ personal development was enhanced when teachers began dealing with constraints rather than capitulating to them. These teachers related varied encounters they experienced in their teaching career which served as a platform for change. For example, Tina recounts an experience with a department official, Simon spoke of the experience of being an “excess” teacher and Pam related her frustration with continued curriculum change, where the emphasis was on maintaining administrative records.

The study found that these teachers were not prepared to give-up. They propelled themselves to think and behave differently in relation to their teacher work, and to their learners and colleagues. Actually, they were resisting the traditional beliefs and practices that they themselves were schooled and socialized into. In addition, personal development was enhanced when teachers felt empowered to be responsible for their own development. The study showed that these teachers developed a sense of trust, and this was part of their personal development. Teachers felt empowered when they were confident and competent in the classroom. Their confidence was boosted with the new teaching strategies and activities. Their narratives give new meaning to the concept of “pedagogy of hope”.

## **CHAPTER 6**

### **ANALYSIS**

#### **6.1 Introduction**

In this chapter, I probe the teacher responses to the Critical Question, “What is the impetus for change from the professional self on one’s professional practice”? In this section of the analysis, I combine the social and professional development dimensions of teacher development as espoused by Bell and Gilbert (1994). Within Bell & Gilbert’s (1994:498) framework, “social development involves working with and relating to other teachers and students in new ways”, and professional development involves changing concepts and beliefs about education, changing classroom activities and initiating other development activities. These particular teachers that I have interviewed do not want to see their teacher work simply as a job. They want to see themselves differently and to engage in teacher change through professional development.

This analysis will be presented in two parts: Section A and Section B.

Section A is framed around two themes within the Social Dimension of teacher learning as a platform for cultivating new meanings and ways in the impetus for change. The emphasis is on:

**Section A: Valuing learning in a social context for teacher change**  
**Initiating collaborative ways of working for teacher change**

In Section B, the analysis will be presented in four themes within the Professional Dimension as a platform to enacting new identities and practices as teachers. The emphasis is on:

**Section B: Teacher engaging in new activities and methods of teaching**  
**Teacher as a learner**  
**Teacher who teaches with love and care**  
**Teacher as an agent of change**

#### **6.2 Section A**

In this section, I will be discussing the Social Dimension of teacher development. This will include the participants as teachers and how they interact with their colleagues and how these

social spaces allow teachers to see themselves differently.

### **6.2.1 Valuing collaborative ways of working**

The teachers valued new ways of working. They were supporting each other through meaningful dialogue, listening to each other and working with other teachers. There was much value that was placed on these relationships. Teachers work collaboratively with other teachers as well as students and these social spaces allowed them to re-work their meanings of who they are as teachers. When teachers work together in this context, it is seen as valuable. Sen (2006) re-iterates this view that “an identity with others in the same social community can make the lives of all go much better in that community and thus this is seen as a resource- a capital”.

According to Bell & Gilbert (1994:486), “isolation in the classroom was problematic”. While being the only adult in a classroom can make one feel safe from negative criticisms and pressures to change, it does not provide the ideal context for the emergence of new ideas, support and feedback necessary for teacher development. The teachers presented both negative and positive effects of the workshops. They did criticize the workshops for tending to be a one-way street. For example, teachers in this study felt that while they attend workshops to gain knowledge, skills and insights on how to raise the performance levels of their students, most of the workshops ignore the different needs of students and the experiences of the teacher in the classroom. The teacher is generally required to implement the curriculum irrespective of whether it is appropriate to the students or not. Simon felt disillusioned that the workshops ignored “how they taught” as teachers, through a prescribed “one-size-fits-all” approach. His argument is in line with Lieberman & Pointer Mace (2008:227), who indicate that teachers are given a “one-size-fits-all set of professional workshops that deny the variability on how to teach and that this prevents teachers from supporting their peers and deepening their knowledge about students”.

But such frustration could have positive effects, as with Tina, who describes her workshop experiences as a turning point in her motivation to work as a teacher. She found the space that the workshops afforded her to interact with other teachers helpful in the long run:

*Our experiences at most workshops organized by department were not taken into account. It was a top-down approach. My discussions with the teachers were the turning point as we talked about difficult situations and engaged in meaningful dialogue that contributed to our development.*

What can be done so that teachers can see themselves differently? What was inspiring for her was “listening” to other teachers getting to know what worked in their classes and sharing their “successes and failures”. As Shulman (2004) states, efforts at schools must create conditions for teacher learning and development that encourages collaboration, reflection and deliberation to help teachers to work together and supplement each other’s knowledge.

For Simon, he derived “credibility” by listening to teachers about what worked and what did not work at the workshop:

*Certainly for me, listening to other teachers from my school as well as other schools was inspiring as I got to know how they coped with certain circumstances and also to realize that they were experiencing the same difficulties as me. I got to know their successes and failures and this gave me more credibility than sifting knowledge from books.*

He felt that this was more meaningful. Tina also agreed that “engaging in meaningful dialogue” was beneficial to her. For instance, by liaising and discussing with other teachers she realized that they were experiencing “the same difficulties”. Hence, this form of discussion was a way of valuing collaborative ways of working, in line with Bell & Gilbert’s (1994:490) argument of social development, where teachers were offering suggestions for new teaching activities, suggesting solutions to problems and voicing their opinions and views. Pam also responded favourably in terms of her experiences of working with other teachers.

*Pam: There is a danger of working on your own as you are unable to see your own shortcoming but others can pick it up. Also, when you become aware and see what others are doing, you get inspired, get new ideas. Also, I feel change is not bad. Change is good, for the better. Therefore, working with others helps you to understand and solve issues.*

Pam’s comments are aligned to the position taken by Bell & Gilbert’s social development perspective. Do teachers soldier alone, or do they work in community? What is the connection between independence and interdependence as a teacher? Pam is aware that working in isolation is problematic. She observes that “there is a danger of working on your own as you are unable to see your shortcomings”. Bell & Gilbert (1994:490) argue that by working with others you get “new ideas, support and feedback” necessary for teacher development. These elements were necessary for teacher learning. Steyn (2008) and Maistry (2008) support this argument that

learning is not individual but occurs in the context of people's lived experience of participation. The emphasis is on collaboration and co-operative learning. Lieberman and Pointer Mace (2008), and Bell and Gilbert (1994) agree that the benefit of working with other teachers is better than working in isolation.

The teachers' experiences show that the absence of substantive development programmes to address teachers' needs has resulted in teachers seeking alternative options, namely teacher-learning communities. Maistry (2008) argues that teachers are poorly equipped to handle the implementation of the new curriculum, and suggests that communities be developed. He argues for a "community of practice" framework as a useful means of analysing teacher learning. Bell and Gilbert (1994:486) concur, stating that "teacher development programmes clearly involve taking risks, but the benefits of collaborating and working with other teachers to improve one's professional practice are more rewarding and greater." So when teachers work together they become articulate and critical about their practice and the meanings that inform their practices. This learning space gives them the confidence to rethink existing or tacit meanings and practices and opens up the possibilities for the creation of new meanings of themselves and their work as teachers. As Nieto (1994:125) re-iterates, "Excellent teachers don't develop full-blown at graduation, nor are they just born teachers. Given the dynamics of their work, they need to continually rediscover who they are and what they stand for through their dialogue, collaboration with peers and through reflection about their craft."

