FORMS OF DISCIPLINE PRACTISED AT TWO RURAL SCHOOLS

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Thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements

for the degree of

Master of Education

(Education Policy Studies)

at

Stellenbosch University

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March 2012

DECLARATION

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ABSTRACT

The study aims to research discipline in schools and I explored alternative forms of discipline. The literature indicates that alternative forms of discipline exist to the canings that were inflicted in the past, which have now been outlawed. However, effective alternatives to corporal punishment are not obvious. Before deciding on alternatives, it is advisable that teachers go through an experimental phase, and be prepared to make adjustments along the way. The literature also shows that classes with fewer behavioural problems have teachers who tend to use non-violent and child-centred approaches to classroom discipline. Studies show that the vast majority of disciplinary problems result from the circumstances in which such learners find themselves, which are characterised by problems at home, learning barriers, trauma, and ineffective teaching methods. I conclude that the application of corporal punishment aggravates such problems, rather than solving them.

Present-day educators are required to fill a greater pastoral role than they did in the past, as learners nowadays tend to face many more difficult challenges than they used to do in the past and also are likely to experience less support outside the school. Most educational psychologists recommend that educators place learners, in cases of them suffering from emotional problems, child abuse, sexual abuse, HIV/AIDS, or alcohol and drug abuse, in an intensive process of counselling, with them being referred to experts in the fields of reference (Porteus *et al.*, 2001:45). I conclude that attempts to improve classroom discipline can be effective if the whole school community is involved. One of the ways in which the whole school community can become involved in attaining a better discipline system is through the adoption of a code of conduct that is arrived at by means of consultation, persuasion and agreement with all role-players concerned. The maintenance of such a code is, however, only likely to be successful if it is strictly enforced and the appropriate sanctions are imposed against those who violate it.

KEYWORDS: discipline, schools, learners, alternative forms of discipline.

OPSOMMING

Hierdie studie doen navorsing oor dissipline in skole, en spesifiek alternatiewe vorme daarvan. Die literatuur dui op die bestaan van alternatiewe vorme van dissipline na die afskaffing van lyfstraf in Suid-Afrikaanse skole. Alternatiewe vorme van dissipline is egter nog nie duidelik sigbaar nie. Voordat daar besluit kan word oor alternatiewe vorme is dit egter raadsaam dat onderwysers eers eksperimenteer en die haalbaarheid van alternatiewe vorme probeer vasstel. Die literatuur dui aan dat klaskamers met min of geen dissiplinêre probleme, onderwysers het wat nie-geweldadige en kindergesentreerde benaderings volg. Studies dui aan dat kinders met dissiplinêre probleme uit huise kom met leerprobleme, trauma, en oneffektiewe onderrig metodes. My gevolgtrekking is dat lyfstraf sulke problem vererger, eerder as om dit op te los.

Daar word van hedendaagse onderwysers verwag om meer as ooit tevore 'n pastorale rol te vervul. Sielkundiges adviseer dat leerders met ernstige dissiplinere problem eerder na deskundiges verwys behoort te word in plaas daarvan om dit in die klaskamer te probeer oplos. My gevolgtrekking is dat klaskamer dissipline kan effektief toegepas kan word indien die hele skool, ouers en gemeenskap betrokke word. Dit kan slegs geskied met „n gedragskode wat deur wye konsultasie, beraadslaging en in ooreenstemming met al die rolspelers daar gestel word. Die handhawing van so 'n kode kan slegs slaag indien dit streng toegepas word en indien daar strafmaatreëls in plek is vir diegene wat die kode verbreek.

SLEUTELWOORDE: dissipline, skole, leerders, alternatiewe vorme van discipline.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

CASS	continuous assessment
ECD	early childhood development
FAMSA	Family and Marriage Society of South Africa
MEC	Member of the Executive Council
NICRO	National Institute for Crime Prevention and Rehabilitation
OBE	outcomes-based education
PTA	Parent Teachers Association
RAPCAN	Resources Aimed at the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect
RCL	Representative Council of Learners
SANCA	South African Council on Alcoholism
SGB	school governing body
SMT	school management team
WCED	Western Cape Education Department

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CHAPTER ONE
ORIENTATION AND INTRODUCTION

1.1   INTRODUCTION

I have been teaching since the late 1980s, and have witnessed a radical change in issues relating to discipline at schools. For instance, in the late 1980s corporal punishment was an accepted practice to deal with disciplinary problems of learners. Since democracy in 1994 there has been a drastic change to how disciplinary problems are dealt with. At a policy level, corporal punishment has been critically reviewed and then abolished in schools. If the intention was that abolishing corporal punishment would lead to an improvement in discipline, then it has certainly not materialised. If the intention was that alternative forms of disciplined would be pursued, then the policy objectives were realised. However, there is a perception among many teachers that pupil or learner discipline deteriorated since 1994.

In this study I research the complex problem of discipline and related challenges of finding alternative forms of discipline which can assist schools in providing quality education to all learners. To this end I conduct a review of relevant literature, critically analyse policies, and conduct a small empirical study to develop a deeper understanding of how two schools engage with the challenge of discipline.

1.2   BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Since starting my teaching career at a high school during late 1989, I have observed that the approach to discipline has changed dramatically. In the past, discipline was enforced by means of corporal punishment and, of course, by means of verbal warnings by teachers. Looking back, I can now say that such discipline worked for my fellow colleagues and me, as it forced learners to conduct themselves in ways that we, as teachers, perceived to be appropriate. But, in contrast, I also have to admit that I always had the concern that the teachers, in some cases, abused corporal punishment by applying it to the detriment of an environment that was intended to be conducive to teaching and learning. After the first democratic elections were held in South Africa in 1994, it became evident that the teaching

system in the country would change. The then Minister of Education, Professor Bengu, announced that South Africa would, in future, follow an outcomes-based education (OBE) system. To this end, the South African Schools Act 108 of 1996 (Republic of South Africa, 1996b), was implemented on 1 January 1997. The purpose of the Act is as follows: to provide for a uniform system for the organisation, governance and funding of schools; to amend and repeal certain laws related to schools; and to provide for matters connected therewith.

The implementation of the Act changed education in South Africa dramatically. Relevant to the current thesis, section 10 of the South African Schools Act (Republic of South Africa, 1996b) prohibits corporal punishment. It states as follows:

(1)   No person may administer corporal punishment at a school to a learner.

(2)   Any person who contravenes subsection (1) is guilty of an offence and liable on conviction to a sentence which could be imposed for assault.

Needless to say, many teachers could not handle the change, because of a perception that their rights had somehow been taken away. As a result, teachers‟ authority was now questioned by learners and their parents. The introduction of the Act might be the reason why thousands of teachers left the teaching profession, either quitting or taking a package. My observation was that teachers felt helpless and hopeless, because they could not handle the disciplinary situation in their classrooms. There was a perception that the cane was their only hope, and that it had now been taken away. Changes to the issue of discipline resulted in teachers coming under more stress, which led to some of them developing stress-related illnesses.

The abolishment of corporal punishment forced teachers to find new strategies to maintain discipline in their classroom. The strategies needed to conform to the change introduced by the South African Schools Act. My motivation for the current study stems from the perceptions of teachers regarding the disciplining of learners after the abolition of corporal punishment. It is hoped that my study can bring new insights as to how to deal with discipline in the classroom. I hope that my research will also result in better learning and teaching in the classroom.

Admittedly, there are no easy solutions to the challenges related to discipline, which leaves me with a predicament. Burbules and Hansen (1997:1) describe a predicament as a problematic state of affairs that admits no easy resolution. They posit that predicaments require compromise and trade-offs. Predicaments do not necessarily paralyse human action, as people can, and do, respond to them all the time. Complex human endeavours, such as parenting, friendship, marriage, and teaching, all offer distinctive predicaments. Teachers cannot dictate what their students learn or the attitudes that their students develop toward education. The reality of human individuality and the diversity of human interest mean that predicaments such as the above will persist for as long as parenting, teaching, and similar endeavours do.

According to Burbules and Hansen (1997:5), fortunately, life is not as daunting as the previous paragraph might suggest. Although such practices as parenting and teaching do have their ongoing problematic dimensions, they also yield an incalculable amount of fulfilment. Generation after generation would not willingly engage in such pursuits if they were not meaningful. Countless numbers of people have found a sense of self and identity in these very endeavours. For them, parenting and educating are purposeful activities that render human life more than mere random, aimless, or chaotic exercises. Their work gives life form and direction and, in so doing, creates the possibility for growth, accomplishment, and joy. Nonetheless, most people would probably agree that such endeavours as parenting and teaching are punctuated by difficulties and problems (Burbules & Hansen, 1997:5).

I mentioned earlier that the changes introduced by the South African Schools Act received mixed reaction from school communities. Education policy documents in South Africa use the concept of reform to refer to change. However, consideration must be given to the nature of reform in relation to the topic of the research. According to Floden (1997) reform is a perennial condition of schooling in South Africa. Reforms spring up to meet each request, often seeming to recycle recommendations from previous decades. Although no reform ever achieves all that it sets out to achieve, each new movement of note attracts optimistic proponents, is embraced by many schools and educators, and is eventually replaced by a successor. The reforms often deposit a residue, but leave the basic structure of schooling intact.

The continuous pressure that is exerted to change has many sources. Some reforms are spurred on by changes in knowledge about teaching and learning, whereas others grow out of changes in the priorities that are set for student learning. Educational leaders, both in and outside the schools, benefit from championing new initiatives, so that the focus of reform changes, as its leaders do. For Floden (1997), experience with reforms that are based solely on new curricula has proved to be disappointing, leading to current reforms coming to recognise that teachers must play a leading role in change. The shift, together with arguments that teachers can, and should be, seen as professionals, has convinced reformers that teachers are central to the improvement of education.

Floden (1997) further states that the inevitable shifts that are the focus of reform mean that such learning is always required; new expectations call for new learning, often before the expectations of the prior reform wave are met. The need for teacher learning, prompted by reform, is, thus, repeatedly present. Sometimes the needed learning amounts to a brief review or to the study of a new topic or two. A „back-to-basics‟ reform, for example, might require teachers to review topics learned some years before that once more form part of the curriculum. At other times, training in specific teaching techniques is needed. Teachers might, for instance, be encouraged to wait longer for student responses, or to call on learners in sequential order, rather than letting them volunteer to provide answers to questions asked. Other reforms, however, ask teachers to make more radical changes in content or in classroom process, or in both. In such cases, the required learning goes beyond the making of a slight adjustment or the provision of a reminder of something that was once familiar.

Consideration must be given to how teachers can respond to this wave of reform, given that they will, once more, be expected to teach new content, with little time and resources being allowed for their own learning (Floden, 1997). The language of reform encourages teachers to move away from comfortable modes of practice, without clarifying what they should move toward. As reforms give general guidance, rather than specific suggestions, teachers once more have to try to teach more than they know. They are asked to implement practices of which they have no clear image. The upshot of such a situation is that such reform is not one in which teachers can simply be encouraged to implement specific changes in practice; rather, they must become involved in creating a new practice.

Teachers are still central to the educational process, but their altered role means that what they need most is knowledge about how to find and to evaluate answers to questions – questions about the subject matter and about teaching and learning. Although traditional coursework and in-service workshops have not been oriented towards helping teachers become better inquirers, and other professional activities, such as the development of new methods of student assessment, might give teachers the help that they need (Floden, 1997).

