

**UNDERSTANDING PEDAGOGICAL CARE: A TEACHER'S PERSONAL
HISTORY SELF-STUDY**

BY

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STATEMENT BY SUPERVISOR

This dissertation is submitted with my approval.

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Date:.

DECLARATION

I, Fikelephi Sarah Dlamini declare that

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ABSTRACT

The aim of my study was to better understand the concept of pedagogical care. I believe that, as dedicated teachers, we have an obligation to teach a child as a whole. For this study, however, I have focused specifically on understanding the pedagogical aspects of educational care. I have undertaken a personal history self-study by retracing my own educational journey to better comprehend the effects of pedagogical caring and the consequences of its lack. I used the research methods of artefact retrieval and journal writing to assist me in reconstructing the story of my educational journey. From re-examining my personal history, I became mindful that the teachers who taught me from a young age up to high school were pedagogically caring. It also emerged that my positive approach towards schooling contributed greatly to my learning. The pedagogical role played by my parents was also acknowledged and valued. Moreover, it became apparent that motivation forms a significant part of pedagogical care. This motivation can come from parents and teachers. I realised that children's learning can be enhanced if they are motivated and given energy to progress with their education. Furthermore, this study showed me that, for teachers to be able to offer pedagogical care to their learners, they too need to keep learning. Lifelong learning equips teachers for teaching children in our changing society. I have also learned that teaching beyond the curriculum is a noteworthy form of pedagogical caring that aids children to profit even more from their schooling and to be better equipped for life beyond school.

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CHAPTER ONE

BEGINNING TO UNDERSTAND PEDAGOGICAL CARE

Introduction

Education and teaching as a profession have been profoundly affected by the changes from the Apartheid government to the new democratic government. The rise of the democratic South Africa has resulted in a changing society with a new curriculum, new innovative methods of teaching, and new rules and new roles for teachers. Teachers are at the forefront of this change; hence they are called “change agents” (Day, 1999, p. 4). They are expected to deal with multiple responsibilities in a collaborative effort with their colleagues, parents and the learners they teach (DoHET, 2011). This makes teaching more demanding and more complex when considering the diverse needs of our learners. In my experience, many learners come to school carrying many social problems that teachers have to deal with before the actual teaching can take place.

In their study of resilient schools in impoverished communities in South Africa, Grant, Jasson and Lawrence (2010) explain pedagogical caring as teachers doing their best to provide a positive learning environment for learners, even if the necessary resources are not available. Furthermore, they describe caring as teachers working extended hours as a team to improve the working conditions and promote the spirit of collegiality. This working together as a team is also alluded to by Waghid and Smeyers (2011), who call it *Ubuntu*. They define *Ubuntu* as “a kind of human interconnectedness and dignity one has towards others, firstly in the cultural group to which one belongs, and secondly to all other human beings” (2011, p. 1).

My research aim was to explore how my experiences of pedagogical care have influenced my own educational journey. In this way, I hoped to better understand the concept of pedagogical care. By looking back at my life experiences in this personal history self- study, I was trying to trace the pedagogical caring that I received from my parents and my former teachers that resulted in me becoming the teacher I am today. As Allender and Allender explain, “An influence that has been actively part of our formation as teachers is our experiences as students” (2006, p. 14). Hence, in this study, I am looking at my past to better understand my

present and my future as a teacher in this rapidly changing context of my country, South Africa. By so doing, I am responding to the fifth collective role of teachers as advocated by the Department of Higher Education and Training (DoHET, 2011): the lifelong learner role. To be a lifelong learner means to engage in continuous professional development, as advocated by Day (1999, p. 4), who describes it as:

the process by which, alone and with others, teachers review, renew and extend their commitment as change agents to the moral purpose of teaching; and by which they acquire and develop critically the knowledge, skills planning and practice with children, young people and colleagues through each phase of their lives.

I am a Foundation Phase (grade R-3) Head of Department in a township school. Most of the learners in this school come from the informal settlements across the railway line. They come from disadvantaged backgrounds where there are often only some basic needs met for children. Levels of unemployment are high and many families depend on a government grant. Most of the learners live in one or two roomed houses with their families and thus have little privacy. Because of factors such as the HIV&AIDS epidemic (HEAIDS, 2010), some learners are orphans and are raised by grandparents or foster parents, or siblings. Moreover, some learners are sick and look very frail. This is the socio-economic situation I am faced with as a teacher and a Head of Department on daily basis. As a teacher, I am expected to teach these children to read and write. As a Head of Department, I am accountable for their progress. They are often unable to perform their daily work due to reasons which I have mentioned above. The teachers that I supervise also report their frustrations to me when the learners cannot concentrate, cannot complete the activities during a given time and do not perform their homework tasks. For these reasons, I believe that it is vital to investigate how we can better meet pedagogical needs of these learners.

According to the Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education Qualifications (DoHET, 2011, p. 53), part of being a competent educator is to be able “to demonstrate an ability to develop a supportive and empowering environment for the learner and respond to the

educational and other needs of learners and fellow educators”. By so doing, teachers are responding to the “community, citizenship, and pastoral role” (p. 53), which is one of the seven collective roles of teachers in schools.

However, the policy highlights the difficulties that many teachers face in fulfilling all the roles that are expected of them and it therefore emphasises the importance of teachers in a school working collectively to fulfill these roles. Hence, my research will be of value for other school managers and educators who are looking for ways to work together to create an environment that offers pedagogical care to our learners who often seem disillusioned by the environment and the incidents happening around them.

Reading Related to my Focus on Understanding Pedagogical Care

According to Goldstein (1999), caring relationships are vital in children’s cognitive growth and this caring can achieve more than boosting morale and building self-esteem in learners. Here, I identify two themes that emerged from my initial reading related to my study of understanding pedagogical care. These themes are: *caring as the creation of positive interpersonal relationships with learners* and *responding to social ills*. My further reading has been integrated into the subsequent chapters of this dissertation.

Theme 1: Caring as the creation of positive interpersonal relationships with learners and colleagues

According to Goldstein and Freedman (2003, p. 441), “caring is widely believed to be a central facet of teaching”. They further maintain that teachers must create “trusting, caring relationships with learners for those learners to be willing to take risks required [to learn]” (p. 452). As educators, we must be “mindful of our day-to-day experiences and relationship with our students to enable them to learn from us” (Goldstein & Freedman, 2003, p. 452). In other words, interpersonal connections between learners and teachers are essential for learning and growth to take place (Goldstein, 1999). Nieto (2003) also emphasises the notion that a key facet of teaching

is relationships with learners *and* colleagues. In her study with teachers, Nieto was surprised to hear that “joy and hope can be the other side of anger and desperation, and that [all these emotions] may be experienced by committed teachers at different points in their careers and different times of the day” (2003 p.122). Thus, as teachers, we have to look at the expectations we face and find ways of meeting the demands of our work collaboratively.

Jairam (2009, p. 125) maintains that, given the scarcity of trained counsellors in South African schools, all teachers need to be enabled to develop caring relationships with learners “who are overwhelmed by life circumstances or changes in their lives”. Jairam (2009) explains that such caring relationships are characterised by “high levels of warmth, empathy and genuineness” (p. 129). While Nieto (2003) agrees that love and respect are a vital part of teaching, she also warns us that “instead of thinking loving students means being easy going and indulgent, successful teachers believe just the opposite: that it is with even more urgency that they place high demands on students, especially those who others may not believe they are capable.”

Theme 2: Responding to social ills

According to Ramrathan (2007), the transformation agenda demands that teachers respond to the social ills of the community. He questions the capacity of schools and teachers to perform their duties as professionals and also to fulfil their pastoral responsibilities to care for sick learners, counsel the bereaved, and find alternatives to corporal punishment to discipline unruly learners. He argues that these demands of the academic, social, cultural, health, economic and political needs have an impact on the quality of teaching and learning. He further argues that those who expect teachers to meet these demands do not take the contexts of schools into consideration. Similarly, the Media in Education Trust (MiET) Africa (2009, pp. 105-106), states that “many [South African] children experience situations that make it difficult for them to access education”. The MiET maintains that it is therefore the responsibility of schools to provide “a caring school and classroom environment” as one key part of a broader response to the barriers to learning experienced by so many South African learners. Mitchell and Pithouse (2009, p. 3) also highlight the “complex and demanding roles that teachers are expected to play as change agents in post-apartheid South Africa, particularly in the context of HIV & AIDS and other

social issues facing the country”. They highlight the importance of “teachers and school managers working together to develop and put into practice strategies that work well in their own school and community contexts.”

The Concept of Pedagogical Care

My study is focused on understanding pedagogical care. Thus, the key concept that informs my study is Grant et al.’s perspective on “an ethics of care” (2010 p. 87), which requires that teachers work beyond the demands of their timetables. Grant et al. argue that teachers are capable of offering pedagogical care to their learners even if the resources are not adequate; so long as teachers work together towards a common goal, they can succeed. They conclude by saying “pedagogical care ought to be the norm for all educators, regardless of the context of the school in which they work. It is non-negotiable that a teacher’s work is caring work” (p. 97). This is the lens I use to look at how we, as teachers, and as a school can offer pedagogical care for our learners. This care can also be understood through the perspective of *Ubuntu*. Waghid and Smeyers (2011) explain that thinking about *Ubuntu* as an ethics of care in education allows us to view education as about relationships and empathy between people.

My Methodological Approach

The methodological approach of my study is personal history self-study. According to Mitchell, Weber & Pithouse (2009, p. 119), “self-study facilitates professional growth in ways that not only end up changing oneself but also serve as impetus for tackling the wider social problems that contextualize our individual lives”. Through this personal history self-study research, my aim is to look carefully at the past, present and future situations and think carefully about what I have seen and done. My focus is on personal and professional growth so as to improve my daily practices and to contribute to a deeper understanding of the concept of pedagogical care. I discuss my methodological approach in more detail in Chapter Two.

Research Questions

Question 1: What are my lived experiences of pedagogical care?

In exploring my lived experiences of pedagogical care, I reflect back on my early schooling days as a child, as a student at high school, as a student teacher being trained to teach and also look at my current day-to-day practices. My aim is to gain a deeper understanding of how my past experiences might have influenced or could influence my current viewpoints and practices. Thus, my intention is to “think critically about why I do things the way I do them” (Makhanya, 2010, p. 3).

Question 2: What can I learn from my lived experiences of pedagogical care?

After writing my personal history story, I look reflectively at this narrative to consider what I can learn from my own educational journey in relation to pedagogical caring. I look closely at the pedagogical care I have personally received and at how it enhanced my learning and also my teaching practice. I identify themes that emerge from my personal history. These themes highlight how I received pedagogical caring from my teachers and parents who raised me to become the teacher I have turned out to be.

Overview of the Dissertation

In this chapter, I have described what prompted me to embark on this self-study research journey to look at my experiences of being loved and cared for by different people who surrounded me when I grew up. I have also explained what my focus is. In addition, I have discussed themes that emerged from my preliminary reading related to my study of understanding pedagogical care. I have identified and explained the key concept that underpins my study. This concept has been related to the perspective of *Ubuntu*. Furthermore, I have highlighted the research questions that underpin my study and further clarified them.

In Chapter Two, I offer an explanation of the research design and the methodology used in this study. I also present the context of my school so as to give the reader a clear picture of where my learners come from. The data generation process is also explained in this chapter. The issue of trustworthiness and the ethical issues are also discussed.

In Chapter Three, I take my reader through my educational journey, from the first day I set my foot in school during the early 1960s up to the present day. Throughout my narrative of this journey, I trace the acts of pedagogical caring that I received from my parents and my former teachers. Furthermore, I look at how I have improved my educational qualifications to meet the demands of the ever changing education context of our country.

In Chapter Four, I analyse my personal history narrative and create the themes that emerge from my story. I relate these themes to what other scholars are saying about pedagogical caring for learners.

Chapter Five is the concluding chapter where I review the study and explain how I envision that this study will influence me as a teacher in providing learners with pedagogical care to boost their morale and offer them hope for the future.

CHAPTER TWO

MY RESEARCH PROCESS: PREPARING TO RAISE MY EYES, TO LOOK BEYOND THE DAILY ROUTINE

Introduction

In this study, I am looking at my personal history in order to gain insight into the concept of pedagogical care. In the previous chapter, Chapter One, I stated the focus and the purpose of my study and explained the rationale for the study. I considered what other scholars are saying about teachers' roles in caring. The purpose of this chapter is to explain the research process that I followed in my personal history self-study research. I also describe the context of my workplace that has prompted me to do this study. Furthermore, I explain the procedure I have followed in producing and analysing the story of my educational journey. In addition, I introduce my critical friends, as they form an integral part of my study. Lastly, I discuss the research challenges and limitations, trustworthiness and ethical issues.

Research Paradigm

My self-study research is qualitative. Nieuwenhuis (2010b, p. 50) explains that "qualitative research...attempts to collect rich descriptive data in respect of a particular phenomenon or context with the intention of developing an understanding of what is being observed or studied." In my study, I have collected "rich descriptive data" from own personal history through memory-work (Mitchell, & Weber, 1998) in order to better understand how we can facilitate pedagogical care. My hope is that this understanding will help me to grow in my teaching with enhanced sensibility towards learners' pedagogical needs.

My research is located within the interpretivist paradigm. According to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007), the interpretivist paradigm focuses on the individual, in order to comprehend the phenomena being studied. In this study, I am exploring my individual experiences, observations and viewpoints to better recognise the concept of pedagogical care in this changing and demanding context of South Africa.

Research Methodology

The research methodology I have used is self-study. According to Pithouse, Mitchell and Masinga (2009), self-study focuses on the researcher's own self and experience. For my research, I have taken a personal history approach to self-study in order to look at how I can use a new awareness of my past to enhance my teaching in future. According to Samaras, Hicks and Berger (2004), this form of self-study can be useful in thinking deeply about my personal and professional self and to do reflection to better understand my role as a teacher.