### **6.2.2 Initiating collaborative ways of working**

Teachers began to develop by seeking and initiating collaborative ways of working through relationships and activities with other teachers. They were liaising with other teachers and discussions were held by engaging in interactive activities. An example of initiating collaborative ways of working is reflected in the teachers' narratives. Initially, the teachers pointed out that they were reluctant, negative and sceptical about implementing the new curriculum. However, after involvement in discussions and liaising with other teachers a more positive disposition emerged. As Hamilton et al. (2008:20) points out, "it is a story of experience that attempts to share information and learn from it". This is illustrated when Simon remarks:

*Initially, milestones were confusing and vague, but now I have a better understanding... After liaising with other teachers, discussing milestones, assessment standards and learning outcomes, I feel more confident about how to*

*adapt the new curriculum.*

In Simon's opinion, the "milestones were vague and confusing" because teachers were exposed to only a one-day workshop to familiarise themselves with new strategies and terminology. As a result, there was inadequate training to implement the curriculum successfully and this was not working well for them. However, for Simon, working collaboratively boosted his confidence. He was able to discuss issues and get feedback from other teachers. What is evident is that teachers have shifted from being negative, to becoming more confident.

*Pam: When I started, some of the learning areas I was not familiar with. I just narrated and used the traditional methods of teaching, which is cascading knowledge to the students. However, after liaising with other teachers and with discussion with them I have become more innovative, confident and motivated. Discussions also took place informally outside school.*

Pam explained how she was able to use knowledge that she acquired from her workshops and discussions. Also, she no longer "narrated" her lesson like she did previously but developed lessons that allowed for more pupil engagement. We see that Pam's understanding and thinking, her attitude and ideas about the new curriculum and her role in it, changes.

Through liaising and discussions with other teachers, the teachers in the study realised that they had to change and adapt to make a difference in their work, their lives and their students' lives. They strongly believed that development was enhanced when working with other teachers. Bell & Gilbert (1994:490) argue that "social development continues when teachers indicated that they were valuing collaborative ways of working".

These particular teachers develop and collaborate with each other. Through liaising with each other, they were able to actively foster a sound working relationship with other teachers. These networks were formed to discuss issues inside and outside school which contributed to forming trusting and supporting relationships in and through which teachers' agency to change their ways of thinking developed. Hargreaves (1994:58) states that "trust is essential to the build up of effective and meaningful collaborative work relationships".

## **Interactive activities enhance teacher development**

Teachers learn and develop when they are active and not passive. Teacher learning becomes more meaningful through interaction among teachers. Shulman (1997:514) re-iterates that “active learning results in more enduring learning than passive learning”. In the same vein, Tina recognizes that interactive activities enhance teacher development:

*Tina: There has to be many social interactive activities both at school and outside. These interactive activities will enhance teacher development. Also, there must be meaningful workshops, and I have learned extensively from the workshops conducted by NAPTOSA. These were meaningful uplifting and transformative. Cluster meetings, teacher development discussion among colleagues and networking among neighbouring schools must also be meaningful. We cannot isolate ourselves only to the teaching profession.*

Tina believes that teachers develop by belonging to a “cluster community”. This is where teachers belong to the same Ward Level and discuss assessment strategies, activities and scope of programmes to be taught for the year. She elaborated on the positives of belonging to a cluster community. In her opinion, the National Professional Teachers’ Organisation of South Africa (NAPTOSA) workshops were inspiring and teacher learning was taking place. The words, “meaningful, uplifting and transformative”, suggest this. This was in line with Bell & Gilbert’s (1994:493) framework that “as teachers developed more, they began to actively seek and initiate activities with other teachers which fostered their development”.

The interactive activities allow for interaction among the teachers and this allows them to become confident. They gain confidence through interaction, which includes sharing information, talking to one another, challenging one another’s ideas, questioning, liaising and collaborating with teachers. These teachers were able to work together in ways that foster support for each other’s learning and at the same time also increase their knowledge base. Actually, for these teachers, working within a community of like-minded teachers allowed for a distinct desire for new knowledge and new ways of working. This is in line with Hargreave’s (1994) argument, that interactive activities can take many forms. For example, teachers can collaborate, develop curriculum and other kinds of planning, engage in peer teaching and mentor programmes to novice teachers. The teachers were of the opinion that there are many challenges confronting them and that it was impossible to work alone. The challenges they experience could be addressed in the company of others. Therefore, the interactive activities

created opportunities for them to be successful. In essence, teachers were thinking about their jobs and seeing themselves differently. Previously, the teachers worked in isolation and accepted this state of affairs. But, now they were attaching new meaning to the teacher self by initiating and working collaboratively. Thus, they appreciated that a huge part of learning happens through interaction among teachers.

### **Changed relationship with students**

Teachers further developed within the social dimension because of the changed relationships with students. For the first time, teachers were doing things with students and relating to them in new ways. The following excerpts illustrate this:

*Tina: I started the Environmental Club with students and started doing things that I never did before. There was inquiry and investigation.*

*Pam: The Debating Club allowed me to develop new relationships with my students. We were active members of the club.*

*Simon: The Soccer Club gave me new ways of working with and relating to other students.*

These particular teachers were able to learn and develop by forming new and meaningful relationships with other learners. These teachers were working collaboratively with learners. Within these clubs teachers became more committed and enthusiastic about the relationships they developed. What is evident is that teachers' and learners' relationships had changed from traditional ones, where teachers were domineering and authoritarian, to more collaborative ways of working among learners and teachers. One way was through interactive activities. These activities in the various clubs allowed teachers and learners to investigate, conduct inquiries and be active members of their respective clubs.

Through working collaboratively they began to cultivate a passion for their work and were committed to their activities. This social space gave new meanings to the teacher self. The clubs provided a source of feedback and support for these teachers and for the first time they were doing things differently.

### **6.3 Conclusion**

This study shows that these teachers valued learning in a social context as they found working

with other teachers and students inspiring. Listening, engaging in dialogue and working with others were key elements to social development in my study. When these particular teachers talk and listen to others, they see how other teachers do things differently. This propels them to also work with their challenges and constraints. These teachers realised that their initial isolation was a problem. However, seeking alternative options allowed for learning and development in their professional practice.