Classroom-based assessment occupies a prominent position in discussions about educational reform. As a result, many districts, schools, and teachers are trying to implement portfolios. As they quickly learn, implementation is challenging at best and unworkable at worst. Rather than simply requiring teachers to administer new or better tests, the successful implementation of classroom portfolios requires the making of deeper, second-order changes – fundamental shifts in knowledge, beliefs, and practices. To deny the problems and dilemmas inherent in such change is to doom portfolio assessment to failure. I believe that doing so would be a tragic mistake (Velencia, 1997).

1.3   STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The problem that I intend to research in the current study relates to discipline, as it was practised historically, and as it is currently practised in schools in the Oudtshoorn area. Historically, corporal punishment was a main form of discipline and an integral part of schooling for most teachers and students in twentieth-century South African schools. In fact, it was used excessively in most South African schools (Morrell, 1994). The effects of corporal punishment were hotly debated during the 1970s and 1980s (Newell, 1972). Newell states that psychologists argued that it did serious emotional damage, negatively affected the self-esteem of learners, and impacted adversely on academic performance. Respectful relations between teachers and learners were not possible, he argues, in a context in which corporal punishment was used.

The South African education system, historically, has used corporal punishment to maintain discipline. Criticism of its effects led, in 1996, to the banning of this form of punishment (Morrell, 2001b:292). In addition, in 1998, OBE was introduced into South African classrooms. Many educators claim that the introduction of extensive group work, which plays a significant role in OBE, has exacerbated the discipline problem.

There is a direct correlation between (teacher) morale and (learner) discipline at school. Since the scrapping of corporal punishment, a sense of despair seems to have taken over amongst teachers in South Africa (Morrell, 2001b:294). A report states that the fact that teachers have continuously to deal with learners‟ behaviour problems has made the practice of teaching so stressful that it has resulted in low morale and a high dropout rate among teachers (Squelch & Lemmer, 1994:52). Kubeka (2004:52) reports that teachers argue that, without corporal punishment, discipline cannot be maintained. Oosthuizen (2002:4) states that "the abolition of corporal punishment in schools has left a gap which cannot be filled and this has led to all kinds of disciplinary problems in schools".

At a policy level, the government attempted to fill the vacuum left by the banning of corporal punishment in two ways. It introduced school-level codes of conduct and allowed parents an unprecedented level of involvement in school affairs. The new approach involved adopting a different philosophy towards punishment – one that stressed consensus, non-violence, negotiation, and the development of school communities. School governing bodies (SGBs), of which parents constitutionally comprised the majority of members, were constituted as a major vehicle for the democratic transformation of schools. Since their inception, SGBs have had a key role to play in policy development, including in the development of a code of conduct. Parents, thus, have come to play an important, and indeed critical, role in school disciplinary policy (Sonn, 1999:22).

In 2000, a national project on discipline in South African schools was undertaken, with many of the results being incorporated in the booklet titled „Alternatives to Corporal Punishment: The Learning Experience‟, which was distributed to all schools in South Africa in 2001 by the Department of Education. The booklet contains guidelines for dealing with alternatives to corporal punishment in an effort to combat the fast-escalating problems encountered with discipline, as well as examples of disciplinary action for dealing with instances of misconduct, ranging from the provision of verbal warnings and the imposition of community service to the suspension of wrongdoers from all school activities. The booklet also discusses methods of establishing discipline in the classroom.

Sonn (1999:23) states that discipline is, broadly speaking, about maintaining respect for self and others around us. It is also about not harming one‟s dignity, about having respect for others, and about being equal with one‟s neighbours. It has to do with having an inbuilt

understanding about what keeps us „whole" as people, and it has to do with maintaining our neighbourhood, which, literally, consists of our neighbour and the environment. I also feel that discipline is about establishing an environment that is healthy for both teachers and learners to work in.

Ill-discipline is a fact of school life with which teachers, to a greater or lesser degree, have to cope; also, that to focus on the learner alone is to ignore the interactive nature of human relationships and the very special social context that exists in schools and classrooms (Tattum, 1986:1).

Promoting positive behaviour in the classroom involves a variety of factors. It cannot be achieved simply by the adoption of a more relevant curriculum or better classroom management. It is important to focus, not on the single difficulty that might be most visible, but, rather, on the amount of stress that is experienced by all learners. The main cause of a failure to learn „appropriate" behaviour is the lack of exposure to appropriate learning experiences. Teachers concerned with learning difficulties and behaviour problems should consider the overall structure of the school, and not focus on a child"s deficiencies. However, to achieve a vision encompassing the former, teachers require adequate personal and professional support, in order to deal with the interactive patterns concerned (Tattum, 1986:2). Consequently, a detailed review of relevant literature is covered in Chapter Three. In the light of the historical developments related to corporal punishment, the present study aims to explore what forms of discipline replaced corporal punishment – in other words, what forms of discipline are currently practised at schools.

1.4   AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The aim of the current research is to analyse the forms of discipline practised at two rural schools in the Oudtshoorn area. As a practising teacher, my aim is to develop a deeper understanding of discipline and its impact on the school community. As such, the study can assist teachers to deal with issues relating to discipline, to help them gain a better understanding of discipline, as well as to minimise levels of conflict between teachers and learners, so as to improve the teaching and learning experience.

In terms of the above aim, the following are specific objectives of the study:

- to conduct a small-scale empirical study on forms of discipline practised at two selected rural schools;

- to determine approaches to discipline at the selected schools;

- to study the relevant literature to explore how discipline, in its many forms, is conceptualised;

- to determine which mechanisms the schools can put in place to promote positive behaviour at selected schools;

- to collect, analyse and interpret data, in order to determine the effectiveness of the forms of discipline at the selected schools; and

- to make recommendations based on the findings and conclusions of the research, with regard to the more effective implementation of discipline at the selected schools.

1.5   RESEARCH PROCEDURES

The research procedure entailed an investigation into discipline-related problems regarding a variety of methodological and theoretical views. To formulate a research problem is the most important, and potentially also the most difficult, assignment for a researcher. The formulation does not necessarily involve looking at the topic, but rather at the strategic implementation of the research. Research can be undertaken in a number of different ways, including, for example, by identifying an unsolved theoretical problem, by observing an empirical paradox, or by the asking of a simple question about how a social organisation really functions. In such research, questions must be formulated with a focus on theory and practice (Gerson & Horowitz, 2002:200).

1.5.1   Research question

A research question is the methodological point of departure of scholarly research in both the natural sciences and humanities. The research sets out to answer such a question and must be accurately and clearly defined. It makes the theoretical assumptions in the framework more explicit, most of all indicating what the researcher wants to know most and first of all concerns (Wikipedia, 2011). The purpose of formulating research questions is:

- to state goals that the research should accomplish;
- to make predictions about what the research will reveal;
- to raise questions to be answered by the research; and
- to provide overall direction to the research.

The research question for the current study is: What are alternative forms of discipline practised at two rural schools?

1.5.2 Research methods

The concept of research methods, which is etymologically derived from the Greek word „*hodos*", meaning „the road" (route/way), deals with how research information is handled or dealt with. Methodology also refers to the fashion (way) in which empirical data have been collected or gathered, how questions are set, the reading of documents, and the observing of both controlled and uncontrolled situations (Van Wyk, 2004:29). I next discuss the research methods for the current study very briefly, of which a more detailed discussion follows in Chapter Two.

1.5.2.1 Conceptual analysis

One of the research methods that I use in this study is conceptual analysis, which is employed to obtain an answer to questions of a philosophical nature. Conceptual analysis is regarded as an approach that deals with various educational matters (affairs), including the nature of education, teaching and learning, the content of the curriculum, moral training, educational research, and research policy (Waghid, 2001).

Conceptual analysis is a very important requirement when answering philosophical questions. In terms of philosophy of education, conceptual analysis is seen as a mechanism that is involved in a variety of educational matters, including the nature of education, educational research and research policy (Waghid, 2001:17).

Burbules and Warnick (2004) describe conceptual analysis as the analysis of a term or concept, showing its multiple uses and meanings, for the primary purpose of clarification.

Such an analysis might include arguing the internal or external distinctions that differentiate between significantly different meanings, and also might include the making of a recommendation or the prescribing of a term‟s „proper‟ use. In other instances, such an analysis might be more neutral and descriptive (i.e. diagnostic).

1.5.2.2 Questioning a particular educational practice or policy

According to Burbules and Hansen (2004), the questioning of a particular educational practice or policy might include an examination of curricular programmes, classroom practices, funding procedures, education laws, and other relevant matters, from ethical, political, epistemological, or metaphysical perspectives. The point of the examination might be to find out what normative implications the practices entail, for example, or, possibly, to suggest alternative practices.

According to Burbules and Warnick (2004), a good deal of work in philosophy of education is less concerned with discourses, principles, and systems, and more with fairly specific policies and practices that define educational business as usual: developing charter schools; corporal punishment; test-based systems of accountability; sex education; vouchers as a mechanism of school „choice‟; the installing of content filters on all school computers, and so on. Sometimes such practices might be questioned on normative grounds: whether they support or violate principles of justice, fairness, or equality, for instance, or whether they violate certain rights. Sometimes the practices concerned are questioned on epistemological or metaphysical grounds: whether they are based on reliable or shaky assumptions about knowledge, truth, or an objective reality, or whether they rely upon characterisations of human agency and responsibility that are too individualistic.

1.5.2.3 Interviews

In the current research, semi-structured interviews were conducted with three teachers from each of two different state-funded high schools in the Oudtshoorn area in the Western Cape province. The interviews were conducted at each school with the principal, with the vice-principal or a head of department, and with a Post Level 1 teacher, in the belief that the interviews would help me to form a balanced view about the discipline at the two schools concerned, because each post level teacher experiences and practises discipline

differently. The results (data) that I obtained from the interviews also allowed me to answer the research question posed in the study.

1.5.3   Research methodology

Methodology refers to the theory that produces knowledge, as well as to the method that the researcher uses. However, it is more than a mere method of how to handle an interview. Rather, it refers to the specific method that is used by a researcher to gain specific knowledge or an understanding of a term. Cohen and Manion (1994:39) allege that "the aim of methodology is to help us to understand, in the broadest possible terms, not the products of scientific enquiry but the process itself". Research methodology, which is a system of principles that shows the way forward for research, is based on a researcher"s concept of the inhabited world. Van Wyk (2004:25) sees methodology as an extended framework that can also be seen as a paradigm shift.

Recently evolved theories have tended to view methodology through the lens of the critical hermeneutic. The critical hermeneutic tradition states that "[i]nterpretation involves in its most elemental articulation making sense of what has been observed in a way that communicates understanding" (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2000:285). Interpretation is, thus, derived from the hermeneutic, which is a systematic and scientific approach of a concept. According to Van Wyk (2004:26), the term „hermeneutic" has its origin in the Greek verb *hermeneuein*, which has three different connotations, namely to make things explicit (to give expression), to make something public (to explain), and to explain (to interpret).

The role of the interpreter can be defined according to the model of the exegete, who is a person who is committed to the critical analysis, or explanation, of a text or to a humane action that uses the method employed in the hermeneutical circle. Gadamer (1970, cited in Schwandt, 2000:194) explains that insight is not "an isolated activity of human beings, but a basic structure of our experience of life". In terms of the interpretative approach, the „why" question must be replaced with one that asks „how" (Van Wyk, 2004:28).

In the current study, I shall also make use of qualitative research, which focuses on social-based circumstances, actions and their consequences. A sociological source focuses on the interaction between structure and action, depending on the interview method, observation

or direct connection with the social world. The focus of such a source is also on how people form part of the greater social and cultural context, and how they shape active participation around the world of which the individual is a part (Gerson & Herowitz, 2002:203). Qualitative researchers are not only concerned with objective measurable facts and occurrences, but also with the manner in which people construct, interpret and give meaning to their experiences. The adoption of a qualitative approach pays specific attention to dynamic processes and strives to discover and develop new concepts (Gerson & Horowitz, 2002:199).