Context of the Study

I have been a teacher in the same school for 26 years. The school is situated in one of the big townships south of Durban. It is a government school, which has learners who are all isiZulu speakers. It is a junior primary school (grade R-grade 3), with two classes of the intermediate phase (grade 4). The school has an enrolment of about 450 learners. Their ages range from 4-13 years. It has a staff of 13 teachers, including the principal. There is a cleaner, a caretaker who also helps as a gardener and a volunteering clerk. The support staff is employed by the School Governing Body. The school is under-resourced; hence the learners are fed through the nutrition programme. Although the school is situated in an urban area, most of the learners come from the informal settlements just across the railway line. Most households across the line are living in poverty and the effect of HIV&AIDS pandemic is high. The level of illiteracy and unemployment is high in this area.

Since I have worked with this community for more than 20 years, I have visited many homes in this area. My visits were mainly educationally motivated. I am a strong believer that the teacher and the parent should know each other. Knowing each other creates and enforces the parental bonding which is the foundation for the year-long relationship. This connection eliminates unnecessary tensions when dealing with the learner.

As mentioned in Chapter One, many of our learners come from families with either one parent deceased or both. The lack of proper housing that is warm for young growing children can be seen when you go around through the narrow paths. In my experience, these factors have a negative effect on the learners' welfare and upbringing. This can be seen in the learners' behaviour and their progress at school. Since most of those parents who are employed are semi-skilled workers, they work long hours. When they come back home, they are often too tired to help their children to do their homework. These challenges require teachers who are passionate about learners and education. As teachers in this school, we have experienced different types of problems from death to poverty that hinder the progress of children at school. Often, we as teachers have to intervene for education to progress. Either we use our own money, or we work with relevant government departments.

My Role in the Research

As this is self-study research, I am the main researcher participant. In this study, I narrate the story of my personal history, tracing the acts of pedagogical care that have enhanced my educational journey, as well as my teaching practice. I uncover the valuable lessons I learned as a student and as a teacher and all the roles attached to me by the virtue of being a teacher that has pushed my career to this level. This self-study has pushed me to a place whereby I have to take a break, step back and look behind, think about my words and deeds and then consider how I can take action. As a teacher, I often do introspection, but sometimes I just brush off the thoughts and go on with my life. Personal history self-study has offered me a chance to do reflection aimed at strengthening my positive pedagogical beliefs and practices and questioning the ideas and acts that I usually take for granted (Samaras et al., 2004).

My Critical Friends

As Pinnegar and Hamilton (2009, p. 100) explain, although self-study research is “self-initiated and focused”, it “requires collaboration with others in the practice”. Thus, this journey cannot be travelled unassisted (Samaras et al., 2004). Hence, in my study I have worked with my critical friends who have given input into my research. Costa and Kallick (1993) describe critical friends as reliable people who are not reluctant to ask questions that are challenging and make you think

critically and who offer you the chance to look at diverse perspectives that you might have overlooked. My critical friends are a group of three other students doing MEd studies at the University of KwaZulu-Natal like myself. I have named them Lungi, Thanda and Rheena to protect their identities. Lungi, Thanda and Rheena have all been conducting personal history self-study research. All of them are in management positions in their schools and they have been in the teaching profession for some time. We have come together on a weekly basis for the past two years to meet our supervisor. Our supervisor would make sure that we all has input into each other's topic and research process. In most cases, she would ask one of us to explain an issue that would then be discussed by us all. This would give us a chance to look at our personal history narratives from different angles and debate these issues through the lenses of other self-study researchers (Costa & Kallick, 1993). Sometimes, as critical friends, we would come together on our own, without our supervisor. During these sessions, we would look at our personal history data, discuss this and share our readings. These opportunities would enable us as critical friends to advise each other and ask each other questions (Samaras et al., 2004).

Data Generation Methods

Pinnegar and Hamilton (2009) explain that in self-study research one can use a variety of strategies to generate data. As explained below, the strategies I used to recall and record stories of pedagogical care are journal writing and artefact retrieval.

Method 1. *Journal writing*

According to Pinnegar and Hamilton (2009), a journal offers a place for writers to expose and reflect on their personal feelings and perspectives. From the day I decided that I was going to do a self-study, I started recording my thoughts and feelings about my past and present experiences of pedagogical care. I did this to express my emotions and support my own reflection. As Samaras et al. (2004, p.924) argue, self-study “opens what was once hidden”, and one of my journal entries reflects on my hidden memories of an emotional incident that still brings tears to my eyes. This can be seen in the journal entry shown in Chapter Three (p. 35).

In her self-study, Masinga (2009), another South African teacher from a township school, highlights that journal writing was an unfamiliar practice for her and her learners. Likewise, journal writing was not familiar to me. Therefore, I sometimes forgot to record something unless it seemed very significant for my study. If I had to do journal writing again, I would ensure that I buy a small notebook that could fit in my handbag. Ideas about your study come to your mind anytime and it is wise to have a notebook at hand all the time.

Method 2. *Artefact retrieval*

Allender and Manke (2004) explain that artefacts or objects that have significance for your research topic “may be brought to the surface after years of storage to begin a new life as the core of a...self-study” (p. 20). In my study, I used photographs as artefacts to prompt my memories of my educational journey. Going back home to look at my family album for photographs portraying the significance of pedagogical caring either by my parents or teachers was an enjoyable experience for me. I was not just paging through the album as I usually do; this time I was using the lens of a researcher. I began to look at these photographs and realised that they had a new meaning for me as a teacher. The use of these photographs has helped me to think deeply about my upbringing and the influence it has had on my personal and professional self. Allender and Manke (2004) argue that working with artefacts can help a teacher grow and change by reflecting on significant incidents and emotions related to those artefacts. I concur with their statement because, for example, after looking at photographs of me as a young teacher, showing how I used to spend my time, doing nothing (see figure 3.5, Chapter Three, p. 28), I felt ashamed.

Mitchell, Weber and Pithouse (2009, p. 119) contend that “the use of visual approaches to self-study can literally help us see things differently”. For example, when looking at my parents’ photographs (see figures 3.1 and 3.2), I thought more deeply about them than I had before. I then realised the important role my parents had played in my life and particularly in my educational journey. I also felt guilty about not telling them this before my father passed away. I wish he was still alive to see me prosper and achieving in life. Having looked at these photographs with a

self-study lens, I am now more aware of the vital role that parents or guardians play in providing pedagogical care for learners.

In addition to using photographs, I also looked for official documents such as certificates and reports that might have helped me to add more by refreshing my memory. However in moving from place to place, most of these had been damaged or lost. Nevertheless, I have been able to include one certificate that is significant to my educational development (see figure 3.7, Chapter Three, p. 31.)

Writing the Story of my Educational Journey

In their discussion of “personal narrative writing [as] one of the creative approaches to self-study”, Pithouse, Mitchell and Weber (2009, pp. 49-50) maintain that “writing descriptions of remembered educational experiences can help teachers (and teacher educators) to review their experiences from diverse perspectives and to think about them in new ways”. Writing my personal history narrative has been the most enjoyable journey and has accomplished my long-standing dream of writing about my life. Although this has not been an easy road because it brought back some bad memories that were forgotten, it has been worthwhile. Recalling all the incidents that have impacted positively and negatively on my work has helped me to grow and think of changing some of the ways in which I have done things.

When we discussed as a group of critical friends that we were going to do self-study research, it sounded exciting. I thought it would be a simple thing to do, but I have found that the actual writing of a personal history narrative is challenging. I started by writing a lot in my journal, including much that was not relevant to the research topic. During the writing process, we were having contact sessions with our supervisor who used to guide us on how to keep our focus on the topic. I did a great deal of writing and my critical friends helped me very much in advising me through discussions on what to include and what to leave out. Many drafts were written and corrected. Sometimes I would feel like dropping out when looking at the corrections I had to make, but my inner ego would want to go on.

Analysing the Story of my Educational Journey

As I analysed my personal history narrative, I worked inductively to search for “emerging patterns, associations, concepts and explanations” (Nieuwenhuis, 2010a, p. 107). My critical friends and I were all doing self-study research with different topics. When we came together to share what we were learning about self-study and the challenges we were facing in our work as teachers, it eased the pain of thinking that maybe your work environment is worse than others. I found that my critical friends gave me ideas to help me when analysing my personal history narrative. They sometimes looked at the situation from an angle that I had neglected by questioning what I was discussing. In other words, they provided me with readers of my work in advance. They gave me constructive criticism aimed at challenging me to write responsibly. Their inquisitive minds helped me to analyse my data with an open mind.

I used highlighters to colour-code sections of my personal history that seemed particularly significant for my research topic. This helped me to see possible themes and then I grouped these sections of my narrative accordingly. To illustrate, I used pink to highlight all the information related to *motivation*. I then decided to use a blue highlighter for all the information related to how my practice of pedagogic care is enhanced by being a *life-long learner*, and lastly I used an orange highlighter to group all the ideas related to *teaching beyond the curriculum*. From there, I had to think deeply about the themes that had emerged. I also consulted literature relevant to my themes to support and extend what had come out from my narrative. When doing this exercise, I gained more information and became even more enthusiastic about the research. I felt very committed to providing pedagogical care for my learners as I began to think more deeply about and appreciate the pedagogical care provided to me by many people in my educational journey from many years ago to date.

Research Limitations and Challenges

This is a small scale, in-depth study based on my own personal history. However, I hope that my learning from this study will be informative for others and will contribute to a deeper understanding of the concept of pedagogic care. Although I enjoyed talking about my teaching experience, my work and my learners with my critical friends and supervisor, it was a challenge

for me to write my personal history narrative from the beginning to the end. Sometimes I felt as if I was ‘blowing my own trumpet’. To overcome this, I discussed it with my supervisor. She explained to me that the feelings I had are common when doing self-study and she assured me that I was on the right track. Sometimes I would feel that what I had written was not significant, but upon discussion with my critical friends and reading other scholars’ work, I would gain confidence to continue.

Trustworthiness

In self-study research, it is important to use multiple strategies to gain a variety of different perspectives on what is being studied (Pinnegar & Hamilton, 2009). I have therefore used different methods of data generation to contribute to the study’s trustworthiness. Following Feldman’s advice on establishing trustworthiness in self-study (2003), I have also attempted to make the explanation of my research process as clear and in depth as possible so that other students, researchers and teachers will be able to understand how my research was conducted.

Ethical Issues

Throughout the research process, the researcher must try to ensure that the rights of the participants are not compromised in any way. In our contact sessions with my critical friends, the issue of drawing on their ideas in my dissertation was discussed. Hence, their names have been hidden to protect their identities. They were assured of anonymity and confidentiality and have been given letters of consent to sign (see Appendix A) and it was explained to them that their ideas would be used to substantiate Onyx and Small’s (2004, p. 3) argument that “through group discussions the participants can gain understanding and new meanings”. In the consent letters to my critical friends, it was explained that they had no obligation to participate and that they could withdraw at any time. People who appear in the photographs published in Chapter Three were given letters of consent for their approval of using their photos (see Appendix B). But, despite my attempts to reach all these people, I was sometimes unsuccessful. Some of them have relocated, others are deceased and some were too far from me to be aware of what was happening in their lives.

Conclusion

In conclusion, I would like to draw together what I have done in this chapter. I have identified the research paradigm and the methodology used. I have explained the reason for using this methodology. I have explained the research context for my study and the pedagogical challenges that I have encountered as a teacher and a Head of Department in my school that have prompted me to do this study. I have also explained my role in this research. My critical friends and their roles have been described. I have also explained the research methods of artefact retrieval and journal writing that I used to assist me in writing the story of my educational journey. In the following chapter, Chapter Three, I present my personal history narrative of my own educational journey.

CHAPTER THREE

MY EDUCATIONAL JOURNEY FROM INNOCENCE TO KNOWLEDGE

Introduction

In this study, I am exploring my lived experience through personal history self-study in order to better understand the concept of pedagogic care. In the previous chapter, I have described the personal history self-study research journey that I have undertaken. In this chapter, I am responding to the first critical question of my study: *“What are my lived experiences of pedagogical care?”* I look back at my learning experiences in stages. I consider what “these memory accounts can tell [me] about the influence of early experiences of schooling” on my development as a learner and teacher (Mitchell & Weber, 1998, p. 45). I subdivide my educational history into phases that were used at my time of schooling: primary school, secondary school and teacher training. Then I subdivide my working experience into two categories: a novice teacher and an experienced teacher. I also look at the further studies that have had a major impact on my career and me as a teacher.

By looking back at my life experiences, I am trying to trace the caring actions that I received from my parents and my former teachers that resulted in me becoming the teacher I am today. Hence, I am trying to look at my origins to better understand my present and my future in this rapidly changing context of my country, South Africa.

My Early Childhood

I am the first born in a family of six children. I was born in Estcourt in the midlands of KwaZulu-Natal (then called Natal) in the late 1950s. I started my education journey earlier than my peers because I insisted that I wanted to go to school at the age of five instead of seven. Mother told me that I requested her to ask Father to give me permission to go to school instead of looking after his cattle and goats. My primary education was spread among three different schools, which I am going to call School A, School B and School C. Moving from School A to School B was due to the Group Areas Act of 1953. Moving from School B to School C was due to my parents' choice.

School A: The Foundation Layer

The first school I went to was situated in a valley on the foot of the Drakensberg Mountains. It was a combined school, starting from First Year to Standard Six (as it was called then). It was a big school located between houses that were starting to be deserted due to the forced removal of people by the Apartheid government. There were also very big gum trees around the school, which was an indication of how old the school was. The school was about six kilometres away from home. Estcourt is a very cold place especially in winter. However, although it was in a rural area, I do not recall walking barefoot to school in winter. I recall with pride that my father made sure I had shoes and socks for school.