Engaging in interactive activities allowed for liaising with others. It was within these social spaces where interaction took place that teachers became confident and were able to think differently about themselves. These social spaces provided new ways and new ideas of working and the benefits of working with other teachers were perceived as greater. These particular teachers initiated and engaged in activities and relationships that fostered their learning and development within the social dimension of teacher development. For instance, for the first time teachers were relating to students in new ways in their respective clubs. So within the social dimension, teachers were learning and developing through dialogue, listening to others, talking, liaising and engaging in interactive activities. These are key ingredients in terms of what motivates teachers to imagine a different teacher self.

## **6.4 Section B**

In this section of my study, I discuss the Professional Dimension of teacher development. Within the social dimension of learning, we understood how listening to other teachers, dialoguing and working with others, liaising and engaging in interactive activities motivated teachers to construct themselves differently as teachers and the responsibilities that they took up in this position.

In this section, there are four themes that will be discussed that foreground teachers' re-configured selves:

- Teacher engaging in new activities and methods of teaching
- Teacher as a learner
- Teacher who teaches with love and care
- Teacher as agent of change

#### 6.4.1 Teacher engaging in new activities and methods of teaching

Within the professional dimension teachers had to change their meanings and understandings of how they worked. There were certain things that they were doing. One of them was trying out new activities and methods to re-think and re-structure the way they worked. Within Evan's (2002) definition of teacher development, functional development is identified as one of the elements of teacher development and reflects change and is a process whereby teachers' performance may be improved. In the same way, these particular teachers were engaging in functional development and were improving their performance by using other activities and methods.

##### Teachers had to learn how to facilitate learning

*Pam: Teachers have to become facilitators. They had to learn how to facilitate learning by designing and implementing group work, co-operative learning and teaching strategies. Furthermore, teachers have to be involved in research as information is changing all the time. We as teachers need to be aware about policies and methodologies. We must change with the times if we want to make a meaningful contribution in the lives of our students.*



*Figure 5: Teacher using innovative methods*

Feeling constrained, Pam had to move beyond the traditional methods, and become innovative in her teaching, as is evident in the drawing (Refer to Figure 5), of learners engaging in self discovery. Pam recognised the need to be a different kind of teacher and offer something different to her learners. As Bell & Gilbert (1994:487) state: "Using new teaching activities was seen as likely to lead to better learning conditions, better classroom management and feeling

better about one self as a teacher”.

What is the impetus for change in the teachers’ professional practice? According to Aronowitz & Giroux (1985:31), it is “important that teachers take active responsibility for raising questions about what they teach, how they teach and what the larger goals are for which they are striving”. Bell & Gilbert (1994:492) also highlighted that “being teachers was about the way they think and the way they respond to students’ thinking in the classroom”.

### **Learning to focus on individual learners**

*Tina: I decided to focus on individual learners with barriers to learning. I had to develop and create a programme that would benefit these learners. I had to respond to these learners as they were crying out for help.*

Tina explored other methods by creating programmes to improve and uplift learners who were experiencing difficulties. This can be aligned to Guskey (2002:382), who “defines professional development as efforts to bring about change in the classroom practice of teachers and for most of them becoming a better teacher means enhancing student learning outcomes”. Similarly, Tina was trying to improve learner outcomes by creating other programmes. This showed that she saw herself differently and was willing to try out different methods of teaching.

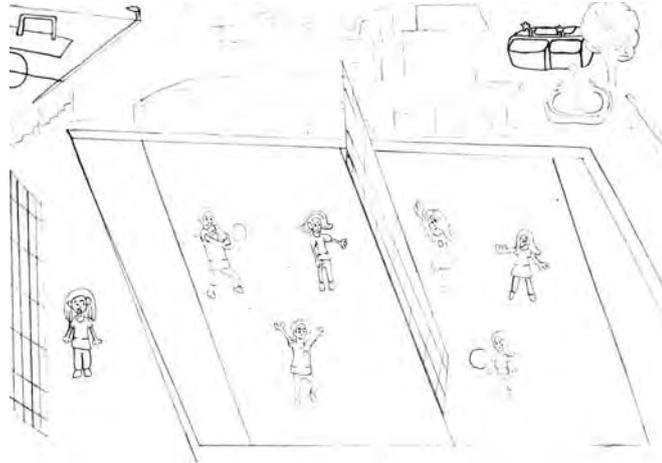
Tina, responding to these learners, attempted to rethink and restructure her work, and helped foster her own learning and development.

### **Insatiable appetite to go on**

*Simon: I have decided to focus on the positive aspects of being a teacher and ignore the barrage of negativity engulfing the profession and this has allowed me to stay above my game. Change is good and it allows me to grow. The sense of satisfaction and fulfilment I experience through my learners accomplishment in their daily lives, gives me this insatiable appetite to go on.*

Simon views change in a positive light. He sees change as a means of growing rather than stagnating. Concentrating on the positive rather than the negative was more meaningful to him. He derives a great deal of satisfaction and fulfilment when his learners do well, and this propels him to keep going. For Simon, seeing the thrill and excitement on the learners’ faces during his

lessons is what motivates him to keep going. A drawing (refer to figure 6) shows learners' enthusiasm and excitement during a physical education lesson and what it means for them. This excitement clearly keeps him going.



**Figure 6: Learners display enjoyment and this is what keeps Simon going**

### **Changing learners' abilities in the classroom is what drives me**

*Pam: As a teacher being able to change learner's abilities in the classroom for the better is what drives me. So I put aside my own wants and needs and stay here for the children and in so doing ensure that I take responsibility in serving them and improving their results. It angers me to see how nothing is done for learners with barriers to learning. Some of them have passed from grade one and still unable to read and construct sentences in the intermediate phase and the disappointing thing is that there are people who would complain and be negative but hardly ever take steps to improve the situation.*

### **Teacher making an impact**

*Tina: My challenge is to see learners working against their barriers and becoming self confident young people. For example, I taught a second language English learner how to read in Grade 5. At the end of that year the child thanked me for making an impact in her life because she now wanted to read so many interesting books. I was no longer a technician merely implementing curriculum but focused on the needs of the learners.*

Pam expressed anger and annoyance with people who were constantly negative and complacent about everything and who completely ignored learners with “barriers to learning”. Although she added that it “angers me to see how nothing is done for learners with barriers to learning”, she, on the other hand, has taken responsibility for improving their results. She believes in serving learners and improving their results. Making a difference in their lives was important to her. These, according to Nieto (2003:73), are “positive forces”. Rather than being complacent, Pam was able to move away from anger and concentrate on the positive aspects of teaching and learning. Similarly, we see Tina’s resolve to improve her learners’ performance and how this transformed her teaching experience.

These teachers presented themselves as teachers who experience joy and enthusiasm to go on. For Simon, despite the negativity and challenges with which he is confronted, he still forges ahead, especially when he can see his learners’ accomplishments. For him, this keeps him going (Nieto, 2003). Similarly, Tina also re-iterates that working with learners with barriers to learning and seeing them progress is rewarding for her. These particular teachers see themselves differently, and therefore, are now engaging in specific things that are different.