Gerson and Horowitz (2002) believe that effective interviewing should give guidance to the participants and allow them to address the research question. The construction of an interview guideline is essential for the collection and analysis of information (Gerson & Horowitz, 2002:204). As part of my study, I had to interview those who were confronted with issues relating to discipline on a daily basis, such as learners, teachers and principals.

Literature on research methodology (practice or discourse) abounds. Defined as "the attempt to describe, explain, and change (improve) human behaviour in educational contexts" (Fay, 1975:72), research methodology became the focus of educational research. Attention has to be paid to what constitutes practice. Fay (1975:76) claims "constitutive meanings (or rules) underlie social practices in the same way that practices underlie actions". Constitutive meanings make practices what they are, forming thoughts or ways of understanding and seeing the world, also known as paradigms. A paradigm is sometimes also referred to as a „grammar of thinking", „a form of discourse", a „shape of consciousness", or a „form of rationality" (Morrow, 1995). Alternatively, paradigms are those „theories" of knowledge that provide a rationale for educational research (Gough, 2001:4). As methodologies and paradigms constitute practices of educational research, an understanding of research methodology involves thinking about, and producing, knowledge and knowledge constructs. Such an explanation of research methodology, following Harding"s (1987:132) line of thought, differs from the research method itself, which involves a technique of gathering evidence, entailing, for example, listening to informants, observing behaviour, or examining historical traces and records, all three of which comprise methods of social inquiry.

By far the most important dimension of critical inquiry is the fact that it is driven by emancipatory interest, that is, its purpose is to contribute to change in people's understanding of themselves and their practices, thus freeing them from societal constraints. Critical inquiry strives to engender self-reflective activity amongst individuals, in order to bring about a clear articulation of arguments in an atmosphere of openness, so as to overcome ideological distortions generated within social relations and institutions (Carr & Kemmis, 1986:162). The adoption of a critical approach to education policy research is aimed at generating critical action in others and at giving rise to conditions intended to replace one distorted set of practices with another, hopefully less distorted, set of practices (Carr & Kemmis, 1986:197).

Critical inquiry alleges that positivist and interpretive inquiries, at best, only serve to describe or to explain the social world, and that "the truth or falsity of (its) theories will be partially determined by whether they are in fact translated into action" (Fay, 1975:95). Critical inquiry develops understandings that are specific to the particular historical situations with which it is concerned, with such understandings and explanations having a practical purpose, namely to help those who find themselves in an unsatisfactory situation to change it.

Following from the above, a problem that is subject to a critical inquiry generally derives from experience, with the goal being to initiate change, rather than to create or test the inquiry itself. Such transformative (or empowering) research, which is shaped by critical inquiry, uses both quantitative and qualitative research methodologies to effect change and to support the kind of reflection that leads to emancipation both during and after the research process. In the words of Marcinkowski (2003:182), "transformative research stimulates critical awareness of power relationships and empowers researcher and participants with the knowledge to change power relationships".

Transformative research, as guided by critical inquiry, suggests that the research methodologies to be used depend on understanding the basis of the problem. Such methodologies can be both quantitative and qualitative in nature. In this regard, Marcinkowski (2003) argues that education (policy) research can employ lengthy, open-ended interviews for data collection purposes, and can use content analysis procedures for data analysis purposes, as is common in qualitative research. In addition, both procedures

present research findings, in the form of quantitative frequency distributions. Accordingly, critical inquiry transcends the quantitative–qualitative research dichotomy. Yates (1997:491) argues that quantitative research questions help frame "new qualitative agendas for (educational) researchers". Bryman (1989:123) argues that the quantitative–qualitative research dichotomy should be transcended.Bryman (1989:124) has the following to say about critical inquiry:

> (It) is, at its center, an effort to join empirical investigation (quantitative research), the task of interpretation (qualitative research), and a critique of this reality … (in order) to improve human existence by viewing knowledge for its emancipatory or repressive potential.

Sherman and Webb (1990:221), on the complementary relationship between quantitative and qualitative research, state:

> (E)ducational research today requires a more comprehensives perspective in which the considerations that qualitative researchers raise, and the questions about worth and intent posed by philosophy, are as much a part of the discussion as are measurement and analysis.

For Habermas (1987), self-reflective inquiry (i.e. an inquiry in which those who are involved in a situation consider ways in which their situation can be improved) is crucial to understanding and practising education policy research. He proceeds from the understanding that critical inquiry ought to be grounded in the notion of an ‚organisation of enlightenment‟. The notion has two dimensions: the ideal pedagogical speech situation and the reform of institutions. The former situation concerns the mutual communicative relationship between educator and learner, in which the learner is able rationally to assess views or, at least, to come to hold them in a manner that is open to rational assessment. In terms of such thinking, education is organised as enlightenment and not as indoctrination. A mutual communicative relationship between educator and learner prevents the domination of one party by the other. Both educator and learner produce and reproduce the rules of the epistemological discourse concerned. Examples of the ‚ideal pedagogical speech situation‟ in education policy research might include researchers drawing on educators‟ and learners‟ experiences to explain how a situation can be changed, and educators and learners contributing towards the critical assessment of their own performances at school.

The second dimension of Habermas"s (1987) „organisation of enlightenment" practice involves reforming institutions. According to the theorist, critical inquiry should bring about the decentralising of administration needs and the freeing of institutions from bureaucratic and technical interests. Moreover, critical inquiry should also serve to re-theorise the institutional roles of members whose own technical, egocentric interest outweighs the need for greater openness. For example, critical inquiry demands that schools be managed at community level. The roles of parents and educators, as members of SGBs, cannot be ignored in changing previous unjust patterns of school management.

The third dimension of Habermasian critical inquiry relates to the organisation of action, with the idea being that communicative interaction between education policy researchers, educators, learners, policy analysts and communities should result in new knowledge that should be systematically incorporated in the process of change (Young, 1989). For example, policy researchers do not merely talk about improving their education – they do something about it: they act.

1.6   CLARIFICATON OF KEY CONCEPTS

The key concepts used in the current inquiry are explored below.

1.6.1   Discipline

For purposes of the current study, in referring to discipline, I refer to school discipline. School discipline is the system of rules, punishments and behavioural strategies that are appropriate to the regulation of children and to the maintenance of order in schools. The aim of school is, ostensibly, to create a safe and conducive learning environment in the classroom. The term „discipline" is also applied to the punishment that is the consequence of breaking the rules.

1.6.2   School

A school refers to a place that is dedicated to the conduct of learned intercourse and to the instruction of children and people under college age. In the context of the current study, I

refer to public schools, and to the two high schools in the Oudtshoorn district at which I conducted the study.

1.7   CHAPTER ORGANISATION

In order to achieve the stated objectives, the current research report evolves as follows:

- Chapter Two discusses the research methods and methodology used in the study.
- Chapter Three covers the perspectives on discipline found in the literature reviewed.
- Chapter Four concerns narrative constructions.
- Chapter Five consists of the recommendations and conclusions.

1.8   SUMMARY

In the chapter I provided the background to this study. I stated that the problem I intend to research relates to discipline, as it was practised historically, and as it is currently practised in schools in the Oudtshoorn area. To conduct this study I will employ three research methods (conceptual analysis, questioning a particular educational practice or policy), and will attempt to gain data about alternatives to corporal punishment by listening to the narratives of participants. Here I will make use of semi-structured interviews. The methodology for this study is Critical Theory, which I chose because it provides a critique of the reality of disciplinary challenges. Furthermore, Critical Theory aims to improve human existence by viewing knowledge for its emancipatory or repressive potential. A search for alternatives to corporal punishment has the potential to emancipate schools in their thinking about discipline.

CHAPTER TWO
RESEARCH METHODS AND METHODOLOGY

2.1   INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I provide an extensive discussion of the research methods and methodology for this study. This study is a philosophical inquiry, and I provide a conceptualisation of this approach. The purpose of the current chapter is to foreground philosophy as an area of inquiry, and I use philosophical research methods. To this end, I provide an in-depth discussion of the research methods I use (conceptual analysis, questioning a particular educational policy or practice, and semi-structured interviews). I start the discussion on Critical Theory by emphasising the importance of theory in philosophical inquiry. I posit that theorisation is important as the systematic examination and construction of knowledge – in the case of social theory, such knowledge is about social life. I also consider the nature of Critical Theory.

2.2   PHILOSOPHICAL INQUIRY

The nature of the current study, as a philosophical inquiry, is discussed in this section. Philosophical inquiry into education is one of the oldest of the educational disciplines in the Western tradition, going back at least as far to the ideas of Socrates and Plato. For the two thinkers, reflection on the purposes and methods of education was inseparable from reflection on morality, knowledge, and the nature of a just society. The question of how to foster the desirable qualities of a good person, a good thinker, or a good citizen were part and parcel of thinking about the citizen, with all elements concerned being seen as closely interconnected. Philosophers often have very immediate and practical things to say about how to promote such qualities (Burbules & Warnick, 2004:17).

More recently, however, philosophical inquiry has come to be seen as an extravagance with which hard-headed educational realists need not concern themselves. Many in the field of education today neglect (or even disparage) critical reflection about educational aims and their grounding in deeper, often unexamined, assumptions about knowledge and value; instead, those concerned seem preoccupied with the exigencies of test scores and

other narrow measures of accountability. Philosophy provides the ideal target for the instrumental mindset. Those on the front lines of education do not want to hear of research minutia, or postmodern musings, or philosophy, or theory, or advocacy, or opinions from educational researchers (Burbules & Warnick, 2004:18).

The above-mentioned attitude reflects widespread prejudice. However, in my view, those on the front lines of education require, most of all, to find a sense of value and purpose in what they are doing. Maximising test scores is insufficient to inspire and to promote a sense of vocation, or calling, among those who are prospectively or actually involved in the teaching profession. The undersupply of teachers, coupled with their low rates of retention, has led to the crisis confronting education today. The crisis is characterised, not by a lack of „how to‟ directives, but by a lack of meaning and satisfaction in the profession, with such a lack militating against new teachers being attracted into the profession, and failing to keep them in it for reasons beyond that of for the receipt of a pay check (Burbules & Warnick, 2004:19).

The purpose of the current chapter is to foreground philosophy as an area of inquiry, seeing it as a method of generating *knowledge* (though not knowledge of an empirical sort) and *perspective* (consisting of commitments of value and belief that provide answers to the „why‟ questions underlying any complex area of human practice). If philosophy cannot give adequate answers to the challenge involved, then it deserves to be marginalised. However, by the same token, if leaders and policymakers in the field of education no longer recognise the value of such understanding, then the problem is not with philosophy but with the audience concerned (Burbules & Warnick, 2004:20).

2.3   RESEARCH METHODS

The three research methods (conceptual analysis, the questioning of policy and practice, and interviews) used in the current study were briefly discussed in Chapter One. They are discussed in greater detail below.

2.3.1 Conceptual analysis

Conceptual analysis has been used in the field of philosophy of education, as has become clear from statements made by Hirst and Peters, as well as by Hamm, whose work is referred to in this section (Van Wyk, 2004). There are several dimensions of this method. For many philosophers, the parsing of multiple meanings, in itself, makes a valuable contribution to knowledge. Apparent misunderstandings or disagreements are often due to people using the same terms or concepts in tacitly different ways. By clarifying the varied meanings, it becomes possible to focus with greater concentration on what is actually in dispute.