Figure 3.1: My Father who made sure I had shoes and socks for school.

At school, I knew that I was there for education, nothing else. In our school we were taught to count using counters (which were thick grass sticks), we were taught to write words (spelling) and we would read books in our mother-tongue, IsiZulu, which we enjoyed very much. I do not

recall how the spelling words were introduced, but I have a clear vision of us, the First Years, as we were called, scattered in the playground with our slates. We were scattered so that we would not copy from each other. Our teacher would call out the spelling words to us, and then we would mark them instantly. I guess we were all eager to do our best because during our time it was a shame to underperform and corporal punishment was used during those days. After all the slates had been marked, we would stand in a circle and display our work by supporting the slates with our feet. That was the moment of happiness for those who had passed and the moment of sorrow if you did not make it.

Usually, this was the time for inspection for the cleanliness of slates. Slates were made of something like asbestos. They were the size of A4 paper. The edges were lined with planks. There was a special pen to use. This slate was very fragile. It used to break now and again and we would be punished for broken and dirty slates. On the one side squares were drawn for sums, and on the other side you would write words on the neatly drawn lines. Prudent parents would bore the corners of the slate and reinforce it with wire so that it was kept intact. Once the planks were loose, it was likely to break anytime. Pieces of a broken slate could be used for writing, but it was not allowed. Teachers insisted that we use the special pen.

As children, we were taught to listen to the teachers by our parents and the teachers. Obedience was the order of the day because disobedience was never tolerated. A disobedient child was punished severely. I did not experience a lot of punishment because I used to listen to the adults and teachers; as a result I grew up to be a hard worker like my parents. I think this was because of the motivation that I got from my parents. My mother was illiterate, as she had never attended school, but she motivated me by telling me how she wished to have an educated child amongst her offspring.



Figure 3.2: My Mother who inspired my love for reading.

On top of education, another thing that I enjoyed at that school was the commitment to sports. The school was very much involved in athletics; hence I grew up running like a rabbit. I still have fond memories of us going to attend athletic meetings in Mooi River, (a small town in the Natal Midlands) and the songs we used to sing to cheer on our athletes. That is the basis of the love of sports that I still have even as an adult. One of the songs we sang goes like this:

“Ibambeni hheyiwebafana, ibambeniwezinsizwa.O’

Lolodumo, hheyiwe MA, Selungikhumbuza eschool A!”

(Just hold it like that boys, just hold it like that young men! That fame reminds me of my school!)

By that time we would be marching like soldiers going to war, with our banner held by our leaders in front.

School B: One Step Forward

During my second year of schooling, my family was removed by the Apartheid government to another area due to the Group Areas Act. I had to change to another school, which had floors that

were polished with the cattle dung every Friday. This was a combined primary school, starting from First Year to Standard Six (Grade 1 to Grade 8). The teachers were females and males, all speaking IsiZulu. It was an old mud building, standing all alone on a hill with not a single household around. All the people were removed, and the school was about to be moved to the new site.

I remember very well how our teachers cared for us during snowy days. They would send bigger boys to collect wood so that we could make a fire inside our classroom. On such days, we would not write anything; instead we would come together around the fire and read our books in English, Afrikaans and our mother tongue, IsiZulu. We used to enjoy reading and answering in IsiZulu, but we struggled in English. I must say I am grateful to my teachers because when I listen to my peers they say they had no books to read at primary school while, in my case, we had enough books to read. In my case, I could read in my language at a very tender age.

I feel that I am not good in English, because of my fear of talking this language. I would say that maybe our teachers did not give us enough time to use it verbally; instead they concentrated on written language. But having said that, let me correct myself by saying that according to my memory, the English books that we read had questions to answer, logically arranged in a way that there were simple questions asking “who”, “what”, “where” and the higher order questions asking “why”. Our teachers would encourage us to answer these higher order questions orally and in writing as early as Standard Three (now known as Grade 5). We would struggle to do that. But the truth must be told. Our teachers tried their best to teach us but the language was new and difficult to us since it was not our mother-tongue. It was also in this school that we read in Afrikaans about a sausage that was running and the cat or dog shouted “*Worsie!Worsie!Moeniehard loopnieekwiljouhe*”(Sausage! Sausage! Do not run away, I want to eat you).

I would also like to highlight the role that my mother played in the reading fluency that I possess. During my years of primary education, there were no television sets to watch in the evening. As mentioned before, my mother was illiterate, as she never attended school. Therefore, she made

me read her the stories in the Bible from the first chapter. Although I could not finish it, I read most of the chapters. My knowledge of the stories in the Bible comes from that. She used to listen attentively and she never fell asleep when I was reading to her. Her attentiveness encouraged me to do it again and it gave me a sense of being appreciated. I would also feel sorry for her because I could feel that this situation was robbing her of her privacy. Her love letters from our father were read and replied to by me!

This reading got into my blood in such a way that I used to read any piece of paper that I could lay my hands on. My father used to come home with newspapers and magazines from his work and I would read these until very late at night. Mother would tell me the following day that Father had complained about the wasting of paraffin. Mother would protect me because she knew exactly how much I liked reading.

School C: Another Building Block

When my family moved to Umtwalume on the South Coast of Durban, I had mixed feelings because I did not know how life was going to be. The first problem I encountered was the source of water. In Estcourt we had springs where we fetched clean water, but at Umtwalume we fetched water from the river. We shared this river with animals and humans who swam and washed. Another problem was the language. Although they also speak IsiZulu in that area, it is slightly different from that of the KwaZulu-Natal Midlands.

The school I went to in Umtwalume I went to was also a combined school, starting from First Year to Standard Six. In this school it was a norm that, at the beginning of the year, the rehearsals for music would start. All the pupils were expected to take part. Only those that could not sing well would be eliminated as the competition drew nearer, but not before they had mastered the songs. Going to the competition was a big event for us all, parents, teachers and children. We children all used to enjoy these competitions since we would be provided with new uniforms by our parents and a chance to travel by bus to where the competitions were held. Neatness was important for all the pupils as it was preached by our teachers. I understand that the

neatness of the choir when standing on stage was one of the criteria for winning. Our teachers would wear very smart clothes and we would feel very proud of them.

In this school, I continued to be obedient and to excel in my subjects as I had in the previous school. The only challenge I had was craftwork. I could not finish the mats that were made out of grass. I used to be punished for that. I accepted the fact that I was lazy in doing handwork, but I was one of the top students in almost all the other subjects. In this school, we were taught all the subjects in our mother tongue except the languages. We did Health Education, Social Studies, General Science, Religious Education, *Izibalo* (Arithmetic), IsiZulu, English Language and Afrikaans. The practical subjects were sewing and craftwork.

There is an incident that happened in my Standard Six class which is unforgettable. During that year, 1971, we were informed by our teachers that the final examination scripts for Standard Six were going to be marked by the Port Shepstone Branch and theirs were going to be marked by our teachers, Umzinto Branch. To our surprise we ALL failed except a girl whom we knew was just average. We all received school leaving certificates. With these certificates, we could not be admitted to a secondary school, unless we wanted to go to a vocational school. Vocational schools (now FET Colleges), at that time were equipping students with skills such as plumbing, mechanical engineering, brick laying, electricity. This was looked down upon as the career path for those not clever enough to pass Form Five (Matric).

The whole village was mourning because we had been certain that we were going to pass. Our teachers had taught us everything that we were supposed to know. We had written our class tests and passed them, but then everybody got a shock when the results for the final and external examination were declared and we failed. We failed Standard Six and we had to repeat it the following year after crying our hearts out. I will never forget that blow in my life.

My educational journey would not be complete without the mention of the school stationery used during those days. Amongst it all, I would like to mention the pen called nip-g and the more advanced fountain pen. These pens were used with ink which was kept in a bottle. Personally, I

feel that this was the most abusive writing material. The nip-g is dipped in the bottle of ink and then you write. If it is loose, it releases a lot of ink. The exercise becomes very untidy. Sometimes the bottle would spill all its contents into the exercise books, down to our frocks. Your neighbours would be affected too. You would be scolded by the teacher and all the affected children. This was the most embarrassing moment. You would have to spend the whole day with a blue stain on your uniform. You will have a label of being untidy. This would lower your self-esteem. On that particular day, you would not take part in games during break times. You would just lean against the wall, feeling embarrassed and lonely.

My Secondary Education: The Pathfinder

After repeating the Standard Six class, I passed it with flying colours. I got a blue certificate which was for a first class pass. I then had to go to the nearest secondary school, Umtwalume Secondary School. This was a boarding school that housed about 20girls and 30boys. However, many of the students were not boarders. Due to the shortage of space in the hostel, I had to look for accommodation in the households that surrounded the school.

All the teachers spoke IsiZulu. Nevertheless, in this school we were introduced to English in most of the subjects. We were also introduced to a new subject that was slightly different from Arithmetic but almost the same. This was Mathematics. I passed the tests that were conducted to eliminate those pupils who should not do this subject that was regarded as a difficult one. In my subjects, I had Mathematics and Arithmetic. The principal himself taught us Mathematics. Looking back now, I can see that the principal was not good at this subject because he would just demand the homework from us. In most cases, he would not get it because we did not know what to write. After punishing us for not doing the homework, he would go straight to the office. After a few minutes, he would come and go straight to the board to do just one sum. There was no explanation, no talking, no questions, and just one example. Then he would give us work for the following day. That is how I learnt Mathematics. Even today I am good at the algebra part because it is like Arithmetic, but not the trigonometry and the other part.

In this school, there were teachers that I wish to commend for the contribution they made in my life. I would say they were quick to spot the potential in me and nurtured it into a blazing flame. One teacher, Mr Mhlanga (pseudonym), noticed my good handwriting and used me as a scribe for his History notes. I used to come early to school to write notes for all the pupils in the class on the board. I used to read them as I wrote and then I would find time to copy from other pupils. That is where I was prepared to write on the board for my future career as a teacher. Another teacher, Mr Dlodla (pseudonym), used to write to the Newspaper editor. He would write his script in his handwriting, and then he would ask me to transcribe it in my handwriting before he sent it to be published. When reading his arguments, I would wish I could possess the same fluency in the English language. During our years of schooling, there were no computers for teachers to prepare school work. Hence, after the principal was told of my good handwriting he used to give me the lists of final examination candidates to write. Every year, towards the end of the year, I would sit in the principal's office transcribing the names of all the candidates.

Mrs Mdlalose (pseudonym), my English teacher and the only female during that year, was just like a mother to all of us. Besides being an English teacher, she would give us moral lessons. During her lessons, she would tell us that we needed to honour our parents no matter how strict they were. She would tell us not to leave our homes when we were angry. She would say "*ayikhoindawoedlulaikhaya*" (there is no place like home). There is an idiom she taught us that has guided me all my life: "Aim for the sun, you will probably hit the moon". She did not make us memorise it without understanding. She explained clearly that in life you should always aim for the best so that if you do not achieve it, at least you will get nearer to your target. I used to respond positively to her work and, as a result, she taught me how to do crochet. She chose me out of many children who used to play on the school premises after examinations, and gave me crochet to do.

All these duties were on top of my school work. Looking back now, I can see that the sense of responsibility that my parents had instilled in me had a great impact on my schooling. The duties that my teachers assigned to me gave me a sense of accountability that I still possess. I suppose these teachers saw how dedicated I was and the quick response I would display when given work

to do. At home, I was trained to do whatever I was commanded to do at that instant. Postponement and repetition never existed in my parents' word bank. Failure to respond called for punishment. My listening skills and attentiveness were sharpened both at home and at school. These characteristics have caused me to gain popularity and unpopularity with some people. Parents have different opinions when it comes to child rearing. I wish to teach the children who would display the same respect and obedience, but unfortunately I do not think it is going to happen. I have been criticised and praised by many people, including my ex-students, for my contribution in their lives and my teachings. Looking back now, I can see that my upbringing has had a great influence on my practice as a teacher. In my current school, I have taught for more than 20 years. My current learners are the children of my ex-pupils. Sometimes when they bring their children, they spell it out that they want me to teach their children.

My Training College Life Experience: The Decider

There is nothing much to write about my study at Matata Training College (pseudonym) near Newcastle in 1976-1977, except that I was not aware that I was trained to become a leader, a manager and a mother of many children. It took me some time to get it into my mind that the training was for me to change from pupil to teacher. Firstly I was young, only 18 years of age. Secondly, initially my ambition was nursing. I think the passion for nursing stemmed from the white uniform they used to wear. I was only attracted by nurses' cleanliness, but ignorant about their duties and responsibilities. So really, I could not believe what was happening to me.

I was admitted to the college very late in March during my first year. That resulted in me memorising all the work put in front of me for the quarterly tests that were due two weeks after my admission. In this institution, most of the teachers were white and spoke English or Afrikaans. This was a challenge for me who had mastered only grammar in English and Afrikaans. The spoken language was a problem for me, especially Afrikaans, because many students came from Transvaal (now Gauteng) and Orange Free State (now Free State) where Afrikaans was widely spoken. When it was story time in Afrikaans, they would enjoy the story and talk with the teacher. I would just remain silent because nobody cared about me or any other

student who might have experienced difficulty in the language. I never discussed this situation with my fellow classmates. It was my lonely feeling and a problem never shared.

As a result, I can teach the language part of Afrikaans (*Afrikaans Taal*), but I cannot speak Afrikaans. My political naivety resulted in me liking to talk the language, but I was unable to talk it. It was in 1976 when I started to hear that children were marching against the teaching of Afrikaans in many subjects. These marches started in Soweto, the biggest township in Johannesburg in the Transvaal Province (now Gauteng). They then spread throughout the country and turned to violence. Students wanted to do away with Afrikaans as a medium of instruction. Even though I did not hate the language, I felt sorry for those students who were expected to do most subjects in this language.