Sikes, Measor & Woods (1985) consider how teachers adapt to change and manage roles and constraints imposed on them. They state that there are particular kinds of actions that teachers embark on to deal with challenges in their path. For instance, teachers may focus on activities that foster learner accomplishments and may find ways of overcoming learners’ barriers to learning, as a way of managing their roles and constraints. They are embarking on a particular kind of action. Tina shows how she engages in simple activities, which have positive effects on the learners:

*Tina: I am also cutting old magazines to create collages in my art and culture lesson or teaching drama to my Grade 5 class and see the learners light up as we act out scenes.*

Thus, for Tina, using innovative methods of teaching became a matter of course. From the interviews, it is clear that these particular teachers in the intermediate phase are also confronted with learners who are struggling to read and write. These learners are not taught the basic skills.

*Pam: I am going to be true to what I believe and not worry what others think. There are many children that can’t read or express themselves. Therefore, I have established a routine of reading and writing in each class and also engage in*

*remedial lesson after contact time.*

Pam goes on to explain how she engages in activities that are meaningful.

*Pam: I am not satisfied with the prescribed activities and spend nights designing worksheets by consulting various books. Some of my colleagues question me as to why I am wasting my time when everything is prepared for you in the form of pre-packaged lesson plans. My response is that the pre-packaged lesson plans does not cater for all learners.*

Pam is re-defining her identity by using different activities to cater for her learners. She resists the traditional model and is revising her role as a teacher. As Ritchie & Wilson (2000:82) argue, a teacher may resist the “implied prescription for her teaching and move her practices... more closely with her beliefs.” Thus we see teachers continue to rewrite and redefine their teacher self by improving and changing their professional practice. This is in keeping with the view expressed by Pithouse (2004), who claims that there are certain teaching experiences that are memorable because they magnify certain aspects of ourselves as teachers, and that these experiences feed teachers’ professional and operational growth. So in Pam’s case, her teaching experience is memorable when her learners are able to read as a result of her intervention programme. And this, in turn, allows for professional and operational growth.

The analysis of the stories highlights aspects of teacher development. Bell & Gilbert (1994:493) state that “Teacher development can be viewed as teachers learning, rather than...getting teachers to change.” In learning, the teachers were developing their classroom practices and changing. At the same time, they were overcoming challenges with which they were confronted. These particular teachers were re-thinking and re-structuring their teacher work and this contributed to their learning and development. In line with this argument, Fraser et al. (2007:157) locates “professional learning and professional development within a more general concept of teacher change and suggest that teacher change can be described in terms of learning, development, growth, improvement and implementation of something new and different”.

The new activities and teaching methods actually led to better learning outcomes, with teachers being more confident and feeling better about themselves. These teachers realized that they no longer were technicians but were creative individuals, there to enhance their learners’ potential and thinking. They were developing new ways of interacting with their learners - ways that were proving meaningful and different to what they were doing previously. These activities and

methods of teaching had actually fostered learner development as well as teacher development. Shulman (1997:504) “believes that the engine of reform is the classroom teacher and the successes ultimately rest on the quality of the pedagogical interaction between the teachers and learners.” In the same vein, these particular teachers believe that they have a vital role to play in the lives of their learners, and therefore, they are not just content to do a job but rather ensure that they make a difference in their learners’ lives.

#### **6.4.2 Teacher as a learner**

The teachers’ stories illustrate that they re-constructed themselves as learners. According to Bell & Gilbert (1994), teachers were encouraged to adopt the role of teacher as learner, as they value finding new information.

*Tina: I am continually changing by reading relevant documents. Therefore, I am confident because of my knowledge of curriculum issues.*

*Simon: I have developed a habit of reading, especially the progress on the crisis of our education in post-apartheid South Africa. I am also finding out information in my learning area so that I can be best equipped to fulfil my obligation as a teacher. I am always trying to find new methodology that I have read about.*

Tina elicited new information by reading “relevant documents”, while Simon was reading books on South African education. What is evident is that these teachers were now adopting the role of teacher as learner and as a result, they did not feel inadequate and incompetent. These teachers were learning and keeping themselves updated with new information and trends. This line of argument is in keeping with an essential finding in Swart and Oswald’s (2008) study, where participants indicated that they regard their identity as teachers to be linked to being a learner. So, experienced teachers became apprentices in learning, in order to accommodate the dynamic and diverse learning needs of the children in their classrooms. Actually, the teachers in my study were finding ways to improve their own knowledge about their content, curriculum and pedagogy. Similarly, Shulman (1997:514) states that “in the lives of teachers, enduring learning occurs when the teacher is an active agent in the process, not passive, and that teacher learning becomes more active through ... inquiry”.

Tina went on to explain that by “attending workshops, belonging to cluster committees and networking with peers” she was able to share her classroom experiences with others and obtain

feedback. In essence, both were engaging in, what Bell & Gilbert (1994:491) call, “cognitive development”. This includes obtaining new information by reading about the curriculum. Tina’s comments that she is “changing” registers this dynamic professional development, as compared to the traditional teacher. The words, “I am prepared to learn”, and “I am attentive to learners and sensitive to their emotions”, illustrates this.

Similarly Pam echoes the same statements in the following excerpts.

### **Researching and reading everyday**

*Pam: I am never afraid to try out new methodology therefore I am researching and reading daily. Information is changing all the time. Teachers must be aware of recent policies, methodologies, strategies to use to assist learners and to provide holistic learning. You must change with the time. You cannot be constant all the time.*

The new identity of the teacher as a learner is transforming how they see themselves. Thus, what we see is that Pam is re-defining herself, by being updated with new information, to keep abreast of developments in teaching. In addition, she makes an effort to become aware “of recent policies, methodologies and strategies to assist learners”. Thus, she creates new understandings of her subject matter by researching and reading. The statement, “Teachers have to be involved in research”, conveys this. Nieto (2003:81) re-iterates this argument when she states that “doing research before each lesson is an important part of being a teacher”.

Similarly, Tina has naturally assumed the role of teacher as learner:

### **Being a creative teacher**

*Tina: Although there’s so much to do as far as what’s expected of a teacher I still frequently surf the internet looking for new resource material and subject matter in my respective learning areas.*

*Simon: Deciding how and what to teach is challenging at times daunting. Reading and engaging in newest developments is encouraging.*

For Simon, keeping abreast of new developments are important and this he does by reading and

being a learner. According to Bell & Gilbert (1994:487), “teachers need to adopt the role of teacher as learner so that they could view their professional development as learning and not remedial”. Their new identity as learners is transforming the way they see themselves. These particular teachers are clearly researching and reading to re-educate themselves and to change their traditional teacher role. These are crucial processes in the teachers’ learning and development and shows whatever they are doing motivates them.