Similarly to Van Wyk (2004), I shall attempt, in this section, to gain a deeper understanding of the nature of „analysis‟ and of what constitutes a „concept‟, before I examine my understanding of „conceptual analysis‟ in more detail than I have before. In keeping with the approach taken by Van Wyk, I start the present discussion by posing two questions: what is analysis and what constitutes a concept? The reason for me taking such an approach is to enable separate examination of the two concepts, and to allow for seeing how the concepts contribute to the meaning of conceptual analysis (Van Wyk, 2004). According to Hirst and White (cited in McLaughlin, 2000:445), analysis is "the elucidation of the meaning of any concepts, idea or unit of thought that we employ in seeking to understand ourselves and our world, by reducing it, breaking it down, into more basic concepts that constitute it and thereby showing its relationship to a network of other concepts or discovering what the concept denotes". Analysis, in this sense, is concerned not merely with the meaning of beliefs, but also with their justification and truth. In such terms, the „connective‟ character of analysis is worthy of emphasis, as a form of investigation of "how one concept is connected – often in complex and ragged-ended ways – in a web of other concepts with which it is logically related" (White & White, cited in McLaughlin, 2000:445).

Hirst and Peters (1998:29) start their discussion of conceptual analysis by addressing the question of what analysing a concept means. They argue that a concept is not the same as an image, stating that one can have a concept of „punishment‟ without necessarily having a picture in mind of a criminal being hung, or of a boy being beaten. By conceptualising the term „punishment‟ correctly, we can relate to it. The two researchers argue that the ability

to relate words to one another is linked to the ability to recognise cases to which the words can be applied.

Hirst and Peters (1998:29) continue to argue that the taking of the above approach to explain a concept is unsatisfactory. Rather, it would be better to say that our possession of a concept enables us to discriminate between concepts and to classify like things together. To be able to use a word appropriately is a sophisticated and very convenient way of doing the above. Doing so could be regarded as a sufficient, though not a necessary, condition for the possession of a concept. In other words, we would probably be prepared to say that a person has a concept of „punishment" if they could relate the word „punishment" correctly to other words such as „pain" and „guilt", and apply it correctly to a case of punishment. However, the absence of the ability to use the word would not necessarily lead us to say that a person has no concept of „punishment" (Van Wyk, 2004).

Burbules and Warnick (2004:36) describe conceptual analysis as follows: analysing a term or concept, showing its multiple uses and meanings, for the primary purpose of clarification. Such analysis might include arguing for internal or external distinctions that differentiate significantly different meanings, and might include a recommendation or prescription of the term"s „proper" use. In other instances, the analysis might be more neutral and descriptive (i.e. diagnostic). According to Burbules and Warnick (2004), the process of mapping or analysis involves taking certain prototypical steps, of which making distinctions is perhaps foremost, showing that what we thought to be a concept was a seamless unity. The process, in fact, comprises distinguishing among quite different subconcepts or variations to see whether there are significantly different kinds of „choice" hidden within a single term, for instance. The question, „What is an X?" or „What counts as an X?" typically serve to stimulate reflection on the apparently necessary characteristics that constitute a thing as an X, versus its merely incidental features (for example, what features make a science „scientific"). Finally, an ambitious conceptual mapping might include a review of related concepts that share certain features with the primary object, such as which conceptual elements „teaching", „instruction", „childrearing", „indoctrination", and „initiation" might share, while varying from one other. The Wittgensteinian notion of „family resemblance", invoked earlier, argues that there may be a limit to how sharply such uses can be distinguished from one another; an analysis does not

have to be perfectly complete or all-encompassing to be edifying (Burbules & Warnick, 2004:22).

Wittgenstein (cited in Hirst & Peters, 1998:32) has made two very important points. The first is that we must not look for defining characteristics in any simple, stereotyped way, with the paradigm of just one type of word before us. The second is that concepts can only be understood in relation to other concepts. The second point is crucial for the current study, as it implies that concepts in policy statements have to be examined in relation to other concepts, in order to gain a deeper understanding of their meaning.

The question that is often put to philosophers when they have done some conceptual analysis is: „Whose concept are you analysing?‟ (Hirst & Peters, 1998:33). Concepts might be linked indissolubly with the social life of a group, with it being impossible for an individual to have a purely private concept of, say, „punishment‟. The point of undertaking conceptual analysis is to obtain clarity about the types of distinctions that words have been developed to designate. Such analysis is aimed at seeing through the words concerned, in order to gain a better grasp of the similarities and differences that it is possible to discern.

Undertaking a conceptual analysis not only helps us to pinpoint more precisely what is implicit in our moral consciousness than might otherwise have been possible (Hirst & Peters, 1998:34), but it also enables us to stand back slightly and to reflect on the status of the demand to which the word bears witness. Such an analysis frees us to ask a fundamental question in the field of ethics, which is whether the demand reflected upon is justified. Hirst and Peters contend there is little point in doing a conceptual analysis unless some further philosophical issue is thereby made more manageable. The linkage of conceptual analysis with such types of philosophical questions explains why philosophers do not indulge in an undiscriminating analysis of prior existing concepts (Hirst & Peters, 1998:35).

In conclusion to the above discussion, I wish to ask: „In a nutshell, what is conceptual analysis?‟ Coming to an answer to the question would help us to understand concepts in relation to other concepts. Conceptual analysis is about establishing the (philosophical) meanings of terms, and is often linked to justification.

2.3.2   Questioning a particular educational policy or practice

The current inquiry into alternative forms of discipline has come about as a result of changes in education policy. For that reason, I have decided to question existing policies and to explore alternatives to discipline at schools. In this respect, consideration must be given to what questioning a policy or practice entails. According to Burbules and Warnick (2004), questioning a particular educational practice or policy might include an examination of curricular programmes, classroom practices, funding procedures, and education laws, among other matters, from an ethical, political, epistemological, or metaphysical perspective. The point of undertaking such an examination might, for example, be to find what normative implications the practices concerned entail, or possibly to suggest alternative practices.

For Burbules and Warnick a good deal of work within the field of philosophy of education is less concerned with discourses, principles, and systems than it is with fairly specific policies and practices that define educational business as usual: developing charter schools; imposing corporal punishment; conducting test-based systems of accountability; providing sex education; supplying vouchers as a mechanism of school „choice‟; installing content filters on all school computers, and so on. Sometimes, such practices might be questioned on normative grounds, entailing consideration of whether they support or violate principles of justice, fairness, or equality, for instance, or whether they might violate certain rights. Sometimes they are questioned on epistemological or metaphysical grounds, as to whether they are based on reliable or shaky assumptions about knowledge, truth, or an objective reality, or whether they rely upon characterisations of human agency and responsibility that are too individualistic. My contention is that the issue of choice in education demands critical examination, leading to my desire to subject the alternatives to corporal punishment to critical analysis.

2.3.3   Interview

The third research method used in the current study is the interview, with interviews being conducted with participants in order to develop a deeper understanding of the forms of discipline employed at selected schools. Since the study is qualitative in nature, the interviews concerned were qualitative in nature. In such research, the interviews conducted

are usually taken to involve some form of conversation with a purpose (Burgess, 1984:102). The conversational style is flexible and fluid, and the purpose of the interviews is achieved by means of active engagement by both interviewer and interviewee around relevant issues, topics and experiences during the interview itself. The purpose of the qualitative research interview is to contribute to a body of knowledge that is conceptual and theoretical, as well as one that is based on the meanings that the life experiences discussed hold for the interviewees concerned (DiCocco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006:314). Block (1981:154) suggests: "There are only five ways to collect data: interviews, paper and pencil questionnaires, document analysis, direct observations, and your own experience."

The popularity of interview methods among qualitative researchers is striking to the point where they are commonly taken to be "the gold standard of qualitative research" (Silverman, 2000:291–292). The very nature of the interview allows the interviewer to gain information that might not be obtained by means of using some other data collection method. The interviewer not only obtains the information from the answers provided by the interviewee, but might also gain valuable information from the body language, tone, inflection and other non-verbal responses expressed by the subject (Martin, 2000:342).

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with three teachers from two different state-funded high schools in the Oudtshoorn area in the Western Cape province. The interviews were conducted at each school with the principal, the vice-principal and a Post Level 1 teacher. I believed that conducting such interviews would help me to form a balanced view of forms of discipline used at the two schools, because each post level teacher experiences and practises discipline differently. The results (data) that were obtained from the interviews also allowed me to answer the research question concerned.

Whereas the unstructured interviews were conducted in conjunction with the collection of observational data, semi-structured interviews are often the sole data source used for a qualitative research project, and are usually scheduled in advance at a designated time and at a location that is relatively unaffected by everyday concerns. They are generally organised around a set of predetermined open-ended questions, with other questions emerging from the dialogue conducted between the interviewer and interviewee(s). Semi-structured in-depth interviews are the most widely used interviewing format for qualitative research, and can occur either with an individual or in groups. Most commonly, such

interviews are only conducted once for an individual or group, and take between 30 minutes and several hours to complete (DiCocco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). The individual in-depth interview allows the interviewer to delve deeply into social and personal matters, whereas the group interview allows interviewers to obtain a wider range of experience but, because of the public nature of the process, prevents delving as deeply into the individual psyche as does the former type of interview.

In interpreting data, it is very important for researchers to see that, sometimes, what an interviewee says is not the straightforward answer to the interviewer‟s question that it is presumed to be. For example, if an interviewer asks whether an interviewee‟s father treats her and her sister equally, and she answers yes, he loves them both, we cannot assume, on the basis of the answer given, that the concept of equality itself figures in that interviewee‟s family practices, experiences and reasoning.

The idea that interviewees might answer questions other than those that we ask of them, and make sense of the social world in ways foreign to our own, lie behind many qualitative interview strategies. That we should be receptive to what interviewees say, and to their ways of understanding, underpins much of the „qualitative‟ critique of structure survey interview methods. The problem is not only about how questions are asked (for example in abstract or specific terms), but also about the structure or framework of the dialogue. A structure or sequence of questions that is rigid, and which is devised in advance by the interviewer, by definition lacks the flexibility and sensitivity to context and particularity required for listening to our interviewees‟ ways of interpreting and experiencing the social world (DiCocco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006).

The questions addressed by the researcher were, instead, related to the structuring of the interview, with the answers once again depending upon their theoretical orientation. Most qualitative researchers try to structure interviews in ways that are meaningful to the interviewees (and relevant to the research), and many try to minimise the use of their own rules in the process of such structuring and in the sequencing of the dialogue concerned (DiCocco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006).

2.4   RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research methodology used in the study is critical theory. In my discussion of the methodology, I first want to introduce the concept of theory in general, before I discuss critical theory.

New perspectives, theories, including new ones, and new empirical information all can enable us to see how things can differ from the ways in which they first present themselves to us, and how things can even differ from the ways in which they are. Seizing such possibilities, however, means rejecting the notion that either we must accept nearly everything as it is, or else we encounter a radical disorganisation of reality, in which we can claim no bearings to guide us (Calhoun, 1995:2).

Hume showed – almost despite himself, or to Kant rather than to himself – the essential place of theory and the limits of empiricism as a source of certain knowledge. At the same time, he suggested the indeterminacy of theory, and the impossibility of ever arriving at definite proofs on the basis of empirical evidence. Hume turned away from theory and toward history as a guide for the development of human understanding and action. Theory, after all, is not the only way in which to provide orientation to action; language and everyday culture provide us with widespread classificatory abilities, though, as we move into analysis, we become, at least implicitly, aware that theory needs to make room for the reasoning involved in narratives. Narratives need not simply be statements of progression or sequence, as they can also be accounts of how prior events or actions limit and orient subsequent ones. Analysts can theorise about the variation of „plot‟ structures without introducing notions of causality per se. Theorisation is important as the systematic examination and construction of knowledge – in the case of social theory, such knowledge is about social life (Calhoun, 1995:2).