One day I had a critique Afrikaans lesson on "*Hoe om tee te maak*" (How to make tea). I knew my weakness in drawing and therefore I went to a lecturer who was my relative and borrowed the gas stove and all the teaching aids (real objects) on making tea. Still today I am puzzled why I got the worst symbol: Symbol E! Was my language poor or did I waste the gas? I am not sure. I still teach my learners Afrikaans for fun and they seem to enjoy it.

At training college, I opted for Music as my teaching specialisation as I had been exposed to a lot of choral music as a student. By doing Music, I was actually escaping from doing Needlework, which I had no passion for. I want to thank the Almighty because during my time as a young teacher I won some music trophies for my school. My dream came true.



Figure 3.3: My Music Class of 1977: “My music, my enjoyment”.



Figure 3.4: Doing Gardening (You can see me on the left): “Gardening is part of my life”.

My second specialisation was gardening, since it was what my mother depended on for our living when my father was out of work and to supplement his income. Even today I still go to the garden with my students and I teach them the value of growing crops.

Fikile: A Novice Teacher

During the year 1977, I wrote my final examination knowing very well that I was going to pass. Hence, as soon as I reached my father's place Estcourt, I applied for a teaching post in December. My cousin Nonhle (pseudonym) was with me all the time. We had trained together and got a job in the same school. The inspector asked us to come back in January the following year. We got teaching posts in a very remote rural area, where there was neither a challenge nor encouragement to continue with your studies. The school itself was an old brick building which was sometimes occupied by goats from the nearby households. It had only five classrooms. It was a combined school, starting from First Year to Standard Five (Grade 1 to Grade 7). The main building was occupied by Standard Four and Five only. The other classes were housed in the churches around the school.

During weekdays, we would teach in a very relaxed manner. Our main motivation was the training that we got from the college. We were just full of vigour, and we wanted to prove to other teachers that we were fresh from Matata College where we were taught to teach, dress and talk like professionals. We were full of new ideas that we wanted to share with our learners. We had many songs to sing with our pupils. On top of that we had hymns and choruses in our notebooks that we wanted to share with our children. We did not care about other teachers, how they taught or felt. There were teachers in our school who used churches as classrooms, but we did not bother to ask how they felt about it. There was no collaboration in school work. We wanted them to look at us, the newly qualified teachers. Nobody came to us to ask for help concerning the subjects we offered. Nonhle and I used to share the difficulties, frustrations and jokes together since we were both teaching Standard Four. We only came together for sports and staff meetings. Team work was never encouraged. Looking back now, I regret the time I wasted in that area doing nothing to improve my standard of education.

During my second year of teaching in this school, we were visited by the inspector. It was the first time we were going to be observed in this school. We felt so annoyed because we felt the school was very far from the department officials. We thought no official was concerned about our daily practices. Initially, he planned to spend three days with us: Wednesday, Thursday and Friday. Unfortunately, the school had planned a trip to Durban from Friday to Sunday. Thus, ultimately, he had to spend two days and board our bus to his hometown, Pietermaritzburg. On his last night in the area, Nonhle, my cousin and I decided to be naughty. We collected small stones and threw them at the same time on the roof of the house in which the inspector was sleeping. After that act, we ran away, laughing all the way. We were doing that because we felt this man was intruding on our comfortable place. Our principal was only interested in our daily preparations, not critically looking at the content and the methods we were using. Now this man was coming to observe us, and we felt intimidated and unsafe.



Figure 3.5: This is a picture of Nonhle and me just enjoying ourselves in the river near the school.

I spent two years in that area, doing nothing to upgrade my standard of education. I thought that, being a teacher, I was just educated enough to do my job which would never come to an end because as long as there are children born, nobody would take my position. During my stay in that area, there were workshops organised but the term “course” was used. But our concern as young teachers was not about what information we were going to gain and take back to our

pupils. Our concern was what we were going to look like. We would prepare ourselves for the workshops by plaiting our hair and choosing our best dresses.

This kind of thinking came to an end when I had to move from Estcourt to Durban. The environment was quite different from the rural area. I discovered that people wanted to continue with their studies. Many of the teachers during those years were trained as teachers after completing Form Three rather than Form Five. When I came to Durban, I realised that most of them wanted to further their studies. They wanted to improve their standard of education and the inspectors were encouraging the teachers to upgrade their standard of education. I also joined them and wrote my Standard Ten privately in 1981. At first, I thought I was going to end there. I did not realise that it was the beginning of my continuing journey to becoming a better educated, knowledgeable and empowered teacher.

My Further Education: Origins and Benefits

In the year 1985, I was challenged by one of my male acquaintances in a casual talk when he asked me what education was. By that time, I had taught for more than six years, but I struggled to answer his question. That incident left me embarrassed and guilty at the same time. Although this conversation was between two people, I felt I was just an embarrassment in the whole education sector. How can a teacher fail to explain what education is when she is working for the Department of Education and Culture? I felt so ashamed that I had to do introspection. Hence, I decided to register with a distance university in 1986 to do my Secondary Education Certificate through correspondence.

At the university, I took English and History as my major subjects. During my second year of study, I felt that I was gaining the self confidence that I had longed for. I then decided to be an active member in the community and in my church (United Congregational Church in South Africa); hence, I joined an educational committee at church. This committee subscribed to the umbrella body, the South African Council of Churches. This wing was called Home and Family Life. Its focus was on the socio-economic challenges of the people of South Africa at that time when the informal settlements were mushrooming all over the country and the family structure

was being eroded. They were concerned about parents having no privacy in these not so properly built houses. They were also concerned about health services, sewerage, crime, poverty and unemployment.

In August 1987, I was chosen to attend a Home and Family life conference in Johannesburg. At that conference, we sat around a round table. Nobody was concealed, everyone was just in front and the debates were fascinating and challenging. The issue was on what should be done to protect the institution of family from being destroyed by these informal settlements. Although I could understand very well what the debate was about, I had difficulty joining in the arguments because it was not a matter of saying one sentence. You had to state your point and elaborate on it. After that, you had to answer the questions that might follow for further clarification. Again, I was challenged as I also wanted to contribute as a member of the society who worked with different families with various challenges on daily basis. However, I could not join in the debate. It was only during breaks over tea that I could voice my opinions on the matter. That incident caused me to take study leave in 1988 and register at the University of Natal (now the University of KwaZulu-Natal) to do a Bachelor of Arts. One of my majors was English because I wanted to be fluent in speaking the language. Unfortunately, I studied for only one year instead of three years because one of my classmates asked me to loan him my money which was meant to pay for school fees the following year and he has never paid me back to date.



Figure 3.6: This is a picture taken at the IsiZulu class year-end party in 1988 at the University of Natal.

My Life after University Of Natal: The Eye Opener

As I have mentioned before, I could not finish my studies at the University of Natal. I had to go back to teaching. However, I was not the same person; now I had a higher self-esteem. Personally, I was just motivated to continue learning until I satisfied my quest for education. I went back to the distance university for a Secondary Education Diploma and Higher Education Diploma. I then registered at the University of Natal for an Advanced Certificate for Education and Basic Literacy in Computers. The course that I did at the University of Natal was very constructive because it was relevant to me as an experienced teacher. It was interactive and innovative, too. It dealt with the work done in the classroom daily; hence the lecturers visited to observe us teaching in our schools. These school visits were very important to monitor the implementation of the methods gained in the university. It equipped me with new methods of teaching Mathematics, English and Technology (which was quite a new subject). I could contribute to the discussions and argue where necessary. I would ask clarification questions, especially on the teaching of Mathematics. I gained a lot on the methods teachers can use to teach Mathematics. Our Mathematics lecturer, Mrs van Jurgen (pseudonym) insisted that we should not take for granted that the children know the concepts. She explained that, each time

you introduce a concept, you should check the basic knowledge to see how much the children know. As a result, I value my Advanced Certificate of Education more than any other certificate I possess. As an artefact I have placed a copy of this certificate below.

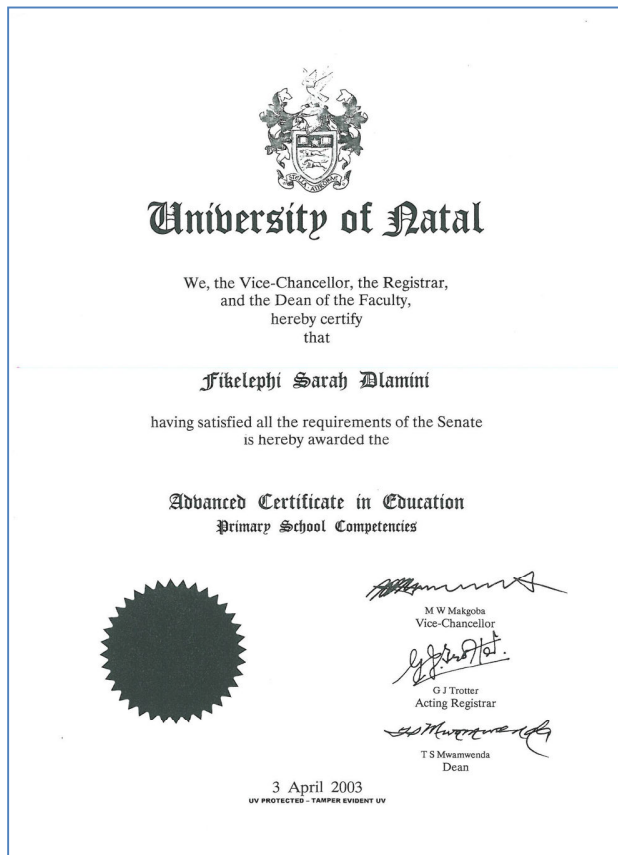


Figure 3.7: My Advanced Certificate of Education, which I value more than any other certificate I possess.

When doing this course, I influenced other two teachers to join me so that whatever we gained was going to benefit the whole school. By being part of the programme, principals of registered student teachers were supported in school management. Hence, the whole school teaching practice was improved.

My Life Experience as a Head of Department: Mission Accomplished

Being promoted from within the same institution is as challenging as coming from outside. I was appointed as a Head of Department (HoD) for the Foundation Phase in 1997. These were the first posts for Heads of Departments in almost all primary schools that had been classified as African schools during the Apartheid era. These posts depended on the enrolment of the school. Prior to this, these posts were not available in the Foundation Phase. As we all know, change comes with fear and many people resist change; I am not different. But I was driven by the determination to learn more about my career and the wonderful, dynamic material I work with (the children). I was also happy that we were given these posts we used to hear about in other departments of education. My instinct told me to go for it!

In this new position, I was expected to be in charge of the Foundation Phase. In this new position, I encountered many challenges due to the curriculum, political and socio-economic changes that were taking place in the country. I had a staff of nine teachers under my supervision. Two Grade R, three Grade 1, two Grade 2 and two Grade 3 teachers. Shortly after my appointment, the new curriculum (Curriculum 2005) was introduced. As HoDs, we were the first people to be introduced to Outcomes-Based Education in the school level. However, we encountered difficulties from both the Department and the teachers at school.

From the Department side, the cascading of the information did not work well. It was done very haphazardly. Training was conducted for a period of three days and teachers were expected to go and implement something they were not clear about. The subject Advisors themselves were not yet clear about what was to be taught. There was a short space of time between training and implementation. Teachers complained that the new terminology was quite complex and unfamiliar. Implementation was limping; there was no monitoring to guide and support teachers, to see whether they were on the right track or not.

As I have mentioned above, teachers were supposed to be trained by their senior management. Hence, I was in charge of training my staff of teachers. I was in charge of drawing up timetables for each class, drawing up work schedules, learning programmes and designing of lesson plans. I

had to supervise the implementation of the new curriculum. There was a lot of work to be done. I had no confidence in what I was doing because this was also new to me. Furthermore, we all felt that this kind of learner-centred curriculum demanded adequate resources to implement it adequately.

I remember our first attempt to have a duplicating device. Somebody taught us to cook gelatine and glycerine. This mixture would be put into a tray to cool. After cooling, this would be used to make copies by writing work on a carbon paper. The procedure was: Place the carbon paper upside down on the tray and press. All the words on the carbon paper would be blotted to this mixture. This was your stencil. You would have to press all your blank papers on this stencil to have copies of your work depending, on the number of copies you needed. When you had different pages to make, you were expected to have many trays or else you had to recook the mixture so as to dilute the first stencil. We were very excited at our school after getting our first copies out of this handmade photocopier. At the same time, we felt proud that we could improvise. All this was done to meet the challenges of this new demanding curriculum. Many teachers were disillusioned by this curriculum with its massive paperwork. They felt that a lot of effort was put into doing paperwork instead of teaching.

But in spite of all these challenges, we managed, together as a staff, to create time to look at the new curriculum policies once a week. In our year plan, we chose Tuesday afternoons as the time when we come together to read and ask clarification questions. We also invited experts from outside institutions such as Non-Governmental Organisations, colleges and book publishers to help us understand the principles of the changing curriculum policies. We would also invite neighbouring schools to join us in this endeavour. A lot of teachers benefited from this practice.

Besides the Tuesday meetings, determined teachers would also attend workshops organised by our teacher unions during weekends because the government training on the new curriculum was so limited. This is the time that we learned to network with other schools because it was a matter of either sinking or swimming. We targeted the schools that were better resourced than ours. In most cases these were Ex –model C (formerly white) schools. We used to go from school to

school looking for the information and worksheets that were suitable for our environment. But as I have already mentioned, nobody came from the Department to guide us or to give us positive affirmation.