### **6.4.3 Teacher who teaches with love and care**

Showing love and respect to every learner is what is important to these practicing teachers. Forming special relationships and looking at ways to assist them is defining teaching as love. The following excerpts illustrate these relationships of love and care.

#### **Recognising the need for caring relationships with learners**

*Simon: The important thing is the love and respect I have for the children and therefore this transcends to fulfilment and joy in the classroom. Although, there are many obstacles as far as problem learners, I have realised that all learners are different and that they should be afforded equal opportunities in the classroom.*

Simon points out that by showing love and respect towards the learners, he is able to bring out their potential. The learners reciprocate, and this keeps him going and adds to his development and growth as a teacher. Such an achievement is sheer joy. Simon had come to the realization that all learners have different capabilities and perform at different levels but should be afforded “equal opportunities” in the classroom.

Simon relates an incident where he tried to improve the reading ability of a child in his class, where English was not the child’s home language. This proved that he really cared. Previously, Simon would have ignored the child but when something in the teacher self propelled him to assist the learner to read, things changed. This single act brought new meanings to his role as a teacher.

#### **Simon expresses love and care in his work**

*Simon: Thando, a learner in my class had no word recognition skills and was now in Grade 4 but unable to read at all. Through continuous word drill, phonic drill*

*and syllabication which is breaking words into syllables. Thando, after a few weeks was able to read simple sentences.*

What we see is the love and care that Simon expresses in his daily work. Simon was able to form a special relationship with the students by identifying their needs and finding ways to assist them. Together with love, he was also demonstrating faith and confidence. Nieto (2003:37) argues that “love is a blend of confidence, faith and admiration for students”.

### **Compassionate teachers encourage learners to improve**

*Tina: I believe that the most caring and compassionate teachers encouraged their learners to improve themselves. Having faith in the abilities and making a positive impact is what's important.*

Tina was rightly of the opinion that if teachers made a positive impact on learners, learners were motivated to improve. This illustrates the importance of love and compassion, of a caring and supportive role, when being a teacher. This tendency is not linked to skills as much as to a belief system that comes from deep within. Such a belief system makes all the difference to students' lives, and gives a new meaning to teacher competence.

### **Pam's sensitivity, passion and love are palpable:**

*Pam: During my training towards my Bachelor of Education Honours Degree, specializing in Inclusive Education, I had the opportunity of learning how to identify learners with barriers to learning, how to access their performance, design and implement learning support. This was the most fulfilling and rewarding training I received because I took what I learnt into the classroom. I saw children change from being totally lost to being now able to communicate. It brings tears to my eyes when I think about how much they could be helped if every teacher took the time from Grade R to work with these children.*

Pam, through her training in Inclusive Education, was able to make a positive impact on her learners. She realizes that she has an important role to play and that that can only be achieved because she cares about her learners. The words, “bring tears to my eyes”, is indicative of her sensitivity, passion and love for the children, and her general emotional involvement in her work.

The teachers were advocating professional development. Fraser et al. (2007:157) states that “professional learning may be better understood as a manifestation of a particular change strategy”, therefore change can come about through a process of learning between teachers’ experience and beliefs. In other words, there was an inner desire to bring about change and this makes them see themselves as teachers in today’s classroom in a particular way. This is in keeping with Bell and Gilbert’s (1994) framework of professional development. Through the development of the teachers’ classroom practice they were obtaining new suggestions for teachers’ activities.

According to Hargreaves (1994:12), “the bases of creativity, change, commitment and engagement is to be found in desire”, and he argues that in “desire is to be found the creativity and spontaneity that connects teachers emotionally and sensually to their children, their colleagues and their work”. He further maintains that desire is at the heart of good teaching.

These practising teachers have worked hard to develop strong and positive relationships of love and care with the learners and their families. This is illustrated in the following words:

#### **Developing relationships with learners’ families**

*Pam: I make it my duty to visit my learners’ homes, to meet their families especially if the learners need my attention and were struggling in the classroom.*

For Pam, she got to know and understand the daily struggles of these learners more deeply. It also gave her an appreciation of the learners’ background and why these children were confronted with issues in the classroom. This would not have been possible if she did not get to know their families and their home environment.

On the other hand, Simon tried to recall events of the past:

#### **Initially I was focusing rigidly on learners only**

*Simon: I was overcome by a sense of frustration and anger, as previously I had bought into this system of rigidly focusing on my learners only. I did not take into account the underlying deep-rooted issues that learners encountered at home but now that has changed.*

Simon sees his teacher self differently as he extends his disposition of love and care to his learners by being very supportive, understanding and caring. He mentions that he has changed and now takes into account the deep-rooted issues that learners encounter. This shows a choice to reconstruct his identity as a teacher. This relationship of love and care experienced by Pam and Simon is translated into what they are doing in their lessons and how they are shaping themselves. This is re-iterated by Hooks (1994:37), who argues that “we need to teach in a manner that respects and cares for their souls”.

Similarly, for Tina, developing a caring, empathetic role seems to become a natural extension of her work as a teacher in the classroom.

### **Caring relationship with learners**

*Tina: My caring relationship was extended to learners whereby I got to know each child personally and found time to engage in conversation with them regularly. This had helped the learners to ask questions and work harder in the classrooms.*

For Tina, getting to know the child and engaging in conversations meant that the learners began to trust her and “work harder in the classrooms”. This mutual caring relationship creates, as Richie & Wilson (2000:85) state, “a sense of belonging”.

### **Support in a mutual caring manner**

*Pam: The love and care I share with my colleagues transcends in a meaningful relationship whereby we are able to support each other in a mutually caring manner.*

Ritchie & Wilson (2000) theorise the significance of love and care in learning contexts. If we examine the data closely between Pam and Tina we find that the relationship of love and care between colleagues and learners has many consequences. In the case of Pam, the relationship of love and care she demonstrated for her learners propelled her to find her “voice” and “potential”. This impacted on how they saw themselves as teachers.

Love and desire are not usual in the lexicon of conventional teaching. Yet, it is these dimensions that transform a clinical, transactional exchange between teacher and learner into a deeply rewarding human engagement.

#### **6.4.4 Teacher as an agent of change**

These particular teachers feel that initiating other development activities will keep them motivated to learn and develop in their professional practice. According to Bell and Gilbert (1994:493), “teachers engaging in development programmes are facilitating development themselves”. For instance, with regards to their studies, these teachers were initiating their own development. Initially, they felt constrained and were stagnating, but their desire to further their studies had motivated them to learn and develop. Fritz & Smit (2008) view this as intrinsic motivation, where people use opportunities for self-direction, and this they argue relates to self-esteem and that people with a high self-esteem would succeed with tasks they had undertaken. On the other hand, Day (2000), as cited in Moletsane (2004:204) “warns that the relentless criticism of teachers and their work runs the danger of demoralizing them and attacking their self-esteem.” Therefore, the teachers in my study have taken it upon themselves to build their self-esteem by becoming agents of change.