The world that social theorists seek to understand is not just empirical, and constituted of facts and propositions; it is the world also of phenomenological experience, reflective judgment, and practical action. Recognising such reality makes more difficult, but perhaps more interesting, the key challenge that theorists have faced ever since Hume: to develop systematic ways of understanding the world that are true to that world as the object of

experience and action as well as of observation, that recognise the place of other subjects in that world, and that are rigorous, yet that recognise their own embeddedness in history.

There are two important points I want to raise about theory. First, social science theories are always partly inductive, as they depend on at least some information about how the world works and also on an orientation to the world induced (though usually left inexplicit) from the culture and experience of theorists. More than the above, many of the best theories are „empirically rich". That is, they are compilations not solely of formal propositions or of abstract speculations, but of concrete explanations and of narratives. They work very largely by means of empirical analogies and by means of statements of similarity and contrast, rather than by means of law-like universal statement. The extent to which the most compelling theories are richly and densely empirical can be seen easily by a quick reflection on the theories that have proved most enduringly influential – those, for example, of Marx, Weber, Durkheim, and Freud (Calhoun, 1995:4).

Second, the idea of a theory-free, totally concrete empirical sociology is equally misleading. Even when empirical researchers leave their theoretical orientations completely inexplicit, and claim – like Sherlock Holmes – to be working with „nothing but the facts", they rely on concepts, ideas about causality, and understandings of where to look for empirical relationships that cannot be derived entirely from the realm of facts, and that are necessary to constitute both facts and explanations.

First, „theory" is sometimes understood in a strongly empiricist fashion to refer to an orderly system of tested propositions. In such a usage of theory, the main elements are (1) potentially generalisable propositions, and (2) scope statements about where they were thus conceived. Such theory is often called positivism by both critics and proponents, but such an appellation is really a misnomer. The „positivism" label comes from the scientism of early French social theorists like Comte, and from Hegel's critique of „mere positivity", in terms of which the surface existence of the world is seen, but not its internal tensions (Calhoun, 1995:5).

The above leads, then, to the second sense of „theory" as a logically integrated causal explanation. It is only in terms of such a second sort of theory that criteria of praise, like parsimony or power or completeness, become relevant. Finally, there is a third sense of

theory, one that Robert Merton tried to distinguish from the first two, calling the third sort „theoretical orientations" or „perspectives", rather than theories. He meant, I think, something like approaches to solving problems and to developing explanations, rather than the solutions and explanations themselves (Calhoun, 1995:5).

First, we realise that the language that our so-called theoretical perspectives provide for discussing various issues is, itself, dependent on theories. In other words, if we say that we think power and conflict play a larger role than does functional integration in establishing social order, we presume understandings of what social order is that can only be achieved on the basis of some level of theorisations, and which might not be the same as other understandings. Second, and for partly similar reasons, most of what we take to be the „facts" of social science, and indeed the criteria for evaluating both facts and explanations, are themselves constituted in part through theory. Theory not only follows from, and attempts to explain an inductively pre-given world of empirical observations, but also enables us to make observations and thus to convert sensory impressions into understandings that we can appropriate as facts. Theories thus offer us ways of thinking about the empirical world, ways of making observations, and ways of formulating tests, and not just ways of explaining the results of tests and correlations among empirical observations (Calhoun, 1995:6).

Theoretical writings offer methods of thinking up new explanations. However, such an offering makes things seem too simple, and it obscures the potentially transformative role of theory in terms of both academic sociology and public life. Even when we speak with more sophistication of theory as explanation and methods for constructing explanations, we fail to do justice to the role of theory in constituting our very access to the social world, including the facts about which we theorise and the practical actions through which we test propositions and understanding. Conceiving theoretical ideas about the world that we study change it so that we are never able to achieve the complete closure envisaged by our conventional textbook notions of theoretical cumulation or by the relationship between theory and research. Especially with regard to the relationship of social theory to the public sphere, but also in relation to the most academic of the sciences, we need to recognise that our theoretical innovations are a response to problems, so that, in our fixing one set of problems, they may create new ones, or new ones may emerge as the social world changes (Calhoun, 1995:7).

One of the most important roles of theory lies in it enabling us to ask new and different sorts of questions to those that were previously asked. A host of important questions arise from Marx's theories, for example, that would not arise from those of either Durkheim or Weber. Marxist theories urge us to study to what extent interests that are rooted in material relations of production shape people's identities and actions, and whether the recognition of such interests makes for an international class consciousness strong enough to triumph over nationalism. Moreover, theories enable us to ask questions that did not occur to the originators of such theories themselves (Calhoun, 1995:7)

The fact that theories enable us to ask new questions is not just a sign that our knowledge grows progressively better. It is, rather, a result of the many possible vantage points that one might achieve in considering a single set of social phenomena. For the above reason, we cannot expect theoretical simulation to result in the development of a single, completely adequate theory. The field of sociological theory necessarily – and indeed happily – is bound to remain a field of dialogue among multiple theories, with each offering aspects of truth and none commanding truth entirely. The above means also that theory needs to be seen crucially through its role in the process of interpretation, and that its empirical content is often best deployed, not as universal truths or law-like generalisations, but as analogies, contrasts, and comparisons (Calhoun, 1995:8).

Critical social theory makes the very givenness of the world the object of exploration and analysis, which suggests another reason why theory has a complex relationship to facts. Such theory cannot merely summarise it, or be neatly tested by it, since theory of some sort is always essential to the constitution of facts. Theory is not only a guide to action in the way in which engineering principles guide the construction of bridges, but, rather, it is an aid to thinking through changed circumstances and new possibilities. Theory helps practical actors deal with social change by helping them to see beyond the immediacy of what it is, at any particular moment, to conceptualise something of what could be. Doing so involves a crucial analytic ability that shows the limits of sheer empiricism (Calhoun, 1995:9).

The above point is conceptualised differently, but equally clearly, by the dialectical theorist following of Hegel and by theorists in the structuralist movement, basing their work on

that of the linguist Ferdinand de Saussure. For the former, the key is the tensions and contradictions that underpin existing reality and that point both to its situation within a larger historical reality and to the possibilities of its transcendence. For the latter, the key is to be able to see underlying patterns of causes and constraints, rather than merely the more contingent surface pattern of actual occurrences. The social scientists who are familiar with the difference between an anecdote and a statistical pattern sometimes become frustrated by students, colleagues, and politicians who insist on thinking in terms of particular cases, rather than in terms of overall patterns and probabilities (Calhoun, 1995:9).

Using theory to challenge the givenness of the social world and to enable researchers to see new problems and new facts in that world requires recognising that knowledge is a historical product and always, at least potentially, a medium of historically significant action. Since to theorise is to open up vistas of understanding, doing so can never be altogether neutral, but it is necessarily perspectival. Thus, theorists take seriously both the historical sources of their theory and its orientation to the future. Arendt employed a parable from Kafka to describe the necessary situation of theory – indeed of thinking – that is caught in a tension existing between past and future. Since so much theory seeks the umpire‟s chair, it seems useful to have a special term for theory that is self-conscious about its historicity, its place in dialogue and, among cultures, its irreducibility to facts, and its engagement in the practical world. Deferring to Kant and a long tradition, rather than just to Horkhemer and Adorno, we can call such theory critical. Kant firmly placed his philosophy in contrast both to Hume‟s scepticism and to the dogmatic rationalism of Leibniz. It was regarded as untenable to reject the project of increasingly secure understanding and theoretical knowledge as it was to imagine it settled prematurely. Instead, Kant sought, as systematically as he could, to explore the limits to, as well as the grounds for, different forms of reason, knowledge, and understanding, taking seriously not only pure reason, but also practical reason and aesthetic judgment (Calhoun, 1995:12).

The above debate brings me to a discussion of critical theory. The name „critical theory‟ was chosen by the founders of the Frankfurt School in the period between two world wars to symbolise their attempt to achieve a unity of theory and practice, including a unity of theory with empirical research, embracing an historically grounded awareness of the social, political, and cultural problems of the age. As Horkheimer suggested, the theorists concerned wanted to distinguish critical theory from the sort of „traditional theory‟ that

accepted the self-definition of the familiar and that failed to look more deeply at how the categories of our consciousness are shaped and how they, in turn, constituted both the world we see and that which we take to be possible (Calhoun, 1995:14).

Consideration must be given as to the nature of critical theory. The term bears the stamp of the nascent optimism of the nineteenth century, in terms of which it was held that a critical theory can change society, and be used as a tool of reason to transform the world. The important point is the change involved (Rasmussen, 2004:3).

The task of social emancipation that can be enacted by critical reflection leads the very agents of that reflection to a further task, namely to the transformation of society through revolution. Consequently, the promise of critical theory is radical social transformation. The ancient assumption that the purpose of reflection was to acquire knowledge itself, allied with the further assumption that pure contemplation was the proper end of the human subject, was replaced by another end of reflection, also derived from classical thought, but with its own peculiarly modern twist: theory, when allied with praxis, has a proper political end, namely social transformation (Rasmussen, 2004:4).

Horkheimer‟s 1937 essay, which attempted systematically to define critical theory, begins not by underlying an association with the Marxist heritage that still distinguished the Institute and journal with which it was associated, but rather by trying to answer the more general question regarding theory per se: "What is theory?" (Menke, 2004:188). In the traditional sense, theory is a kind of generalisation that is based upon experience. From Descartes to Husserl, theory has been defined in such a way, argues Horkheimer (1937, in Menke 2004). As such, however, theory, traditionally defined, has a peculiar kind of prejudice that favours the natural science.

Critical theory appears to have been the central motive of language, reason, subjectivity, modernity, and others, with the younger critical theorists trying to overcome what they interpreted as the impasse of the associated tradition (Menke, 2004:104). The foundation of morality on which the modern philosophical reflection on morality generally is based equates to that of the moral attitude on which other, non-moral interests, capabilities, or practices, are based, such as an interest in one‟s own personal welfare (in contractualism) and the capacity for reasonable self-determination (in Kant). Such an attitude towards

morality is taken up by the second-generation critical theorists, with Habermas and Apel trying to derive the moral attitude of equal respect from the practice of communicative discourse (Menke, 2004:107).

According to Max Horkheimer‟s (in Menke, 2004) well-known definition, a theory is critical only if it meets three criteria: it must, simultaneously, be explanatory, practical, and normative. The above means that the theory must explain what is wrong with current social reality, must identify actors to change the reality, and must provide clear norms for criticism and practical goals for the future. The critical theory of society, as Horkheimer defines it, has, as its object, human beings as producers of their own historical form of life: its goal is the emancipation of human beings from the circumstances that enslave them. The same criterion applies to the theory of democracy. However, democratic practice has a special place in Horkheimer‟s programme for critical reflection, since he believed that the goal of emancipation requires that human beings consensually choose and control the conditions of their lives to the greatest extent possible (Menke, 2004:108).

Critical theory seeks to replace liberal possessive individualism as the basis for a democratic polity. The initial writings of the Frankfurt School on democracy subject classical liberalism to the same sort of ideological critique that Marx employed in his political writings, such as the critique of civil rights in terms of the Jewish question. The current critique shows that liberal and individualist interpretations of rights and liberties have, in reality, only an economic meaning.