Fikile: *Uqweqwe Lukathisha* (An Experienced Teacher)

It was early in June and it was cold because it was the beginning of winter. I was supervising the standing order of children that morning. I was not conducting prayers. I noticed that one little girl was extremely untidy. Her tunic was wrinkled. She also looked like she had never washed that morning. After prayers, I called her and did a short interview about her parents. When she told me that her mother was at home, I decided to go and see her at that moment. After talking to the child, I then consulted the Orphans and Vulnerable Committee at the school. The committee then referred the matter to the principal. After discussing the matter with the principal, we agreed that I should pay the family a visit so that the problems that the child might be experiencing could be known by the school for intervention purposes. Together with the child, I visited her home during break. When I entered the house, a shack made of timber, I noticed that it was a two-roomed house and I was in the kitchen. There was a bed I had to sit on and face the door leading to the bedroom. The child disappeared into this bedroom and I could hear her telling her mother that the teacher was there to see her. It took her ages to come out. Instead, a boy that was doing a higher grade in our school came out carrying a sleeping sponge that was leaking urine. He was taking it to dry out in the sunlight.

As I was sitting there, I started to question myself about what kind of a parent was I expecting to meet. I looked around me and I noticed that it was very filthy where I was sitting. I started pulling some of the things on the other side of the bed using a piece of wood I picked from the floor. From the rubbish that I dragged, some clothes were used as napkins. The contents were not discarded. As I was dragging, my anger grew and grew so that when the mother appeared, I could not just ask about sending the child to school in an untidy state. I had to ask her about the whole situation at home I took the broom and swept her room, promising her that I was coming back that afternoon to see how she had tried to clean her house. Before the end of the day, she came to school to apologise to other teachers, sending them to come and apologise to me on her

behalf. She admitted she was wrong by not looking after her children. Teachers then asked her how many children she had. The answer was eight, ranging from 12 years to six months. This matter was then referred to the Social Worker who took the matter to the relevant department. The matter is now dealt with professionally. This recent experience made a profound impression on me and I wrote about it in my research journal:

Dear God, for all along my teaching career, I did not know where my learners had come from. Now I understand why they just throw papers on the floor. Please help me to guide them correctly. (June 12, 2011)

As I am writing my story and thinking about caring, my mind goes down memory lane and I recall one of the most heart breaking incidents that happened many years ago. There was a boy in our school who used to come very late until the teachers asked him about his home background. The teachers learned that the child was coming very far from school. They also noticed that the child was starving. His class teacher made sure he received extra food during feeding time. One Monday morning, we received a message that the boy was coming back home from selling the carpets he collected from the dumping place. He had a sum of twelve Rands and he was attacked by a man that stabbed him to death. We came together as a staff and cried. The family had no money to bury the child. Three teachers, unmarried ones, including me, decided to foot the bill and bury the child. All other teachers contributed towards groceries that we carried on our first visit to the family. These are minor gestures of caring that we as teachers do for our learners. When thinking about this incident, I feel sad and I break into tears.

Another source of my inspiration for exploring the topic of caring is the incident that nearly took me to court. In 2008, I had a student by the name of S'fiso (pseudonym). S'fiso was a boy of 8 years, doing Grade 3 in my section. As a teacher who was always supervising prayers, I was quick to notice that there was a child who was always fighting during prayers. I decided to get closer to the child so that I could get to the root of his problem. Firstly, I asked him simple questions about his parents. He told me that he and his brother were raised by a single mother who worked in a restaurant in town. I then offered to visit him so that I could meet his mother.

When I arrived home, S'fiso's mother had not returned from work, but I watched the child preparing his food. The child had all the resources that are normal in that environment such as bread, peanut butter or margarine and juice. Although the house was a two-roomed house, it was well looked after. But something was missing that I had to find out. When S'fiso's mother came, we discussed what I had observed and we both agreed that something was worrying the child. As we were talking, I felt like there was something I could do for the boy. I asked the mother to allow the child to visit me during weekends. After the first visit, the child refused to go back home. He used to cry hysterically when it was time to depart. The matter was later reported to the social worker who resolved this by telling the child not to set his foot again in my place. The child would cry and shout after school wanting to go with me. But there was nothing I could do. In my journal, I described my feelings about this remembered incident:

I have enjoyed being of help to this child, S'fiso. He has been accepted in the family. He also enjoyed being part of the family. Now that he has been prevented from visiting us, I feel sad. I think the decision of the social worker was too harsh for me to bear. (October 23, 2011)

That incident left me devastated and sad. I felt the social worker was rather harsh in resolving this matter. However, I felt proud that I had gone an extra mile by looking beyond the child that comes to the class waiting to be taught. I had to understand the learners deeper in order to form the necessary interrelationship that is conducive to learning and teaching. I had to use that information to motivate other teachers to also try to understand the home background of their learners.

Incidents such as these changed my attitude towards the learners that we teach. I realised that they come from families with many different challenges including, sometimes, lack of love. Some of them are victims of violence, and some have witnessed their parents raped and killed before them. Most of them have seen their relatives: fathers, mothers, sisters, brothers, uncles, aunts and even grandparents making love due to the lack of accommodation. They come to

school carrying heavy burdens of being neglected and of poverty. This is the kind of situation that has prompted me to do this study whereby I look at how we as teachers can provide pedagogical care for our learners who are so exposed to dangerous situations.

Conclusion

In Chapter Three, I have taken my reader through each stage of my educational journey. I have traced the acts of pedagogical caring that I received from my parents and my former teachers. Moreover, I have looked at how I have improved my educational qualifications to meet the challenges of the ever changing education context of our country. In conclusion, I would like to emphasise that this process of writing my personal narrative has highlighted for me that as teachers we are role models and also that we learn new things each and every day, depending on our contexts.

In the following chapter, Chapter Four, I look at my educational history analytically to develop themes to help me to respond to my second critical question: *“What can I learn from my lived experiences of pedagogical care?”*

CHAPTER FOUR

LEARNING ABOUT PEDAGOGICAL CARE FROM MY EDUCATIONAL JOURNEY

Introduction

The purpose of this personal history self-study research is to explore my lived experience in order to better understand the concept of pedagogical care. In the previous chapter, I narrated my educational journey, tracing pedagogical caring that I received from my parents and teachers. In doing this, I responded to my first research question, “*What is my lived experience of pedagogical care?*” The personal history narrative that I produced came through making my journal entries and I also used artefacts, such as photographs and certificates, to revive my memory.

In this chapter, my focus is on analysing the story of my educational journey as presented in Chapter Three. The purpose of this analysis is to consider what I can learn from this journey in relation to pedagogical caring. I look closely at the pedagogical care I have personally received and at how it enhanced my learning and also my teaching practice.

As I explain further in Chapter Two, after narrating my educational journey in Chapter Three, I then re-examined it to look for themes related to my research topic. The following are the themes that have emerged from the narrative I wrote about my educational journey from childhood to the teacher I have become:

Theme 1. Motivation plays a major role in pedagogical care.

Theme 2. Pedagogical care is enhanced by lifelong learning.

Theme 3. Pedagogical care involves teaching beyond the curriculum.

In this chapter, I discuss these themes and look at their impact on me as a learner and a teacher. I also consider the themes in relation to how Grant et al. (2010) describe the pedagogical care provided by teachers in schools in poor communities in KwaZulu-Natal. Furthermore, I look at how the insights that emerge can help me to improve my pedagogical care for my learners and how I can collaborate with other teachers in doing so. Thus, in this chapter, I am responding to my second research question, *“What can I learn from my lived experiences of pedagogical care?”* This is crucial for me to see how I can change my ways of doing things, my views and practices, so that the future generations can benefit through my experiences and encounters. Allender and Allender (2006) point out that if we teachers fail to look back, we are likely to repeat the unpleasant learning experiences that did not benefit us as children. Thus, I concur with Zull (2004) in saying that, “when we learn, we change. We do something new or better, or we may stop doing something. Learning makes a difference” (p. 1).

Theme 1: Motivation plays a Major Role in Pedagogical Care

In analysing the story of my educational journey, it became evident that my parents’ motivation played a major role in my education, especially my mother. In my story, it became clear that, although she was illiterate, my mother made sure that I practised reading every evening. During those years, neither my mother nor I was aware of the impact this reading practice would have on my education. To us, it was a way of spending time together as a family before we went to sleep. At that time, it would have been a joke to tell your friends that your reading skills were sharpened by your illiterate mother because people would have expected you to tell them that she was a teacher. Looking back now, I have realised that my mother was my first teacher. She planted seeds in me, the seeds of loving the book. She continued watering those seeds until they blossomed and she shared and enjoyed the fruits of her effort.

The following extract from my personal history narrative emphasises the role played by my mother in nurturing my love of reading:

I would also like to highlight the role that my mother played in the reading fluency that I possess. During my primary education, there were no television sets to watch in the

evening. As mentioned before, my mother was illiterate, as she never attended school. Therefore, she made me read her the stories in the Bible from the first chapter. Although I never finished it, I read most of the chapters. My knowledge of the stories in the Bible stems from that. (Chapter Three, p. 20)

What my mother did corresponds with what pre-service teachers in an American study conducted by Boggs and Golden (2009) highlight:

As expected, mothers especially played an important role in their children's literacy lives. Over 92 pre-service teachers reported the worth of their mothers' modeling and nurturing for their entrance into literacy. Twenty-two pre-service teachers reported mothers, fathers, or siblings who taught them to read before entering school. (p. 216)

My personal history also illustrates how the reading practice with my mother helped me to gain more knowledge and challenged me to know more:

This reading got into my blood in such a way that I used to read any piece of paper that I could lay my hands on. My father used to come home with newspapers and magazines from his work and I would read these until very late at night. Mother would tell me the following day that Father had complained about the wasting of paraffin. Mother would protect me because she knew exactly how much I liked reading. (Chapter Three, p. 20)

It might have been that my mother was not aware of the lasting impression she made and the contribution of her encouraging words and attentiveness. The following excerpt from my story portrays my mother's pedagogical caring and the contribution of her motivation to my education:

She used to listen attentively and she never fell asleep when I was reading to her. Her attentiveness encouraged me to do it again and it gave me a sense of being appreciated. (Chapter Three, p.20)

Masinga (2009) maintains that teachers' own backgrounds have a significant impact on the development of their teaching selves and pedagogic practice in the classroom. In my case, the nurturing I received from my mother has been a pillar of strength and a warm cushion to bounce back on when the 'going gets tough'. This is the kind of motivation I have shared with my learners; hence I call them 'my children'. This motivation pushes you and gives you strength to go forward in everything that you do, knowing that your family is behind you. When I talk of my mother's encouragement and motivation, I am not talking about only sweet words; sometimes this motivation would come in a form of scolding and threats. Through those harsh words, I would learn what my parents' wishes were. Sometimes I would cry and then think to myself how difficult it was for my parents to guide me. After crying and rethinking about the harsh words, I would realise the ambitions and the great expectations of my mother, as well as my father.

I have shared the story of my mother's pedagogical care with many parents who come to check on the progress of their children. Similarly, Varathaiah (2010) highlights the importance of the contribution made by mothers in the education of their children. She maintains that her "not very educated and academic" mother inspired her to continue with her studies (p. 43). Furthermore, she does not exclude the contribution made by her father in her life, as she points out that "he was a good financial provider in the home" (Varathaiah, 2010, p. 48).

Likewise, I have realised that without my father's watchful eyes from a distance, I would not have achieved much. The story of my educational journey shows that the father figure made a tremendous contribution in my life. Although my father looked like he was aloof, he was monitoring my progress at school. He contributed financially by providing me with the school uniform, school fees, food and shelter. But his most significant contribution in my life and education was his mere presence. From this, I realise that the presence and the absence of the father figure can make a tremendous contribution to children's learning. I have observed that some children without fathers that I have taught have experienced emotional difficulties that have impacted negatively on their learning and performance at school. The following extract from my story draws attention to my father's role in providing for my educational needs:

Estcourt is very cold place, especially in winter. However, although it was in a rural area, I do not recall walking barefoot to school in winter. I recall with pride that my father made sure I had shoes and socks for school. (Chapter Three, p .17)

Correspondingly, Varathaiah (2010) and Waterhouse (2007) emphasise the role played by fathers. Both stress that although their fathers looked like they were standing aloof, they made significant contributions to their education. They have taken the detachment of their fathers and converted it into an encouragement for being independent and for individuality. For instance, Varathaiah (2010, p. 50) explains:

Although both Ann and Olwethu's fathers lacked communicative skills, they were figures of authority who demanded obedience and a quick response to their orders. Despite this, they both agree that their fathers were humane.

Furthermore, Waterhouse (2007) highlights the point that sometimes as a child you might think that your father does not care and you only realise very late in life that he really cares. I now see that maybe our fathers were not sure about how to talk to their children when were young. As Waterhouse (2007) relates:

In my childhood, I felt care from my mother and experienced distance from my father. At the time I didn't question it, judge it, celebrate its presence or bemoan its absence. In fact I was hardly aware of its existence in any tangible way. As best as I remember I just accepted that sometimes it was there and sometimes it wasn't. (p. 2)

From my point of view, I looked at the detachment of my father as a way of him showing authority and a way of teaching that, when you embark on business, you must put in all your effort. The engagement he would put in at his work taught me to put all the effort in whatever I do. I learnt to work hard without looking at what the other person is doing. I was also taught to be responsible for my actions, which goes hand in hand with accountability. Accountability teaches a person to take decisions that are sound. Therefore, the words: accountability,

responsibility, independence, decision making, time, affirmation, apologising, begging, were used almost every day at home. In addition to these traits, individuality was also added as a flavour so that when something goes wrong you do not blame another person.