##### **Engaging with new ideas and knowledge**

*Pam: Up until I enrolled for my Bachelor of Education Honours Degree, I felt de-motivated and constrained. Through my studies, I was able to get a better understanding of who I am and how I can make a difference in my learner's life. Presently, I have enrolled for a Master's Education Degree.*

*Simon: Presently I am hoping to enrol to study at a tertiary institution towards improving my qualification. I realise I need to keep going.*

*Tina: I was elated when I graduated with my Bachelor of Education Honours Degree. Before that, I felt that I had no direction and no purpose.*

Each teacher appreciated the importance and potential of improving their qualification. By identifying and naming the issues that confronted them, they were able to embrace change and become an agent of change. Initially, Tina mentioned that she had “no direction and purpose”. Pam, for her part, felt “de-motivated and constrained”. Simon showed sheer tenacity when he stated, “We need to keep going”. They then found a space to shape their new selves, with some embarking on further studies. Pillay & Govinden (2007:12) argue that the “university offers a space for the germination of new ideas for intellectual activities, for collective, critical reflection and action”. For instance, Pam's comments reflect this:

Pam: *I am aware that my lesson format and methods of teaching does not have to conform with managements prescriptive instructions.*

Through her studies she gained confidence to challenge various practices. In addition, Simon's statement, "I need to keep going", resonates with Nieto's (2003) view that all good teachers are also learners and that we have to keep learning if we want to improve. Similarly, Swart and Oswald (2008) state that change thus implies a journey of learning and that experienced teachers have become apprentices in learning in order to foster learning and development in their practice. In addition, Pillay & Govinden (2007:12) re-iterate that "these teachers are taking their destiny into their own hands". As active agents of change, these particular teachers were able to enact certain practices that enhanced their professional practice.

## **6.5 Conclusion**

So, within their professional dimension, teachers were motivated to think and act differently in terms of their work. How are these spaces critical? These particular social spaces outside of the formal, for instance, where they were liaising, listening, dialoguing, and engaging in collaborative and collegial relationships are not usually part of what happens at school. It is almost outside the formal routine of school. However, within the social dimension of learning these were key elements for a new teacher identity.

So, what keeps teachers motivated? Through particular practices and relationships, new thinking, new ideas, new interests and new meanings about the teacher self was invoked. Actually, it was through these social spaces that teachers cultivated new ideas and new meanings of the kind of teacher they want to be in a South African classroom.

These teachers engaged in innovative ways in terms of their professional development to bring about change. The teachers' hunger for improving their learners' performance shows how they transformed their teaching experiences and re-constructed themselves. The teachers indicated their identity as a teacher was linked to being a learner and that experienced teachers became apprentices in learning. Actually, they were re-defining and transforming how they see themselves. In addition, the relationships of love and care towards learners brought new meaning to their teacher self. It translated into what they were doing in their lessons and how they are shaping themselves. This, in turn, became a deeply rewarding engagement between the teacher and learner.

My study has therefore provided an alternative to the usually dominant perception of what it means to be a teacher. The teachers in my study created social relationships and enacted certain practices through which they developed the confidence to see themselves differently and were doing different things to keep themselves motivated.

## CHAPTER 7

### FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

#### 7.1 Introduction

I began this study by asking the question, “*What keeps teachers motivated?*” I wished to understand the lives of teachers who are able to forge ahead and commit themselves to their vocation (Fritz & Smit, 2008). Presently, teachers in most public schools are confronted with complex and challenging issues on a daily basis. Issues may range from high failure rate (Moletsane 2004). In addition, there are “issues around policy changes and curriculum transformation” (Pithouse, 2003:73). Within this context teachers are caught in a quandary - whether to conform or claim their freedom and engage in work that is meaningful and non-prescriptive. The issue, according to Fritz & Smit (2008,155), is not the typical one of why teachers are not performing; rather it is about what enables teachers to teach with joy, passion and enthusiasm in schools where many changes are anticipated. These changes follow transformation of the curriculum and governance review (Sayed, 2002).

In exploring “*What keeps teachers motivated?*” there were two critical questions that I asked:

- What is the impetus for change in one’s professional practice from the **personal self**?
- What is the impetus for change in one’s professional practice from the **professional self**?

I needed to question what happens at the personal level that propels these teachers to change. Is it their attitudes, beliefs and values that contribute to their identity and confidence? In other words, what is their inner urge to re-think their identity as teachers, and to do things differently? Looking at their professional selves, I wanted to understand how teachers work, how they construct and disseminate knowledge and what collegial influences [such as belonging to a community of teachers] contribute to changes in their professional practice. I also want to understand the many roles that teachers embrace to motivate themselves to engage meaningfully in their work as teachers.

To respond to the two key research questions, I employed the participatory methodology, to portray and interpret the lived experiences of three teachers as it was most appropriate in

collecting the data. The approach, according to Chase (2005:652), “may be oral or written and may be elicited or heard during field work”. It highlights the fact that “when someone tells a story, he or she shapes, constructs and performs the self, the experience and the reality”. This methodology in my study is critical because it focuses on the teachers’ voice (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). It turns the gaze on how they were living out their experiences as teachers, and how they engage with their responsibilities as teachers. In addition, I was able to produce rich data from the stories told. The methods that were used in this study were life story interviews, drawings, and photographs. The “life story interviews” were accounts of the teachers’ lives in their own words. Through these methods the teachers were able to express their individual experiences of their training and their teaching careers. All of these methods had resulted, as Saloojee (2009:119) states, “in the evocation of a variety of elements, themes and trends”. From the personal stories of Simon Tina and Pam about their training as teachers and their experiences as teachers I was able to understand and explore their personal and professional identities – identities that shaped and gave a multi-dimensional understanding of their personal and professional selves.

## **7.2 Re-thinking teachers’ personal identity**

### **7.2.1 Personal Dimension**

These particular teachers realized that they were responsible for their own growth and development, and that attempts had to be made by them to give new meaning and definition to their teacher self (Pillay, 2003). The teachers wanted to change their own understandings and meanings of what kind of teachers they wanted to be. Prompted by frustrations and anxieties at the personal level about the changes in policy and the continued transformation of the curriculum, the teachers in my study were looking for new ways of engaging with their changing realities as teachers. They were calling for a change in their beliefs, values and attitudes as teachers. They expressed frustration and anxiety, for example, about attending a one-day workshop, where they received no proper guidelines from the Department of Education. They were not happy that they were still adopting the traditional methods of teaching. They were confused and not knowledgeable enough about the present methods. They experienced unease, discomfort and dissatisfaction. The teachers retained the traditional methods of teaching as transmitters of knowledge and implementers of knowledge. But, this resulted in feelings of incompetence and dissatisfaction in their work, and this had put pressure on them to change. They came to the realization that there was no growth, development and learning-taking place. They had to learn new ideas and, perspectives to improve their practice.