The freedom of real individuals can only be understood in a holistic way, in terms of the complex relations of the social whole in which individuals find themselves. In contrast to the liberal individual, the subject of critical theory "is a definite individual in her relation to other individuals and groups, in her conflict with a particular class, and finally, in the resultant web of relationships with the social totality and with nature" (Bohman, 2005:139). Insofar as liberal ideology is based on abstract individualism and on illusory freedom, the critic of ideology replaces it with a more complete and historical conception of individuality and autonomy.

Critical theory aims to show how human history has produced an alienation of human capacities, such that social institutions and processes that were creatures of human action

confronted people as being beyond their scope of action. The recovery of human capacities, and thus the possibilities for social transformation, is located in the restoration of truly human relationships, in place of inhuman relationships, in which people are merely the mediations between things and commodities. According to Bohman (2005:139),

> Critical thinking is the function neither of the isolated individual nor of a sum-total of individuals. Its subject is rather a definite individual in his real relation to other individuals and groups, in his conflict with a particular class, and, finally, in the resultant web of relationships with the social totality and with nature.

To treat the individual as an asocial, ahistorical, objective starting point for knowledge is an illusion about thinking subjects, under which idealism has lived since Descartesian times, is ideology in the strict sense. Critical theory took the starting point not of the proletariat in itself, nor of any other specific social group, but of the kind of thinking – necessarily done by individuals – that addressed the most categorically basic structure of the whole society, that which made it whole, gave it its basic dynamism, and pointed to the possibilities for its transcendence. According to Calhoun (1995:28), "[t]he critical theory of society is, in its totality, the unfolding of a single existential judgment."

All knowledge, Habermas argues, had to be understood in terms of the interests that lead practical actors to create in the first place. This means that, when a critical theorist examines earlier theory, his task is to locate the relationships among the knowledge-forming interests that led to the theoretical production, the historical conditions within which the theory was conceived, and the epistemic content of the theory (Calhoun, 1995:29). Indeed, one of the organising features of Habermas"s work is a determination not to fall into the same pit of incapacitating pessimism as do Horkheimer and Adorno. In *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, Habermas examines the origins, development, and degeneration of the distinctive political institution that made bourgeois democracy genuinely radical in its day (Calhoun, 1995:30).

The importance of the public sphere for Habermas is that it offers a model of public communication that could, potentially, realise the rational guidance of society. Habermas seeks to locate the social roots of the transformations that have deprived the public sphere of its initial strength of rational-critical discourse. Heavily influenced by the mass society

theories of the 1950s, however, Habermas‟s account of the twentieth century undermines his own initial optimism (Calhoun, 1995:28).

Habermas shows a public sphere that was not only deradicalised, but which was fundamentally diminished, by two major processes. The first was the progressive incorporation of ever larger numbers of citizens into the public sphere. However, as the public sphere grew in scale, it degenerated in form. Secondly, the public sphere lost some of the basis that it had once had in a civil society clearly distinct from the state. In the twentieth century, and especially after World War Two, the boundaries between state and society had increasingly collapsed, Habermas thought, as government intervention in the economy increased, as welfare states were formed, as giant corporations took on political functions, and as citizens were organised into (or represented by) interested groups. Instead of seeking critical purchase in the comparison of historically and culturally specific social formations, he seeks it in the elaboration of the universal conditions of human life, grounding his critique not in historical developments as such, but in a broad idea of evolutionary progress in communication (Calhoun, 1995:32).

At a deeper level, Habermas does not base his critical theory on actual or historical social institutions of discourse, but on the potential for unimpeded communication suggested by the rationality implicit in speech itself. Habermas‟s later work on communicative action retains one crucial theme from his early work, in terms of him seeking ways in which to realise the unfinished potential of the project of enlightenment or modernity. With the shift to universal pragmatics, he found a more reliable basis for an optimistic orientation to critical theory than he had in his historically specific account of the public sphere. When speech denies any possibilities, it necessarily contradicts itself. Habermas shifts away from history to recover a basis for optimism, while Horkheimer and Adorno move away from history in a kind of radicalisation of their despair. Habermas has insisted on the social construction of individual identity, claiming that "socialized individuals are only sustained through group identity" (Calhoun, 1995:33).

Habermas pursues a theory of communicative action that is grounded in the universal presuppositions of language. Habermas‟s approach to human life and social practice is, moreover, a highly cognitive one that assumes that all significant differences are ultimately resolvable – at least in principle – on the basis of rational discourse.

In summary, critical theory should be seen not just as a „school", but as an interpenetrating body of work that demands and produces critique in four senses:

- a critical engagement with the theorist"s contemporary social world, recognising that the existing state of affairs does not exhaust all possibilities, and offering positive implications for social action;

- a critical account of the historical and cultural conditions (both social and personal) on which the theorist"s own intellectual activity depends;

- the theorist"s understanding, including the historical construction of the frameworks concerned; and

- a critical confrontation with other works of social explanation that not only establishes their good and bad points, but which also shows the reasons behind their blind spots and misunderstandings, and which demonstrates the capacity to incorporate their insights on stronger foundations (Calhoun, 1995:32).

All four of the above forms of critique depend on some manner of historical understanding and analysis. The first calls for „denaturalising" the human world, recognising it as a product of human action, and thus, implicitly, as the product of some actions among a larger range of possibilities than might else be conceived of. Beyond the making of such a call, a theoretically serious critical engagement with one"s social world requires an account of that world in terms of its salient features for practical action, and an ability to place the account in relation to other basic patterns of activity (e.g. other epochs, as well as culturally or socially different contemporary settings).

The second form of critique calls for an account of the accomplishments and of the particularities of history that makes possible the vision of the contemporary theorist. The attainment of such is not just a matter of the giants" shoulders on which one might stand, but of the entire social formation that grants one an opportunity for theoretical reflection and conditions, and which serves to shape one"s theoretical outlook (Calhoun, 1995:35).

The third form of critique calls for the historical analysis of the ways in which ideas come to take on specific significances, to be embedded in different intellectual contexts and projects, and to be invested with certain sorts of references to the world of experience and

practice. If we are to be seriously critical of the concepts that we incorporate into our theories – such as the various „keywords‟, like „individual‟ or „nation‟, that Raymond Williams analyses – we need to see them in terms of their historical creation, and to see that no attempt at operational specification ever escapes the impact of that history.

Theorists do not work in a world of right answers, but in what Charles Taylor (in Calhoun 1995:36) has called an "epistemic gain" movement from a problematic position to a more adequate one within a field of available alternatives (rather than in epistemology‟s mythical movement from falsity to truth).

In conclusion, the use of critical theory for the current study requires consideration. In the study, I shall use critical theory to contextualise discipline critically in selected South African schools. In doing so, I shall attempt to explain how discipline was practised in South African schools before 1994. I shall also give a brief account of education reforms in South Africa, especially after 1994, and the role that such reforms have played in transforming the nature of discipline in schools. I shall also give a critical account of what constitutes discipline in South African schools, look critically at learning barriers and social challenges, and find solutions for the challenges encountered by offering alternatives to it (see Chapter Three). In my literature review in Chapter Three, in finding the existing state of affairs unacceptable, I offer affirmative alternatives that can be chosen for taking positive social action. The literature also offers alternative forms of discipline to change discipline in schools for the better.

2.5   SUMMARY

In this chapter I discuss the research methods for this study. The chapter highlights that one of the most important roles of theory lies in it enabling us to ask new and different sorts of questions to those that were previously asked. Moreover, theories enable us to ask questions that did not occur to the originators of such theories themselves (Calhoun, 1995:7). Since this study investigates people‟s experiences on discipline at two schools, I draw on the importance of the public sphere as articulated by Habermas. The relevance of Habermas‟s idea is that it offers a model of public communication that could, potentially, realise the rational guidance of society.   Schools are part of the public sphere, and Habermas‟s ideas are relevant for this study.

CHAPTER THREE
CONCEPTUALISING DISCIPLINE IN SCHOOLS

3.1   INTRODUCTION

Hundreds of thousands of young people in our country used to be legally beaten every year in homes, in schools and in prisons. Although the practice is no longer legal in schools, in prisons or in foster homes, it, nonetheless, continues. Over the past two years, the Education Rights Project has received many reports of the physical and emotional abuse of learners. In some extreme cases, learners have been disabled and even killed as a result of them having been physically punished. Others have dropped out of school because of having had to undergo humiliating forms of punishment.

While some educators have found creative, non-violent ways of approaching classroom discipline, others have struggled to find effective solutions to the problem (Porteus *et al*., 2001:1). Some educators and parents believe that learners have too many rights and that they have become less respectful and more disruptive because of the ending of physical punishment (Vally, 2005:1).

Since 1994, several legislative initiatives have been introduced to outlaw the physical and psychological abuse of learners within schools. While many view the outlawing of such abuse as a victory for human rights, others feel that the related decision was made too hastily and that it does not reflect the realities that exist in our schools. Most educators observe that, although corporal punishment is now a criminal offence, it, nevertheless, remains a prevalent and pervasive practice.

Teachers from very different schools, primary and secondary, rich and poor, private and public, feel that learners are becoming more unruly and less respectful than they used to be in the past. They argue that the lack of discipline among learners makes it impossible to teach effectively.

Because neither alternatives to corporal punishment nor appropriate in-depth training in prescribed methods of discipline have been provided to educators, many have come to

believe that there *are no effective alternatives*. Hence, they feel that corporal punishment is the only strategy for the effective maintenance of discipline in the classroom. Acknowledgement must be given to the fact that alternatives to corporal punishment are *not easy*. Effective alternatives must be developed through a process of experimentation, group support and reflection (Porteus *et al.*, 2001:1).

3.2   THE CONTEXT OF DISCIPLINE

In the context of South African schooling, we have come to understand the concept of „discipline‟ much more narrowly than the concept of „punishment‟; with the latter often including forms of physical punishment or psychological punishment, such as humiliation. Many mistakenly equate discipline with punishment. While corporal punishment had been practised in South Africa for many centuries, it became entrenched in the classroom during the apartheid years. The apartheid system of education was grounded in a non-democratic and authoritarian philosophy. In terms of the system, young black South Africans were not considered capable of becoming critical and responsible citizens. Instead, they were „educated‟ to become obedient, low-wage workers within a racially based capitalist system. Even white South African children were educated within an authoritarian ethic, in terms of which they were „educated‟ to be law-abiding bureaucrats, rather than critical thinkers within a vibrant democracy.

During the apartheid years, the system of Christian National Education and the educational philosophies that guided it encouraged educators to believe that corporal punishment was the „scientifically irrefutable‟ way of educating children. During the aforementioned years, the use of corporal punishment was sanctioned by law, and encouraged by teacher training institutions (Porteus *et al.*, 2001:5).

A great deal of research has been undertaken into the efficacy and impact of corporal punishment. Some of the most important conclusions drawn in this respect are the following:

- Classrooms with the fewest behavioural problems over time tend to be run by teachers who are committed to the adoption of non-violent and child-centred approaches to classroom discipline (Kohn, 1996). One study of „disruptive‟ learners in secondary schools turned out to be a study of „disruptive‟ teachers

(Burke, cited in Kohn, 1996). The same study found that „bad" students who were transferred into organised and non-violent classrooms tended to became „good" students, and vice versa.

- If corporal punishment were to work as a deterrent, over time it should stop all bad behaviour among „difficult children". In fact, research shows that, in schools that use corporal punishment, the same learners are being repeatedly beaten for the same offences (Vally, 1998).

- Corporal punishment tends to develop aggressive hostility, as opposed to self-discipline. For many children – boys in particular – such punishment tend to lead to feelings of revenge, anti-social aggressiveness, and increases in vandalism (Vally, 1998).