My parents' guidance motivated me to work hard at school in order to succeed. They led by example, by being hard working people. Sometimes they had to be very harsh to me so that I would realise the importance of their warning and teachings. Their influence on me can be seen in the following extract from my story:

I did not experience a lot of punishment because I used to listen to the adults and teachers; as a result I grew up to be a hard worker like my parents. I think it was the motivation that I got from my parents. My mother was illiterate, as she never attended school, but she motivated me by telling me how she wished to have an educated child amongst her offspring. (Chapter Three, p. 18)

Without this upbringing, I do not want to imagine where I would be. This is the kind of pedagogical care that I received both at home and at school. I believe that some valuable traits that I possess were instilled at school. As Eisner (2002a) explains:

It is usual to consider the implicit curriculum as having an entirely negative impact as far as education is concerned. But this is not necessary true. The implicit curriculum of the school can teach a host of intellectual and social virtues: punctuality, a willingness to work hard at tasks that are not immediately enjoyable, and the ability to defer immediate gratification in order to work for distant goals can legitimately be viewed as positive attributes of schooling. (p. 95)

Thus, my observant teachers contributed tremendously in my educational journey. I now realise that the motivation that I received from my teachers has played a vital role in my career as a teacher and my development as a person. Looking back through a researcher lens, I have been able to learn that teachers are like sowers. They throw their seeds with hope that one day the

surviving plant will bear fruit. In other words, as teachers we have an obligation to nurture all the children in our classes because we do not know the outcomes. This gives me an indication that when a teacher has many learners to teach, some of them will always remember what was taught. This means that as teachers, we should not tire to inspire, care for and guide our learners. From the story of my educational journey, I see that my teachers were not motivating me as an individual; however, because I had a clear vision of my mother's dream and my goals were clear in my mind, I listened attentively to them. The role of my teachers is highlighted in this extract from my story:

In this school there were teachers that I wish to commend for the contribution they made in my life. I would say they were quick to spot the potential in me and nurtured it into a blazing flame. (Chapter Three, p. 23)

Hence, one of the insights that has emerged from my story is that the little favours teachers do for their learners on a daily basis can unleash their potential. These acts of caring might be unintentionally performed, yet they can make a tremendous contribution to the 'cared for' by encouraging, guiding and giving hope and direction for a long time, if not for the rest of their lives. When I look at the following extract, I can see how my teachers were trying to provide pedagogical care, although it was not obvious to me at that time:

Our teacher would call out the spelling words to us, and then we would mark them instantly. I guess we were all eager to do our best because during our time it was a shame to underperform and corporal punishment was used during those days. After all the slates had been marked, we would stand in a circle and display our work by supporting the slates with our feet. That was the moment of happiness for those who had passed and the moment of sorrow if you did not make it. (Chapter Three, p. 17)

I now see that our teachers were actually motivating us to do our best. By making us display our work, it was a way of saying to others, "You can learn from the child standing next to you. There is a lot you can learn from other children in the class. You can learn to write clearly and legibly,

you can learn to work diligently”. Even the displaying of slates teaches a child to be clean. I do realise that some of the learners who did not perform well might have been demotivated by this activity. In addition, Makhanya (2010) highlights how the corporal punishment used at school had a negative impact on the teachers she worked with in her study. However, looking back now, I think that these tactics were carefully thought out by our teachers to encourage us to do our best.

Furthermore, my story reveals that my former teacher, Mrs. Mdlalose’s passion for her work has guided my daily practice and interaction with my learners:

Mrs. Mdlalose (pseudonym), my English teacher and the only female during that year, was just like a mother to all of us. Besides being an English teacher, she would give us moral lessons. During her lessons, she would tell us that we needed to honour our parents no matter how strict they were. She would tell us not to leave our homes when we were angry. She would say “ayikho indawo edlula ikhaya ” (there is no place like home). There is an idiom she taught us that has guided me all my life: “Aim for the sun, you will probably hit the moon.” (Chapter Three, p. 23)

Mrs. Mdlalose taught English for many years in that school, but she did not know at that time the outcome of her teachings and practices. As a teacher and a mother, she taught across the curriculum, motivating us to grow up as well behaved citizens of our country, but we did not notice that she loved and cared for us. When we grew up, it was very rare to hear a parent, a teacher or a child pronouncing the words, “I love you”. These words were reserved for lovers only. Mrs. Mdlalose did not tell us how much she loved us, but today it is obvious to me that she really loved and cared for us. Looking back now, I can see that as children it was not easy for us to see how passionate she was.

Another teacher who played a significant role in my personal history encouraged my love of reading newspapers. This teacher used to ask me to copy his letters to the editor in my handwriting and thus also contributed to my learning of English language. Hence, when reading

the newspaper at home, it was an extension of what I was doing at school. The shortage of libraries hindered my progress, but I used the newspapers to supplement the information gained at school:

Another teacher, Mr. Dlodla (pseudonym), used to write to the Newspaper editor. He would write his script in his handwriting, and then he would ask me to transcribe it in my handwriting before he sent it to be published. When reading his arguments, I would wish I could possess the same fluency in the English language (Chapter Three, p. 23)

When looking at my story, it is clear to me that having no books at home or school should not be an excuse for anyone's inability to read. Parents can expose their children to reading and teachers can shape those small beginnings. Since I started teaching, I have preached the same gospel of using newspapers and magazines as sources of information in those cases where libraries are not easily accessible. Newspapers and magazines can serve as the basis and extension of reading for children at home and at school. Furthermore, these can be used by parents to monitor how fluently their children can read and from there they can encourage their children to read with correct pronunciation of words. Similarly, Makhanya (2010) highlights how the lack of resources can be addressed by encouraging teachers to make their resources out of waste material:

These discussions have helped me to see that I should encourage teachers to make their own resources using waste materials. I have shared my expertise of making resources with a group of forty teachers from disadvantaged rural schools. I will carry on sharing my expertise even on weekends or holidays as teachers are appreciating the sharing of skills. This will help in improving teachers' practices. (p. 64)

Through my educational journey, I have learnt that motivation is a very useful tool in encouraging learners to achieve their goals. Thus, in our school we make sure that we motivate learners every day during the morning assembly; we really believe that this is fruitful for some learners. These talks may be taken for granted or disregarded when a learner is with his/her friends, but this might change in the long run. Furthermore, this motivation is not only verbal, it

can also be conveyed by the way we present ourselves, the way we talk to each other as teachers and how we present ourselves to parents when they visit the school. All other favours we do for our learners and all the gestures of motivation to show them how we appreciate their presence and participation in school can encourage learners to imitate us when they grow up and become teachers. It is very common for me to meet my ex-students who remind me how I helped them to climb the ladder of education. Most of them appreciate how I literally pushed them by making them to do their work, telling them about their future. I am also proud of the learners who have passed through my hands and who are still continuing with their studies because my motivation would be fruitless if it could not be passed on to the younger generations.

The choices of books that we order for our learners also form part of our motivation to learners. Books that encourage good citizenship have characters that portray the expected behavior in the society. Bad and unwanted habits are also discouraged in the learning material that teachers choose. At our school, teachers who are passionate about their learners and their work come together during book requisition time. They take time to look at the teaching and learning material that they wish their learners to use. Likewise, Grant et al. (2010, citing Christie et al.) highlight how teachers in the study they conducted expressed how their “sense of inner agency” and “mustering of resources to solve problems, should be viewed as strength in schools” (p. 93).

Over and above all this, the motivation I received from my parents and teachers has kept me in the teaching profession through all odds. Day (2007) highlights how difficult it can be to keep going as a motivated and committed teacher:

Bringing a passionate self to teaching every day of every week of every school term and year is a daunting prospect. It is stressful not only to the body but also to the heart and soul, for the processes of teaching and learning are rarely smooth, and the results are not always predictable. (p. 2)

From my personal history, I have learned that teachers who are passionate about their work do everything in their power to make their learners gain the necessary knowledge and skills and they motivate their learners daily to adopt a positive attitude in doing things. I concur with Hargreaves (1999) when he maintains that teachers stay in the profession because they have a passion for their learners and their classrooms. He asserts that teachers endure all the challenges for the sake of their learners.

In concluding this theme, I want to acknowledge the benefit of having the opportunity to pause and look back to reflect on how motivation contributed to my learning. I wish to share with other teachers and parents how nurturing, inspiration and motivation can encourage children to learn and how it can unleash their potential to go forward towards their goals. After writing this chapter, I have become more aware of how I can use some of my former teachers' and my mother's attitudes to encourage learners. I have noticed the acts of motivation that I had always taken for granted and seen how these can contribute to pedagogical care.

Theme 2: Pedagogical Care is Enhanced by Lifelong Learning

In their study on the resilience of schools, Grant et al. (2010) learned how teachers survive and continue teaching in spite of all the challenges they face:

Teachers haven't given up. They haven't burnt out. Their coping skills are excellent. In fact, another participant explained how [they] use [their] problems to achieve, to do better. That is [their] learning curve. The schools clearly did not run away from their problems, but instead interrogated them and used them as a springboard from which to learn and improve. (p. 93)

Thus, their study shows how teachers working in disadvantaged contexts can act as change agents and bring good quality education and development to their learners. Grant et al. (2010) identify this as a key feature of pedagogical care. Changing times require teachers who are prepared to change their ways of teaching in order to overcome challenges and to be effective in their teaching. I belong to a community of people who have great expectations for their children;

I therefore need to keep on doing reflection on my daily practice. Since I have been in the teaching profession for some time, I have realised the importance of being a scholar. Things are changing socially and politically; children are also changing. The changing curriculum demands teachers who are going to be the change agents in this democratic country. Technology has also changed how things are done in our classrooms. Some of the learners that we teach are exposed to this technology at an early age. This calls for teachers who are going to try and learn as much as possible to keep up with the developments in education.

Shulman (2004) highlights the role that motivation plays in teacher learning. Likewise, motivation moved me from my comfort zone of being a teacher with one certificate from my initial training to being a teacher who seems to be craving for more education. The following extract from my story highlights how this change came about:

How can a teacher fail to explain what education is when she is working for the Department of Education and Culture? I felt so ashamed that I had to do introspection. Hence I decided to register with a distance university in 1986 to do my Secondary Education Certificate through correspondence. (Chapter Three, p.29)

As discussed in the previous section, my story illustrates how my mother's motivation has sustained me through all my life to become the teacher I have become. Thus, my mother's motivation encouraged me to continue learning and seek out professional development opportunities. I have never ceased to search for information so as to develop my instructional practices, even though the professional development programmes were often not adequate. I have tried to learn something from every workshop and course I have attended.

Motivational seeds planted by my teachers and parents pushed me to continue with my studies. This can be seen in my story of my educational journey:

This kind of thinking came to an end when I had to move from Estcourt to Durban. The environment was quite different from the rural area. I discovered that people wanted to

continue with their studies. Many of the teachers during those years were trained after completing Form Three not Form Five. When I came to Durban I realised that most of them wanted to further their studies. I also joined them and wrote my Standard Ten privately in 1981. At first I thought I was going to end there. I did not realise that it was the beginning of my continuing journey to becoming a better educated, knowledgeable and empowered teacher. (Chapter Three, p. 28).

As illustrated in my educational story, after being challenged by one of my acquaintances about my job, my source of income, my daily bread, I made a decision to further my studies in order to keep abreast with the new challenges that come with transformation. I decided to take a step back by looking inward and examining myself. By so doing, I was taking a step to a better future for myself and for my learners. I was determined that they were going to have a better qualified teacher, who was better equipped to handle children. I realised that a knowledgeable teacher is more beneficial to the community where she works. She is an asset to the school and the community at large.

The following extract shows what led me to stand up and upgrade my education level:

In the year 1985, I was challenged by one of my male acquaintances in a casual talk when he asked me what education was. By that time, I had taught for more than six years, but I struggled to answer his question. That incident left me embarrassed and guilty at the same time. Although this conversation was between two people, I felt I was just an embarrassment in the whole education sector. How can a teacher fail to explain what education is when she is working for the Department of Education and Culture? I felt so ashamed that I had to do introspection. Hence I decided to register with a distance university in 1986 to do my Secondary Education Certificate. (Chapter Three, p. 29)

One of the requirements in the Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education (DoHET, 2011) is for teachers to be scholars, researchers and lifelong learners. It is further explained that “educators are expected to achieve ongoing personal, academic, occupational and professional

growth, through pursuing reflective study and research in their field, in broader professional and educational matters, and in other related fields” (p. 49). This requirement is just in line with what I did on my own. The story of my educational journey reveals that I went through continuous professional development unaware because at that time, the term ‘continuous professional development’ was not yet familiar to me. According to Day (1999):

Professional development is the process by which, alone and with others, teachers review, renew and extend their commitment as change agents to the moral purposes of teaching: and by which they acquire and develop critically the knowledge, skills, planning and practice with children, young people and colleagues through each phase of their teaching lives. (p. 4)

Similarly, Eisner (2002b) argues that teachers should continue learning for as long as they are teaching. Likewise, Lieberman and Pointer-Mace (2010) concur with Eisner (2002b) and Day (1999) in emphasising the importance of teachers who carry on learning to meet the demands of our changing world.