Their personal development was enhanced when they began dealing with the constraints they experienced in their daily work, and this resulted in their empowerment. Their personal development propelled them to learn and develop in their professional practice, and this kept them motivated (Bell & Gilbert, 1994).

There are many teachers out there who do not care about changing the way they think and work as teachers. They are still implementing the same traditional methods and are strict disciplinarians, instilling fear in their learners. But, the teachers in my study want to change and felt compelled to change because of their inner desire at the personal level. In so doing, they were challenging the dominant structures and were looking at ways to see themselves differently.

### **7.3 What assisted teachers to re-think their professional identities? What motivated them to change?**

#### **7.3.1 Social Dimension**

Through particular relationships with learners and colleagues, the teachers reworked their understanding of their work as teachers. Through the harnessing of particular **social spaces**, certain relationships were formed which involved teachers liaising with one another. Teachers were open to discussing their work with other teachers, and were involved in dialogue that was meaningful and beneficial. These teachers realized that working in isolation was unhelpful, as they are not able to see their shortcomings. However, by working with others they were able to identify weaknesses and share strategies for change. They were also able to gain new ideas, support and feedback. Teachers developed, collaborated and formed networks, and a sound working relationship with other teachers was established.

In my study, teachers valued collaborative ways of working, where colleagues offered suggestions for new teaching activities. They were also attentive to proposed solutions to problems and the opinions of others. In addition, teachers initiated collaborative ways of working, which included interactive activities. This boosted their self-confidence. Through certain relationships with learners in the Environment Club and the Soccer Club and through interactive relationships with colleagues, the teachers felt inspired and motivated to keep going. Through these social spaces, teachers began to attach new meanings to their teacher self and were able to engage in new meaningful activities. It is within these particular social spaces that teachers were learning and developing in their professional practice.

### 7.3.2 Professional Dimension

Re-defining the kind of teachers they wanted to be assisted them in engaging in unique and personally fulfilling ways of working. Within the professional dimension, teachers changed their meanings and understandings of how they worked. There were certain things that they were doing that made them re-think and re-structure the way they worked. Their initial anger was now being transformed into hope and passion, and rather than being complacent, teachers were moving towards improving their teaching and promoting learning. In enhancing learning, teachers were developing their classroom practice. They realized that they were no longer technicians but facilitators of learners' thinking. They were exploring new teaching activities in the classrooms. These particular teachers also demonstrated their love, compassion, caring and support for their students and colleagues. They believed that their love for the children and their relationships with colleagues would make a difference in their lives.

The teachers enacted certain practices, and this allowed for new interests and learning to emerge. Teachers adopted the role of researchers and learners by engaging in activities such as reading documents, policies and books, surfing the internet and spending nights consulting books in order to design worksheets and lessons. These teachers strongly believed that doing research before each lesson is an integral part of being a teacher. In addition, teachers were also studying towards improving their qualifications. They slowly came to see how their fields of study created new identities for them. They came to realize the importance and potential of their qualifications, and that their studies empowered them. They had gained confidence to challenge old practices. Their new re-constructed identities as researcher and learner did not make them feel inadequate and incompetent. Indeed, they were learning and developing, and keeping themselves updated with new information and educational trends. These enacted practices that teachers were engaging in kept them motivated.

My study shows that these particular teachers were committed, dedicated and displayed love and care for their students. It was not about just delivering their lessons and having worksheets and written activities neatly compiled in their workbooks. It was about engaging in certain practices where teachers reflected on how they teach and what they teach. More importantly, they challenged the traditional methods of teaching. In addition, the teachers became agents of change by initiating other development activities that kept them motivated to learn and develop in their professional practice.

## 7.4 Conclusion

The development of teachers can be described as encompassing personal, social and professional dimensions. The personal dimension was related to feelings of frustration and anger, which actually propelled teachers to change. Personal development was an essential and important aspect of teacher development. Within this dimension, teachers were prepared to accept that aspects of their teaching were problematic. They felt the compulsion to change and become empowered. Within the social dimension, they engaged in collaborative relationships that opened up social spaces for change. Teachers were liaising, dialoguing, listening and engaging in discussions.

Within the professional dimension, teachers were motivated to think and act differently in terms of their work. Within this dimension, teachers were engaging in innovative ways to re-define their new teacher self. Their identity as a teacher included re-imagining of themselves as learners and researchers. Teachers became aware that engaging in certain practices reflected what they teach and how they teach.

**“What keeps teachers motivated?”** What does it mean for practicing teachers in schools today?

Through particular practices and relationships, new thinking, new ideas, new interests and new meanings about the teacher self were invoked. It was through the creative use of these social spaces that teachers cultivated new ideas and new meanings of the kind of teacher they wanted to be in a South African classroom.

The teachers engaged in innovative ways in terms of their professional development to bring about change. The teachers indicated that their identity as a teacher was linked to being a learner and a researcher. In addition, the relationships of love and care towards learners brought new meaning to their teacher self. It translated into what they were doing in their lessons and how they are shaping themselves. This, in turn, became a deeply rewarding engagement between the teacher and learner. My study has shown that these particular teachers created social relationships and enacted certain practices through which they developed the confidence to see themselves differently.

## 7.5 Recommendations

Important questions to be asked are: How should Policy change towards professional development initiatives? Should policy prescribe how teachers perform? For instance, the seven roles of teachers as stipulated in the Norms and Standards for Teacher Educators (2000) attempted to move teachers from traditional roles as transmitters of knowledge and recognized instead the multi-tasked nature of the teachers' profession. The prescriptive nature of the policy de-motivated teachers.

Teachers do embrace different roles and responsibilities but they find their own ways and innovative methods to enact roles and responsibilities to accomplish this. However, teachers resist policy that is prescriptive. Policy and schools should open new ways of thinking and working for teachers. According to Pillay (2003:267), "policy does matter and more attention needs to be devoted to teachers' lives and there is a need to open spaces for teachers to inform policy".

Researchers need to look at personal narratives of teachers in an attempt to identify what needs to be developed in training programmes and professional development workshops. Teachers should be given the space to tell and re-tell their stories. Teachers working in South Africa have unique experiences and should be afforded the space to foreground their stories.

This study captured the lived experiences of three teachers in one school in a semi-urban area. I recommend that more research be conducted in different types of schooling contexts, such as township schools and rural schools, to understand what propels teachers in those settings to continue to teach with passion and commitment.

Schools should encourage collegial relationships among teachers, to allow them to engage in meaningful practices. For example, workshops need to be interactive and meaningful. As one participant revealed, "Teaching is a calling - it's what God meant for me to do". Therefore, teachers need be given the respect they deserve. As Nieto (2003:128) maintains, "When teachers are treated as professionals and intellectuals who care deeply about their students and work", they will improve their Professional Practice. In addition, teachers should be encouraged to engage in development programmes. These could include improving one's qualification, participating in curriculum or teacher development programmes. Furthermore, administrative tasks and elaborate record-keeping should be reduced. Teachers should be encouraged and allowed to use technology in their classrooms. Finally, schools should not be prescriptive. They

should cultivate a productive culture of learning and development.