- Children who are facing other challenges at home or elsewhere in their lives may be particularly vulnerable to the negative impact of corporal punishment. For many such children, corporal punishment reduces their ability to concentrate, undermines their sense of self-esteem and self-confidence, and causes a general dislike, or fear, of schooling. In South Africa, corporal punishment has been linked to the tendency to truancy and dropping out of school (Porteus *et al.*, 1998; Vally, 1998).

- Using corporal punishment has been found likely to discourage a search for alternative means of discipline. Such punishment has become a „crutch" supporting other problems, including poor teaching methodology (Vally, 1998).

3.3   WHAT CONSTITUTES DISCIPLINE?

The literature discusses several features of discipline, of which several are highlighted below.

3.3.1   Physical punishment

Physical punishment is described as a deliberate act that causes the pain of physical discomfort in order to punish someone. Corporal or physical punishment can take many forms, including hitting with a hand or an object (such as a cane, belt, whip, shoe or ruler), slapping, kicking, shaking, burning, pinching or pulling the hair; forcing someone to stand

in an uncomfortable and undignified position; denying, or restricting, someone's use of the toilet; denying meals, drink, heat or shelter as a form of punishment; and forcing someone to do excessive exercise.

The above-mentioned forms of punishment very often leave learners with bruises and cuts, with, in some cases, broken bones, knocked-out teeth and internal injuries. According to Vally (2005:2), every year in our schools some children are left permanently disfigured, disabled or even dead.

3.3.2 Humiliating or degrading punishment

Some educators have replaced physical punishment with methods of degrading or humiliating punishment, which takes different forms, such as verbal abuse, ridicule, isolation, or the ignoring of certain learners. Such strategies, based on humiliation and on the removal of self-respect, are not effective alternatives to physical punishment. Some young people who have been stripped of their self-respect and self-esteem become violent, whereas others become sad and withdrawn (Vally, 2005:2).

3.3.3 The difference between punishment and discipline

Many mistakenly equate punishment with discipline. Disciplined behaviour means ways of behaving that show respect and responsibility. Self-discipline means the achieving of disciplined behaviour through one's own efforts, rather than through external monitoring or force. Punishment does not promote self-discipline, but it only stops misbehaviour for the moment. The infliction of punishment might fulfil a short-term goal, but actually interferes with the accomplishment of the long-term goal of self-control (Vally, 2005:3).

3.3.4 How corporal punishment is linked to South African history

Corporal punishment has been practised in South Africa for centuries. The history of slavery, colonialism and apartheid is also the history of the whip, the lash and the sjambok. During the apartheid years, corporal punishment was used widely in classrooms. Whipping was also the most common form of punishment handed down by the legal system for

young offenders. Every year, until 1994, an average of 40 000 young people was whipped in our country.

The apartheid education system was based on a violent, anti-democratic and authoritarian philosophy. Educators were encouraged to use the cane during the period as a way of keeping control and of dealing with those who stepped out of line. Beating children was simply taken for granted as a practice in a society that was familiar with violence. Over time, many educators and parents came to believe deeply in the usefulness of corporal punishment. Along the way, the practice of corporal punishment became deeply woven into the fabric of our society (Vally, 2005:7).

3.3.5 Learning obstacles and social challenges

Child psychologists who study children‟s behaviour in school conclude that the majority of disciplinary problems are rooted in practical issues related to the circumstances faced by the children concerned. Such circumstances include the experiencing of problems at home, learning difficulties, victimisation and trauma, as well as problems with teaching methods and feelings of being misunderstood (Vally, 2005:8).

3.3.6 What does the law say about discipline?

Since 1994, several laws have been passed that outlaw the physical and psychological abuse of young people. The first case after 1994 involved the constitutionality of whipping as a sentence imposed by criminal courts. Constitutional Court Judge Pius Langa, before delivering a finding on the matter, reviewed numerous international cases.

In 1995 Langa found that judicial whipping not only violated the constitutional right to respect and personal dignity, but that it violated international law as well. According to Vally (2005:11), Langa said that corporal punishment:

> is a practice which debases everyone involved in it…so close to the 21st century, juvenile whipping is cruel, it is inhuman and it is degrading. No compelling interest has been proved which can justify the practice. Nor has it been shown to be a significantly effective deterrent. Its effect is likely to be coarsening and degrading rather than rehabilitative.

There have been several legal decisions taken on the issue of corporal punishment in a democratic South Africa. Therefore, I now wish to explore the following several laws banning corporal punishment:

- The National Education Policy Act (1996) states: "No person shall administer corporal punishment, or subject a student to psychological or physical abuse at any educational institution."

- The South African Schools Act (1996) reads:
  - No person may administer corporal punishment at a school to a learner.
  - Any person who contravenes this is guilty of an offence, and liable on conviction to a sentence which could be imposed for assault.

- The Abolition of Corporal Punishment Act 33 of 1997 repealed all legislation that authorised the imposition of corporal punishment by the courts, including the courts convened by traditional leaders.

- The regulations promulgated under the Child Care Act 74 of 1983 were amended during 1998 to prohibit the corporal punishment of children in the residential care system, including children in children‟s homes, schools of industry and reform schools. The regulations concerned also prohibit foster parents from using physical punishment on children in their care.

South Africa is also a signatory to the following international laws and conventions, among others:

- Article 19, section 1 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child; and
- Article 16 of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (Vally, 2005:13).

3.4   LEARNING BARRIERS AND SOCIAL CHALLENGES

Corporal punishment most often masks the "heart of the problem", according to Vally (2005:15). By resorting to a behavioural „quick fix‟, such as corporal punishment, we often miss our opportunity to uncover and address the „heart‟ of the problem.

Thus, an alternate way of thinking about classroom discipline is to emphasise the importance of understanding the practical problems that underlie a given child‟s behaviour.

Such thinking focuses on appreciating behaviour as a key to uncovering the problems facing a child. In this way, behaviour becomes an important resource for educators, enabling them to identify problems that might otherwise be difficult to uncover and understand.

Psychologists have identified a range of reasons that explain why children with learning barriers – whether caused by cognitive, physical, or social challenges – often demonstrate disruptive behaviour in school. Learning barriers undermine a child‟s sense of self-worth and confidence in learning. Many children have few sources of love, care, and attention and often feel misunderstood by people in general. As a result, disruptive behaviour has been found:

- to be caused by the alienation of being misunderstood, the frustration of not achieving, and the limited repertoire of problem-solving skills that are associated with a low sense of self; and

- to serve the needs of such children, because the behaviour concerned demands attention and diverts attention from the work at hand, which is seen as difficult by the children. Additionally, if children do not exert effort, consciously clown around, or do not take care not to alienate others, they start to feel like failures, because they have not tried to succeed in their personal relations with others and have not focused on their schoolwork and related activities (Porteus *et al*., 2001:43).

The focus on the social and psychological causes of difficult behaviour provides important *practical solutions* to a wide range of discipline problems. It emphasises the early identification of learning barriers and social challenges, and the provision of appropriate support and services to learners. In order to identify such problems successfully, educators must become increasingly curious about the behaviour, personality, and life circumstances of each child in their care. Alertness to the needs and requirements of each child, combined with the information provided in the current thesis, should allow for the identification of a large range of problems facing young people.

The pastoral role of educators is becoming recognised as being of ever more importance in South Africa. Because the world is becoming more complex, children are facing

increasingly difficult challenges, with few systems of support provided to them outside of school.

Most educational psychologists suggest that teachers should not undertake an intense counselling process with children who have been the victims of child or sexual abuse. Instead, they emphasise the role of educators as „conductors of the orchestra‟. That is, the role of the teacher is to understand the problem, to understand the resources and services available to children, and to help the child and/or family ensure that the child receives the help that he or she needs (Porteus *et al*., 2001:45).

3.4.1   Emotional difficulties

A child who seems to be deeply unhappy should be observed to find out what emotional need is not being fulfilled. An attempt should also be made to try to speak to the parents about the child. Love, security, encouragement, and praise help children to develop a positive self-image. Children with low self-confidence require much love and encouragement from other people before they begin to love themselves. Helping children who have emotional difficulties means building a classroom that is secure, safe, caring, and creative (Winkler, Modise & Dawber, 1998).

3.4.2   Child abuse

The most important role for teachers of children who have been abused is to recognise the problem, and to seek the right kind of help. The problem should be reported to the principal, to the Education Support Services, to the local hospital, or to the local social workers. Organisations like Resources Aimed at the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (RAPCAN), the National Institute for Crime Prevention and Rehabilitation (NICRO), and Child Welfare specialise in dealing with such problems, and can be of direct help in troublesome circumstances (Donald, Lazarus & Lolwana, 1997).

3.4.3   Sexual abuse

Instead of taking direct action in cases where sexual abuse is suspected, the educator should seek specialised help whenever possible. If a child agrees to the educator taking the

matter further, it should be reported to the principal, to the Education Support Services, to the local hospital, or to the local social workers. Organisations like Child Welfare, the Family and Marriage Society of South Africa (FAMSA), Rape Crisis, the Planned Parenthood Association of South African, or REPCAN can offer direct help in such instances (Porteus *et al.*, 2001:55).

3.4.4   Living with HIV & AIDS

The provision of intervention and support for children who are affected by HIV & AIDS is complex, as it involves seeking many types of services, including counselling, financial, medical, and possible foster care resources. In addition to the above listed means of intervention and support for children, when dealing with emotional difficulties and abuse, the following organisations and government department might be helpful:

- CINDI – The Children in Distress Network – Preparing for life after AIDS;

- the Coalition for Children's Rights in an HIV Positive World;

- the LoveLife Campaign; and

- the National Department of Education (Porteus *et al.*, 2001:56).

3.4.5   Alcohol and drug abuse

Alcohol and drug abuse require early identification and intervention to avoid the vicious cycles associated with long-term abuse. There is a range of organisations, of which some are contactable in most major cities, which specialise in helping to deal with such problems. The organisations include Alcoholics Anonymous, Al-Anon, Narcotics Anonymous, and branches of the South African Council on Alcoholism (SANCA). The efforts of other family members should be involved in coping with any instance of abuse. Use the advice from professional colleagues to determine the best way in which to inform and to involve parental figures (Porteus *et al.*, 2001:56).

3.5   ALTERNATIVE FORMS OF DISCIPLINE

The current study aims to explore acceptable forms of discipline in a democratic South Africa. According to Vally (2005:17), the majority of educators in our country have found

ways in which to encourage self-discipline amongst learners without having to resort to either physical or psychological punishment. Efforts to transform discipline in the classroom can be most effective if the whole school is involved.

3.5.1 Code of conduct

One of the ways of involving the whole school in developing a better system for discipline than that which is currently practised is through going through a process of adopting a suitable code of conduct. The purpose of a school‟s code of conduct is to obtain a commitment from learners, educators, and parents to a set of rules, whose primary purpose is to create a safe, supportive and productive schooling environment. The responsibility for creating such a code rests with the SGB. The importance of the document concerned stems from it affecting everyone in the school, as the law requires that the SGB specifically should consult with the educators, the parents and the learners when drawing up a code of conduct for the school (Vally, 2005:17).

There are certain laws to which a school code of conduct must conform, primary of which is that it cannot be in opposition or contradiction to the country‟s Constitution. This means that, for example, the code cannot unfairly discriminate on the basis of gender, colour or religion. All the actions of the schools at all times – towards learners, parents, or educators – must respect the constitutional principles of protecting human dignity, equality and freedom (Vally, 2005:18).