Another driving factor for me becoming a lifelong learner was to boost my self-image as a professional. According to Mushayikwa and Lubben (2009), this kind of “professional development arising from the teachers ‘own initiative’ ” (p. 376) is self-directed development. The introspection that I did prompted me to register to study so that I would become empowered to face changes taking place in education. This resulted in a change of professional identity, which boosted my morale and self-esteem. This change also came with a change in classroom practices. As illustrated in the following extract, my further studies equipped me with professional knowledge and skills that helped to better my daily interaction with my learners. I had a chance to change my lenses to look differently at my work:

Personally, I was just motivated to continue learning until I satisfied my quest for education. I went back to the distance university for a Secondary Education Diploma and Higher Education Diploma. I then registered at the University of Natal for an Advanced

Certificate for Education and Basic Literacy in Computers. The course that I did at the University of Natal was very constructive because it was relevant to me as an experienced teacher. It was interactive and innovative, too. It dealt with the work done in the classroom daily; hence the lectures visited to observe us teaching in our schools. These schools visits were very important to monitor the implementation of the methods gained in the university. It equipped me with new methods of teaching Mathematics, English and Technology, which was quite new. (Chapter Three, p. 30)

I came back from my studies with a better understanding about my job as a teacher because all that I learned was related to my experience of working with children. Hence, it was more meaningful than my initial training. The inadequacy of my initial teacher training is demonstrated by the following extract from my story:

There is nothing much to write about my study at Matata Training College near Newcastle in 1976-1977 except that I was not aware that I was trained to become a leader, a manager and a mother of many children . It took me some time to get into my mind that the training was for me to change from pupil to teacher. Firstly I was young, only eighteen years of age. Secondly, initially my ambition was nursing. I was only attracted by nurses' cleanliness, but ignorant about their duties and responsibilities. So really I could not believe what was happening to me. (Chapter Three, p. 24)

Likewise, Korthagen, Loughran and Russell (2006) highlight how inadequate initial teacher training often is:

Complaints from graduates of teacher education programs, school administrators, parents and politicians about the irrelevance of teacher preparation for the reality of everyday practice in schools have generated pressures to rethink both the structure and the practices of teacher education. (p. 1021)

My ambition to enroll in a tertiary institution so that I could upgrade my standard of education contributed to my professional development and influenced a change in how I view education as a whole, as well as the children and the community of teachers I work with. At the same time, I have encouraged other teachers to continue studying so that they keep up with the demands of the changing curriculum. In other words, I have become a role model to other people. The following extract highlights this:

When doing this course, I influenced other two teachers to join me to benefit the whole school. By being part of the programs, principals of registered student teachers were supported in school management. Hence, the whole school teaching practice was improved. (Chapter Three, p. 31)

This concurs with what Lunenburg, Korthagen and Swennen (2007) propose:

Modeling is generally considered to serve both the goal of influencing individual teachers' beliefs and behavior, and the goal of changing education as a whole. This could be an important factor in promoting 'new learning' in education. The third goal may be seen as an extension of the second: if education must change, then teacher education must change as well, and focusing on modeling can help teacher educators to change their own teaching practices. (p. 590)

This idea is not directed to teacher educators only; it is also directed to us as experienced teachers who are role models to inexperienced and young teachers. They always look upon us to teach them some valuable lessons whether incidentally or planned. We are their mentors in our schools and, through mentoring; we can show pedagogical care for our colleagues. Correspondingly, Grant et al. (2010) contend that in the caring pedagogical situation, teachers work together as a team: "Educators did not work in isolation.... Both the sense of collegial care and pedagogical care inspired the educators to continue in their endeavors despite the risk factors they faced" (p. 93).

My story reveals that when I was teaching at Estcourt nothing challenged me, but when I moved to Durban, I had to change. Thus, I have also learned that the environment plays an important role in the development of the teacher. Impoverished areas often seem to lag behind when it comes to transformation. The following extract from my story illustrates this:

I spent two years in that area, doing nothing to upgrade my standard of education. I thought that, being a teacher, I was just educated enough to do my job which would never come to an end because as long as there are children born, nobody would take my position. During my stay in that area, there were workshops organised but the term “course” was used. But our concern as young teachers was not on what information we were going to gain and take back to our pupils. Our concern was what we were going to look like. We would prepare ourselves for the workshops by plaiting our hair and choosing our best dresses. (Chapter Three, p. 28)

Later on, my self-esteem and self-confidence came out and pushed me to seek for greener pastures and not be satisfied with the same position. I became enthusiastic to open up new avenues ahead of me. I was not pushed to apply for promotion. However, my inner ego said, “You can do it, go for it!” And I passed the interview and got a job as a Head of Department. In my new position, I had to learn many new management skills, informally and formally. I had to learn to budget my time so that I was able to do my class work and supervise the teachers. I had to learn to communicate well with all the teachers at all levels. I had to learn to resolve conflicts effectively. However, all these skills do not come automatically; continuous professional development helped me to be successful:

As we all know, change comes with fear and many people resist change, I am not different. But I was driven by the determination to learn more about my career and the wonderful dynamic material I work with (the children). I was also happy that we were given these posts we used to hear about in other departments of education. (Chapter Three, p. 32)

In conclusion, I have benefited a great deal by being a lifelong learner. I have learned that, as a teacher, I have to read what other teachers in the same field are saying about our work, even if their contexts are different from mine. In addition, I believe in sharing my encounters, problems or joys and surprises with other people. I also depend on other people to give me direction when I am not sure how to proceed. From my personal history, I have learnt that in order to provide pedagogical care, teachers should continue learning in their schools and in their communities. As Nieto (2003) argues:

Excellent teachers do not emerge full blown at graduation; nor are they just “born teachers”. Instead, teachers are always in the process of “becoming”. Given the dynamics of their work, they need to continually rediscover who they are and what they stand for through their dialogue and collaboration with peers, through ongoing and consistent study, and deep reflection about their craft. (pp. 395-396)

Theme 3: Pedagogical Care Involves Teaching Beyond the Curriculum

The third theme that has come out from my educational journey is that some of my teachers showed care by teaching beyond the curriculum. Over and above what was prescribed, they added something out of love and passion for teaching. Fortunately for me, what they taught tallied well with what my parents taught me. This moulding started from the beginning when I entered schooling. This can be seen in the following extract:

Usually, this was the time for inspection for the cleanliness of slates. Slates were made of something like asbestos. They were the size of A4 paper. The edges were lined with planks. There was a special pen to use. This slate was very fragile. It used to break now and again and we would be punished for broken and dirty slates. (Chapter Three, p.18)

From the above extract, one learns that the cleanliness, responsibility and competitive spirit were embedded in our upbringing by our teachers and our parents at homes. This was introduced in the elementary classes and continued to higher education classes. My teachers, I suppose, knew that they were preparing me for the outside world. Although the corporal punishment was used in

our times of schooling, I do not think it was meant to hurt us. I think that mostly it was used so that we would learn a sense of responsibility. However, as Makhanya (2010) explains, teachers' use of corporal punishment, however well intentioned, can have negative consequences for children's learning. This can hinder the progress of some learners.

In reflecting on my educational journey, I can see that my teachers invested their hopes in me. By teaching me, they were not expecting me to pass examinations and tests only, but they looked beyond that. They realised that they were dealing with a person who was on a journey to adulthood. As Eisner (2002b) argues:

The kind of schools we need would recognize that the most important forms of learning are those that students know how to use outside of school, not just inside school. And the teacher in such schools would consistently try to help students see the connections between the two. The transfer of learning cannot be assumed; it needs to be taught. (p. 581)

To illustrate:

[Mrs Mdlalose] explained clearly that in life you should always aim for the best so that if you do not achieve it, at least you will get nearer to your target. I used to respond positively to her work and, as a result, she taught me crochet. She chose me out of many children who used to play on the school premises after examinations, and gave me crochet to do. I guess it was my innocence that made her pay attention and notice me. (Chapter Three, p. 23)

I now realise that this teacher who taught me crochet did so out of love and concern that we could share some of her expertise instead of just playing after examinations. She added a skill that was not in the syllabus. Even when she presented her lessons, she would motivate us to be open-minded when taking decisions in life. Her words were spoken many years ago, but they are still ringing in my ears. It seems like yesterday. Teachers such as Mrs Mdlalose have a knack for spotting learners' potential achievements and possible barriers to learning. Looking back, I see

that pedagogical care requires teachers to show interest in every learner to be aware of when they need special attention and to offer them special skills that they can use in life beyond the classroom. In this way, teachers can encourage learners to unleash their potential and to make the most of their talents.

Looking back now, I am also able to see that teaching beyond the curriculum can also occur through the development of a good relationship between the teacher and the learners. A relationship built on trust and respect is lasting and fruitful. Correspondingly, Nieto (2003) highlights how teachers' words and deeds have a lasting impact on the lives of their learners and she further goes on to caution teachers to be careful in whatever they say and do. The significance of the learner-teacher relationship in pedagogical caring is revealed in the following extract from my story:

Another source of my inspiration for this topic of creating a caring school environment is the incident that nearly took me to court. In 2008, I had a student by the name of S'fiso (not his real name). S'fiso was a boy of eight years, doing Grade 3 in my section. As a teacher who was always supervising prayers, I was quick to notice that there was a child who was always fighting during prayers. I decided to get closer to the child so that I could get to the root of his problem. Firstly, I asked him simple questions about his parents. He told me that he and his brother were raised by a single mother who worked in a restaurant in town. I then offered to visit him so that I could meet his mother.
(Chapter Three, p. 35)

I believe that the learner-teacher relationship is even stronger if the parents meet the teachers of their children. In my experience, parents feel relieved to see a humanistic teacher taking care of their children. According to Allender and Allender (2006), humanistic teachers are those teachers "whose highest priority is the needs of the students" and "the student needs have to be the place where planning teaching begins" (p. 15). Hence, my teachers' examples as role models, have also taught me to go an extra mile in my teaching. Likewise, Varathaiah (2010) highlights how

the teachers in her study have replicated the good teaching habits of some teachers they admired at school:

We are more drawn to and express admiration for the teachers whom we consider had a positive influence on our lives and those who believed in us rather than those who were negative. (p. 52)

However, I have also realised that teaching beyond the curriculum is usually noticed by the onlooker rather than the doer. Forrester (2005) highlights that teachers are not paid for going an extra mile in their work by caring for their learners. However, Forrester points out that this caring can motivate teachers. Similarly, the teachers in the study conducted by Grant et al. (2010) also highlighted that they teach beyond the curriculum:

Educators also appeared willing to work beyond the demands of conventional timetables. The teachers are committed in such a way that if work is not finished during school hours, they finish off late or even come back during weekends. (p. 93)

In conclusion, through my personal history, I have become aware that caring teachers do not teach children what is in the book only. They also add moral lessons because they care about their children. I have personally experienced that as a teacher, when you go to sleep, you do not sleep. Your subconscious mind is not at rest. You imagine each and every child in your class, especially those that are finding it difficult to cope with work. You keep on looking for different methods to help them experience success and enjoy the feeling of getting high marks and be on top. As a teacher, you always want to find ways of motivating your children to put more effort in their work.

Conclusion

The question I have been exploring in this chapter was: *“How can I learn from my lived experiences of pedagogical care?”* From re-examining my personal history narrative, I realised that the teachers who taught me from a tender age up to high school were caring. It also emerged

that my positive attitude towards schooling contributed tremendously to my learning. The role played by my parents was also acknowledged and appreciated.

In writing this chapter, it has become evident to me that motivation is a form of pedagogical care that can enhance learning. This motivation can come from parents and teachers. Parents can encourage their children in many ways and then teachers can take it from there to advance this motivation. Children learn better if they are encouraged and given moral lessons that are going to give them courage to go forward with their education. Moreover, this chapter has shown me that, in order for teachers to engage in pedagogical care with their learners, they should not stop learning. Lifelong learning equips teachers with tactics for teaching these children in this dynamic, changing society. I have also learnt that teaching beyond the curriculum is a form of pedagogical care offered by teachers who are passionate about their work.

CHAPTER FIVE

NOW THAT I HAVE SEEN, NOW THAT I HAVE LEARNED, IT IS THE TIME TO MOVE FORWARD

Introduction

The aim of my study has been to better understand the concept of pedagogical care. Grant, Jasson and Lawrence (2010, p. 92) explain “an ethics of care” in two ways. They look at “pedagogical care” and “welfare care”. They further explain that pedagogical care is related to “educational needs of learners” and welfare care is related to “the other needs of learners” (p. 92). I believe that, as dedicated teachers, we have to look at both of these types of care because learning cannot happen if the learner is hungry, traumatised or sick. Thus, teachers have an obligation to teach a child as a whole. For the purpose of this study, however, I have focused specifically on understanding the pedagogical aspects of educational care.

In the previous chapter, I analysed the personal history narrative that I wrote about my own educational journey (as presented in Chapter Three) in order to respond to my second research question: “*What can I learn from my lived experiences of pedagogical care?*” I came up with three themes that emerged from my narrative:

Theme 1. Motivation plays a major role in pedagogical care.

Theme 2. Pedagogical care is enhanced by lifelong learning.

Theme 3. Pedagogical care involves teaching beyond the curriculum.

In this concluding chapter, I look back and review my dissertation chapter by chapter. I offer my reflections on the study. I explain what I have learned from my study of the concept of pedagogical care and how I intend to take this forward in my work as a teacher.

A Review of the Dissertation

In Chapter One, I stated my reasons for embarking on this study and I highlighted some of the challenges that we encounter as teachers in my school context on daily basis. I then explained what I had learned from my initial reading related to my study of understanding pedagogical

care. I identified the following two themes that emerged from my preliminary reading: *a) Caring as the creation of positive interpersonal relationships with learners* and *b) responding to social ills*. I went on to introduce my key concept of pedagogical care (as explained by Grant et al., 2010) and to link it to Waghid and Smeyers' perspective on *Ubuntu* as an ethics of care in education that encourages us to understand teaching and learning as about human relationships and responsiveness. In Chapter One, I also introduced and explained the research questions that have guided this study: *Question 1: What are my lived experiences of pedagogical care?* *Question 2: What can I learn from my lived experiences of pedagogical care?* I concluded the chapter by giving an overview of the dissertation.