## **7.6 Reflection**

I am indeed grateful to my participants for allowing me to conduct this study with them. Their stories told and re-told, hold many invaluable and lasting memories and had enabled me to draw rich data that was truly captivating. Teachers' voices need to be heard. We need, as Saloojee (2009:124) claims, to appreciate that teacher identities are not fixed but are fluid and multiple, and that there are two dimensions to teacher identity - the personal and the professional. Through their stories I was able to document their unique experiences and, in so doing, was able to reflect on my own teaching practices. They have instilled in me a new awakening, a new awareness of what it means to be a teacher in a South African school. Their stories provide a space for their affirmation as unique individuals who are motivated to teach. After undertaking this study, I have come to the realization that not all teachers are like the teachers in my study. However, there are lessons to be learned, and from the stories told, all of us can gain from what these particular teachers know and do in their professional practice.

3 June 2011

Mrs E Moonsamy  
P O Box 967  
VERULAM  
4339

Dear Mrs Moonsamy

**PROTOCOL: What keeps teachers motivated? An exploration of teachers desire to learn and develop in their professional practice**

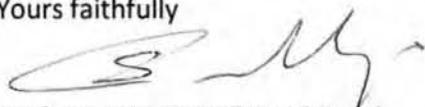
**ETHICAL APPROVAL NUMBER: HSS/0786/2010 : Faculty of Education**

In response to your application dated 09 July 2010, Student Number: **209527732** the Humanities & Social Sciences Ethics Committee has considered the abovementioned application and the protocol has been given **FULL APPROVAL**.

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

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

Yours faithfully



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

SC/sn

cc: Supervisor - Dr. D Pillay  
cc: Ms. T Mnisi/Mr. N Memela

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## APPENDIX 1

### **What keeps teachers motivated? - An exploration of teachers' desire to learn and develop in their professional practice.**

I conducted life stories interviews with three teachers to explore what meanings and definitions teachers give themselves and to understand what the impetus for change from the personal and professional self of their professional practice is.

The un-structured interviews were discussed under the following themes.

#### **1. Professional training**

- Name the institution you studied at towards your teaching qualification? Why did you choose this particular institution?
- What were your experiences at college or university like? Elaborate on, the system of education you received- bearing in mind the political context and the impact it had on you?
- Did you plan to become a teacher? If yes, indicate why?

#### **2. Early teaching experience**

- As a novice teacher what were some of the challenges you were confronted with? Describe the methods of teaching you engaged in.
- Were there meaningful support structures from within the school and from department? Reflect on the leadership styles of management and the types of relationships you had among colleagues.
- What were the most important turning points in your life? How did you come to this realization? Were there any experiences that shaped who you are today and elaborate on these experiences?

#### **3. Teaching in the present context**

- How would you describe your teaching experiences in the present context? Consider contextual challenges, policy transformation, curriculum changes, learners, parents etc. How do these experiences influence your thinking?
- Describe your roles and responsibilities as a teacher. Are you managing your roles or do you feel overwhelmed?
- What are some of the ways you have developed or learned at school as far as your skills, values and attitudes?
- Within the present context how would you describe your teacher identity?

### **3. What keeps teaching going?**

- How are you improving yourself? Are you learning and developing? What strategies are you implementing to sustain this?
- Illustrate and explain an educative teaching experience that had a positive impact on you? How has the experience influenced the way you think?
- Do you learn from colleagues? Explain?
- Within your professional practice, what are you doing differently? What new ways are you constructing yourself?

**APPENDIX 2**

**Life Story Release Form**

I, ..... have read the life story written transcripts written by Evlena Moonsamy.

I agree and accept the following:

- The life story being published.
- I was allowed to add and delete information from the life story.

.....  
Date Participant

.....  
Date Researcher

### APPENDIX 3

#### INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT

**To: Teacher participants**

**Re: MEd Project: What keeps teachers motivated? - An exploration of teachers' desire, to learn and develop in their professional practice.**

The aim of this project is to understand what keeps teachers motivated in one school. This project is supervised by Dr. Daisy Pillay, Tel: (031) 2607 598, a lecturer at the School of Education and Development, University of KwaZulu-Natal.

I am a MEd student at the University of KwaZulu-Natal and this project forms part of my studies. Life story interviews will be conducted whereby participants will relate the stories that shaped their lives as teachers. The interviews will be tape recorded and this will take place after actual teacher contact time. You will also engage in drawings, focusing on your past experiences. The interview process will take approximately three, one hour sessions with each participant. I will record your views in writing and will also tape record the interviews. In addition, with your consent, photographs from the school records will be used.

The data will be anonymous i.e. it will not be possible for it to be linked to your name. The data will be used in my research report and also in a larger report on the whole project. Participation in this project is entirely voluntary. You will not be disadvantaged if you choose not to participate or if you choose to leave or withdraw from the study at any stage.

I will send a letter to your principal informing him about my research project and the faculty will forward a letter to the Department of Education.

I request permission for you to take part in my research project. I would appreciate it if you could take some time to consider my request and then complete and sign the attached form if you wish to give your consent in taking part in the project.

Yours sincerely

-----  
Mrs. E. Moonsamy

-----  
Date



#### **APPENDIX 4**

Date: 12-07-2010  
From: Mrs E Moonsamy  
To: The Principal

**Sir,**

**RE: RESEARCH PROJECT: WHAT KEEPS TEACHERS MOTIVATED? - AN EXPLORATION OF TEACHERS' DESIRE TO LEARN AND DEVELOP IN THEIR PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE.**

I am currently engaged in a research study on the above topic. Following my discussion with you I would appreciate your consent to conduct this research in your school. I would like to work with three teachers and conduct three interviews of one hour each for each teacher after contact time. These interviews I hope will produce data on teachers' learning and development that is self driven, formal and informal.

In doing so I would agree to the following:

1. In no way will the research project interfere with the running of the school.
2. Should for any reason you find that you wish to withdraw your permission for the research, you may do so without any negative consequence.

I will conduct life story interviews with the teachers and the strategies used within this method will include discussions, drawings and the use of photographs from the school records. I will also conduct a drawing group discussion after school hours and in addition will record the teachers' views in writing and will tape record their discussions.

Should you have any queries please contact me at: 084 501 3814 or telephone: (032) 5376 011. My supervisor's details are as follows: Dr Daisy Pillay, School of Education and Development, University of Kwa-Zulu Natal. Telephone: (031) 260 7598 / 260 3449.

Should you require any information about the ethical aspects of this research, please contact Phume Ximba of the Ethics Office at (031) 260 3587 of the Humanities and Social Science Research.

Yours faithfully

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