In Chapter Two, I explained how I had undertaken a personal history self-study by narrating my educational journey to better understand the effects of pedagogic caring and the consequences of its absence. I explained that I took a personal history approach to self-study in order to look at how I could use a new awareness of my past to enhance my teaching in future. I described the research context for my study and the pedagogical challenges that I have encountered as a teacher and a Head of Department in my school that have prompted me to do this study. I also discussed my role as the main participant researcher in this self-study. My critical friends and their roles were clarified. I also explained how I used the research methods of artefact retrieval and journal writing to assist me in retracing the story of my educational journey.

In Chapter Three, I presented the story of my educational journey. I traced significant acts of pedagogical care with the intention of understanding this concept. Through this process, I realised how pedagogical care has helped me to become the teacher I am today and influenced the teacher I would like to become. In this chapter, I addressed the first key research question that was guiding my study: *“What are my lived experiences of pedagogical care?”* In answering this question, it became clear that the pedagogical care that I received from my parents, my teachers and other stakeholders motivated me to become a teacher. Moreover, I realised that this caring sustained me through all my learning and teaching experiences up to the present. It also transpired that through my parents' and teachers' motivation and guidance, I have been able to be a lifelong learner and this has allowed me to achieve many things in life. I looked at how I

have struggled all my life in trying to reach greater heights in education and how caring people supported me in this. I also realised the importance of the support from home. Hence, I have concluded that the first school is home. Through my narrative, I was also able to give instances rendering care to learners through my years of practice as a teacher in different contexts. Moreover, telling a story of my personal history self-study, I was able to look back and see where I had been uncaring towards other people; where everything revolved around me.

I was challenged by writing about myself for a whole chapter (Chapter Three), as I felt as if I was ‘blowing my own trumpet’ because I was the main character in my personal history narrative. I discussed this feeling with my supervisor and she asked me provocative questions that led me to overcome this fear. I took a decision of being honest with myself and relating the story as I saw it.

After narrating my story, I emphasised that we teachers are role models to our learners. From my narrative, it became clear to me that the teachers and my parents who were my role models worked tirelessly and taught beyond what was expected of them. They displayed positive traits that I have copied. I have taken the baton from them and continued to run the race. I am now aware that I have an obligation to teach my learners positive lessons that my teachers and parents taught me.

In Chapter Four, I looked analytically at my educational history to develop themes to help me to respond to my second critical question: *What can I learn from my lived experiences of pedagogical care?* It became very clear to me that through trying to understand the concept of pedagogic care, I was going to learn about and reveal the multiple layers of its components. The three themes that I identified were: *Theme 1. Motivation plays a major role in pedagogical care. Theme 2. Pedagogical care is enhanced by lifelong learning. Theme 3. Pedagogical care involves teaching beyond the curriculum.* All these themes revealed evidence of how pedagogical care has supported me throughout my journey from childhood to the teacher I have become. From re-examining my story, I became aware that the teachers who taught me from a tender age up to high school were pedagogically caring. It also emerged that my positive attitude

towards schooling contributed tremendously to my learning. The pedagogic role played by my parents was also acknowledged and appreciated. In writing this chapter, it became evident to me that motivation forms an important part of pedagogical care. This motivation can come from parents and teachers. I realised that children can learn better if they are motivated and given verve to go forward with their education. Furthermore, this chapter showed me that, in order for teachers to be able to offer pedagogical care to their learners, they need to keep learning. Lifelong learning equips teachers with knowledge, skills and attitudes for teaching children in our dynamic, changing society. I have also learned that teaching beyond the curriculum is a significant form of pedagogical caring that helps the children to gain even more from their schooling and to be better prepared for life beyond school.

What I have Learned from the Study

Through the study, I have realised that personal history self-study methodology is valuable for a person who still wants to grow in her career. This methodology was suitable for my study because it helped me to look at how a deeper understanding of my upbringing and my lived experiences could enhance my teaching. The time I have spent on this study has given me a good opportunity to gaze back on the journey I have walked as a child going to school and as novice and an experienced teacher. Through doing this self-study, I had a chance to look back at what worked well in my own learning and what motivated me to be a teacher that I am today. I also had the opportunity to compare the pedagogical care I received from my parents and teachers to the care I give to my learners. This has caused me to put on new glasses to look at my actions and my thoughts. I see a challenge of changing the mindset of us as teachers to teach our learners in a more democratic way. The literature I have read has also shown me that our actions and words as teachers can have a negative or positive impact on learners we teach. I have realised that personal history self-study helps a person to grow in thinking and change.

I believe I still have a lot to offer in the teaching fraternity. I strongly believe that change in my behaviour and my interactions with other people starts with my own learning. Through this study, I have been able to think about my actions and deeds more often than before. I have been able to learn more about considering the feelings and emotions of other human beings. I have

learned that encouraging words and actions can enhance learning. I have also learned that love and respect go a long way in motivating learners. After doing my study, I have gained a better understanding of the importance of pedagogical care for learners and students. I have personally felt the pedagogical caring from my supervisor through the remarks she makes when looking at my work. Comments such as, “Well done, Fikile,” “You have started so well” and “You are getting there”, have given me courage to go on. This pedagogical caring that I have received has taught me to appreciate the attempts made by my learners.

I have learned that conducting a personal history self-study is a very fulfilling and challenging exercise. As teachers, we do a great deal for our learners and yet we often do not record it. On the other hand, sometimes when you go to bed, you feel ashamed of what you have done or what you have said to a learner. When writing my personal history narrative, many incidents came into my mind at all times of the day or night. I used to think about my self-study even when talking about our learners with my colleagues over tea. When remembering some of the incidents from my personal history, I would break down and cry. Some emotional memories were of the small battles that a teacher fights trying to protect learners in a class in each and every year. The advice I would give to other teachers and researchers-to-be, is to keep a journal and record all the remarkable incidents worthy to be remembered because these small incidents have significance in our lives and work. They remind us where we come from and where we are going. They also show us whether we are growing or stagnating as teachers.

Taking my Learning Forward in my Work as a Teacher

From now onwards, I intend to be more patient and to find out from the learners what problems they experience that hinder their progress. I hope that all my actions are going to be guided by what I have learned from my introspection, my critical friends and my supervisor. This exercise of looking back is going to guide my future plans and my career because of my new awareness of the importance of being considerate and more patient with learners. I wish that learners could see me not only as a teacher, but also as a parent who cares and offers guidance with love on their journey to adulthood. Thus, I believe that what I have learned from doing this self-study is going to make a difference in my life at school and in the community where I live.

I still think about my study daily and I listen to what my colleagues are saying because I am trying to understand today's children and the ways of teaching them. I have realised that we teachers are often comparing today's learners to ourselves as learners. We moan about how things have changed in the behaviour and the treatment of learners. There are habits from the past that we wish we could bring back in schools, and there are current practices we do not wish to see. Through my study, I have been able to learn some lessons for myself and I have gained some confidence in advising other teachers on the importance of understanding and offering pedagogical care for all the learners that we teach. Through sharing my study with my colleagues, I have inspired one of them to register at the university next year.

I would also like to introduce the practice of involving parents in working together with teachers so that the learners do not see a school as a place to hide away from parents. Parents can be educated during parent-teacher meetings on the role they can play in the education of their children. I realise that this cannot be achieved in a day or two, but I hope that consistently talking to learners and parents can make a difference.

Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to review this dissertation. Although my study is a self-study and deals with an individual, it highlights how our learners are very sensitive and they need to be treated with care. My study also draws attention to how parents can work collaboratively with teachers in guiding the children by giving them love and care to nurture them to adulthood. Otherwise their future will collapse right in our hands if we fail to support them. In conclusion, I would like to express that pedagogical care demands a great deal of us as teachers in this challenging and changing context of our society. If parents and teachers fail to work together, it would be very expensive to repair the damage that would be caused by the oversight of this responsibility.

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APPENDIX A
INFORMED CONSENT LETTER: CRITICAL FRIENDS

N.71 Umlazi Township
P.O. Umlazi
4031

Cell: 0825565451
Email: 210551457@ukzn.ac.za

19 November 2012

Dear Critical friend

REQUEST FOR CONSENT TO USE FINDINGS FROM DISCUSSIONS IN CRITICAL FRIENDS' MEETING

**UNDERSTANDING PEDAGOGICAL CARE: A TEACHER'S PERSONAL HISTORY
SELF-STUDY**

The purpose of this study is to explore how I can learn from my own lived educational experiences to better understand the concept of pedagogical care as Foundation Phase Head of Department (HoD) in a primary school. To achieve my purpose, I reflect on the journey of my educational experiences, focussing specifically on the acts of pedagogical caring that I received from different teachers and parents from the first day I set my foot at school, to my high school years, my life and times at a training college, my experiences as a novice teacher, as an experienced teacher learning continuously in different universities to keep up with the changes. These experiences have equipped me with expertise in my position as a Foundation Head of Department. These memory journey experiences are important for this study as they form part of my practice and thus form the data for the personal history self-study research I am engaged in.

The data production methods include my reflective journal writing and artefact retrieval of photographs and a certificate.

Through re-examining and interpreting my educational life, I will explore how I can use this deeper understanding of our lived experiences to improve my own practice to better understand the concept of pedagogical care and its impact on learning in my day-to-day practice.

This study is supervised by Dr Kathleen-Pithouse Morgan who is a senior lecturer at the School of Education, UKZN. Dr Pithouse-Morgan can be contacted telephonically at 031- 260 3460.

In this study, I will also gather information through group discussions with critical friends. The critical friends meetings will take place during our group MEd supervision meetings and will not require any additional time from you. I will take notes during the discussions.

I hereby request permission from you to refer to our discussions of our critical friends' meetings in my study. I will only use this data if I receive written consent from you.

If I receive your consent, I will use this data in a way that respects your dignity and privacy. My notes on your inputs to the discussion will be securely stored and disposed of if no longer required for research purposes. Your name or any information that might identify you or your school will not be used in any presentation or publication that might come out of the study.

There are no direct benefits to you from participating in this study. However, I hope that this study will make a significant contribution to research on teacher development.

I also wish to inform you that you have no binding commitment to the study and may withdraw your consent at any time if you feel the need to. If you withdraw your consent, you will not be prejudiced in any way.

If you have any questions relating to the rights of research participants, you can contact Ms Phume Ximba in the University of KwaZulu-Natal Humanities and Social Science Research Ethics Office on 031-260 3587.

Thank you for your assistance.

Yours sincerely

Fikelephi Sarah Dlamini

INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT FOR PARTICIPANTS

TITLE OF STUDY: UNDERSTANDING PEDAGOGICAL CARE: A TEACHER'S PERSONAL HISTORY SELF-STUDY

I, _____

Hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of this study, and do consent to participate in the study.

I understand that I am free to leave/withdraw from the study at any time if I want to without any negative or undesirable consequences to myself.

I consent to the following data collection activities (please tick):

	YES	NO
Critical friends' discussions		

.....
SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT

DATE

APPENDIX B
INFORMED CONSENT LETTER: SCHOOL PHOTOGRAPHS

N. 71 Umlazi Township
P.O. Umlazi
4031

Cell: 0825565451
Email: 210551457@ukzn.ac.za

19 November 2012

Dear Madam

REQUEST FOR CONSENT TO USE THE SCHOOL PHOTOGRAPH IN A RESEARCH STUDY

**UNDERSTANDING PEDAGOGICAL CARE: A TEACHER'S PERSONAL HISTORY
SELF-STUDY**

The purpose of this study is to explore how I can learn from my own lived educational experiences to better understand the concept of pedagogical care through my own practice as Foundation Phase Head of Department (HoD) in a primary school. To achieve my purpose, I reflect on the journey of my educational experiences focussing specifically on acts of pedagogical caring I received from different teachers and my parents from my primary school years, to my high school years, my life and times at a training college, my experiences as a novice teacher, as a Head of Department continuously learning in different universities to keep up with today's changes. These memory journey experiences are important for this study as they form part of my practice and thus form the data for the personal history self-study research I am

engaged in. The data production methods include my reflective journal writing and artefact retrieval of photographs and a certificate.

Through re-examining and interpreting my educational life, I will explore how I can use this deeper understanding of our lived experiences to improve my own practice to better understand the concept of pedagogical care and its impact on learning in my day-to-day practice.

This study is supervised by Dr Kathleen-Pithouse Morgan who is a senior lecturer at the School of Education and Development, UKZN. Dr Pithouse-Morgan can be contacted telephonically at 031- 2603460.

In this study, I would like to use the school photograph as a data source. I will only use this photograph if I receive written consent from you. Copies of our school photograph will be securely stored and disposed of if no longer required for research purposes. If I receive your consent, I will use this data in a way that respects your dignity and privacy. Names of teachers, learners or any information that might identify members of our school will not be used in any presentation or publication that might come out of the study. However it is possible that people who are familiar with those in the photographs might recognise them.

There are no direct benefits to you from participating in this study. However, I hope that this study will make a significant contribution to research on teacher learning and professional growth.

I also wish to inform you that you have no binding commitment to the study and may withdraw your consent at any time prior to the completion of the dissertation if you feel the need to. If you withdraw your consent, you will not be prejudiced in any way.

If you have any questions relating to the rights of research participants, you can contact Ms Phume Ximba in the University of KwaZulu-Natal Humanities and Social Science Research Ethics Office on 031-260 3587.

Thank you for your assistance.

Yours sincerely

Fikelephi Sarah Dlamini

INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT FOR PARTICIPANTS

TITLE OF STUDY: UNDERSTANDING PEDAGOGICAL CARE: A TEACHER'S PERSONAL HISTORY SELF-STUDY

I, _____

Hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of this study, and do consent to participate in the study.

I understand that I am free to withdraw my consent prior to the completion of the dissertation if I want to without any negative or undesirable consequences to myself.

I consent to the following data collection activities (please tick):

	YES	NO
Photograph		

.....
SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT

DATE