3.5.1.1 Transgressing the school's code of conduct

All schools must make their code of conduct available to all learners. Learners cannot be expected to follow rules that they have not seen, discussed and agreed to. The code must spell out what an offence is and what corrective action will be taken if such an offence occurs. Such codification is intended to ensure that any disciplinary action that is taken against learners is transparent and fair. Ensuring such transparency and fairness helps to keep all informed of what actions will be taken against them if they commit an offence. Serious offences that may warrant suspension and expulsion are determined and published in the Government Gazette by the Member of the Executive Council (MEC) who is responsible for education (Vally, 2005:18).

3.5.1.2 The right to representation

If a serious offence is thought to have been committed, the learner concerned has a right to representation by a lawyer, a learner representative, a trusted educator, a parent, or any other member of the community in whom the learner has confidence (Vally, 2005:18).

3.5.1.3 Suspension from school

In the case of the commission of a serious offence, such as sexual harassment or violence, it might become necessary to suspend a learner from school. A suspension is meant to be a corrective measure, rather than a punitive one. However, a school cannot suspend a learner for more than one week at a time. The school must take into account the right of the learner concerned to an education. This might mean making classes and homework available to the learner while on suspension (Vally, 2005:18).

3.5.1.4 Expulsion from school

In the case of the commission of a very serious offence, after a properly organised disciplinary hearing has been conducted, in which the learner concerned had representation, the school might decide to expel the learner. If the school is thinking of expelling a learner, it must inform the Head of Department in the appropriate Provincial Department of Education. If the learner who is expelled from school is subject to compulsory school attendance – being between the ages of 7 and 15 (grades 1 to 9) – the Head of Department in the relevant province must make an alternative school arrangement.

3.6   STARTING THE CHANGE: RETHINKING THE ISSUE OF DISCIPLINE

The issue of discipline is revisited below in terms of the personal level concerned, the behaviour modification required, and the democratic form of discipline imposed.

3.6.1 At a personal level

Changing the approach taken to discipline in the classroom is, most importantly, rooted in one‟s own personal conviction to create such change. Considering one‟s relationship with

the education profession is important for the process of building respect and discipline in the classroom. Building positive respect in the classroom largely depends on the amount of commitment to being a teacher that is involved. Even for those educators who are committed to the profession of teaching, the process of changing classroom practice is bound to be difficult. Because corporal punishment is rooted in deep and long-held practices for many educators, using such a form of punishment can be an almost automatic response to a difficult classroom and a stressful day. Furthermore, any kind of change is not easy. Research that is conducted into people and change has proved that change causes stress, even when the change concerned is desirable (Porteus *et al*., 2001:25).

Some educators who pride themselves on moving away from corporal punishment have replaced such punishment with methods of humiliation, sarcasm and neglect. Strategies of punishment that are based on humiliation and the removal of self-respect are not an effective alternative to corporal punishment. For very similar reasons to those outlined above, humiliation is not an effective long-term strategy for classroom discipline. A recently completed study on out-of-age learners and out-of-school children provides strong evidence to suggest that learners can lose their confidence in their own learning process when they are subjected to a process that is intended to humiliate and shame them (Porteus *et al*., 1998). Garbarino (1999) cautions adults to be particularly careful not to adopt strategies of neglect or avoidance of young children with chronic behaviour problems. Avoidance and neglect is likely to make such children act up more, rather than less.

3.6.2 At a classroom level: behaviour modification

Behaviour modification, as a school of thought, is based on the premise that the best learning occurs when behaviour is reinforced, often by reward or recognition. The approach concerned is based on the common-sense ideas that emerge when we thoughtfully observe behaviour and the motivations underlying behaviour, and is characterised by the following:

- Clear and consistent rules: Children like rules, as long as they are clear and make sense, because they provide them with a sense of structure. Thus, a cornerstone of the behavioural approach to classroom discipline is to establish clear rules and to ensure that the learners understand the reasons for the rules. The development of rules should be directly linked to maintaining high

expectations for learners. High expectations should relate both to behaviour, as well as to academic excellence.

- Positive reinforcement: There are two important ways in which positive reinforcement is used. First, children who behave in positive ways are positively reinforced or recognised. Through such reinforcement and recognition, they are encouraged to repeat the behaviour. Second, bad behaviour is prevented. An educator carefully observes the „life cycle" of bad behaviour and identifies issues that trigger such behaviour. By so doing, the educator diverts the learner from taking the course of bad behaviour early in the life cycle of such behaviour. Positive reinforcement can come in many forms: a simple smile; a word of praise; public acknowledgement; or social commendation.

- Consistent consequences: Once expectations are clear, it is very important for there to be clear *consequences* for misbehaviour and for such consequences to be consistently applied. Consequences should be designed to teach learners that their behaviour, in the given instance, was wrong and that the choice that they made was not good. Consequences should NEVER make learners feel that they are bad as a person.

- Modelling of good behaviour: The final cornerstone, which is also extremely important, is the necessity for educators to model good behaviour. That is, educators who are effective at working with learners are themselves living examples of good behaviour and caring values. The importance of modelling good behaviour is rooted in the simple fact that children learn from following the example set by the role models around them. If adults model violence, children are more likely to do so too. If educators model frustration and intolerance, the children who follow their example are more likely to express themselves with frustration and intolerance. If educators model compassion, patience, high ethical values, and a light touch, children are more likely to model the behaviours concerned (Porteus *et al*., 2001:29–38).

3.6.3 Democratic discipline

The third way of thinking about alternatives to corporal punishment is to place a special emphasis on the importance of participation and involvement in the thinking and decision-making processes that go on in a classroom. The school of thought involved emphasises the self-discipline (and the development of shared responsibility) that emerges from meaningful participation in decision-making processes by youngsters.

A democratic approach to classroom discipline emphasises a shared responsibility in respect of the thinking, decision-making, and implementation of classroom discipline. Democratic discipline in a classroom puts a special emphasis on the process by which rules are made. Educators facilitate a participative process with learners and parents to establish the „rules of the game‟ and the consequences for good and bad behaviour. Educators who effectively practise such a democratic approach to classroom discipline tend to have more peaceful classrooms over time than they would have otherwise. Attaining such peace in the classroom results from the following:

- Children, like most people, are more likely to understand, to respect, and to follow rules and principles that they have helped to create.
- Participatory processes ensure that all children know and understand the rules of, and expectations for, classroom behaviour.
- Participatory processes ensure that all children know and understand the rules and expectations for classroom behaviour.
- Engaging in participatory processes involving parents helps to ensure that the parents concerned come to know and understand fully the rules and the expectations set for their children. If parents understand the „rules of the game‟ in the classroom, they can provide consistent „messages‟ to their children at home, and support the disciplinary decisions made by the educator and the school to the greatest extent possible.
- Through the process of participation, children and parents build their own capacity for decision-making, community-building, and responsibility (Porteus *et al.*, 2001:40).

There are several resources available to help educators establish a more democratic approach toward discipline. The steps that are commonly suggested for drawing up a code of conduct include the following:

- Step One: Facilitate learner reflection: A range of creative classroom activities has been designed to encourage learners to begin to explore their own experiences and ideas about behaviour, values, social principles and rules, and approaches to discipline. The activities serve to place the immediate problems of classroom discipline in a wider context than they might otherwise be.

- Step Two: Facilitate the creation of a classroom code of conduct: At the beginning of the year, facilitate a process to identify the „rules of the game‟ collectively.

- Step Three: Ensure consistency in the school process: Make sure that the classroom code of conduct is consistent with the code of conduct for the school.

- Step Four: Involve other family members in the process: Involve the family members of learners in a similar process. Call a parent‟s meeting. Outline the code of conduct agreed upon in the class. Ask for any additional suggestions or modifications. Use the opportunity to discuss their expectations and approach toward the discipline of their child(ren).

- Step Five: Revisit the process: The steps above serve only as a starting point. Perhaps most importantly, they plant seeds of involvement and reflection in learners and parents. During hard times, the seeds are likely to grow in various ways, and to contribute toward finding ways of dealing with unforeseen problems. Even if there are few behavioural problems in the classroom, revisit the code of conduct at regular intervals, and encourage both the learners and their parents to reflect on ways in which they can improve or build on the approach.

The above-mentioned steps and ideas should help educators to find a unique way of establishing a more democratic approach to discipline in the classroom. It is important to note that democratic discipline must be located within a broader democratic classroom approach (Porteus *et al.*, 2001:63).

How to build a democratic classroom must be considered. Donald *et al.* (1997:133) suggest that the following principles are fundamental to building a democratic classroom environment:

- The year should start with several activities that engage the class in reflective thought on issues of social importance, including those related to the use and misuse of rules and discipline in society.

- The year should start with several creative activities to encourage learners to understand one another as people, and to facilitate the tradition of discussion and inquiry. (An example of such an activity is one that requires the making of an „all-about-me‟ bag, in which learners place several personal items from their own home in a grocery bag that they bring to school to explain to the rest of the class why each item is important.)

- The year should start with processes of agreeing with rules and expectations, which they help to set, governing their behaviour and learning, as well as the consequences that will result from them contravening the expectations. The educator should also be accountable for meeting such expectations.

- Appropriate structures should be established that facilitate involvement and that help to prevent the abuse of power.

- Clear procedures should be put in place to help ensure democratic practice. Accordingly, rules and procedures might be set up for making decisions. Some decisions will remain the educator‟s primary responsibility. However, many decisions relating to classroom life can be opened up and shared.

- An effort should be made to ensure the optimal participation of all members of the class. The way in which the educator relates to learners and the way in which the learners relate to one another should consciously foster participation.

- A sense of mutual respect should be fostered. Respect for others makes it possible to listen to one another and to take contributions seriously.

- The educators should model the skills involved in democratic leadership themselves, and actively foster them in their learners

The current section has provided a range of different ideas about alternatives to corporal punishment in the classroom. At the end of the day, there are as many approaches as there are educators. Ultimately, it is up to each educator to try and work with the different ideas

and to incorporate them into the very diverse, very large, and very challenging classrooms (Porteus *et al*., 2001:81).

3.7   STARTING THE CHANGE: IDEAS FOR THE WHOLE SCHOOL

Any effort to shift the approach to discipline in the classroom in another direction to that which is customarily taken is most likely to be effective if the shift is taken in the context of the whole school approach, as it is difficult to create islands of excellence in a sea of chaos. Efforts to transform discipline at classroom level must go hand-in-hand with efforts to transform discipline at school level. In the current section I consider what can be done at school level to help support a shift away from corporal punishment and to create a safer and more secure environment for learning (Porteus *et al*., 2001:83).

There is a range of ideas about how to change the school environment so that it will become more conducive to the implementation of alternatives to corporal punishment. The ideas are likely to overlap with other efforts to build safer, more community-orientated and better quality schools. A school‟s approach to discipline should fit in with the school‟s broader strategies for development.

3.7.1   Educator support group

A support group of educators and administrators could be established to discuss issues of behaviour, discipline and conflict resolution. A beginning can be made with spending some time sharing life stories, ideas and fears with one another.

While the knowledge of co-teachers might have been present for several years, few forums exist in which educationists can talk about themselves. Over time, the forum should become a safe place in which teachers might share their problems and frustrations. The forum should be a place in which to talk honestly about „difficult children‟ and in which to brainstorm ways to support the teacher and child in order to find non-violent ways of solving problems. It should also be a place in which to share victories, being the moments when new ideas work (Porteus *et al*., 2001:84).

Forum sessions could be used to pre-empt problems. Educators working with the same learners should form teams to pool their perceptions of the learners and to anticipate possible problems before they become serious.

3.7.2   School code of conduct

The representatives of classrooms and other school constituencies should come together to agree on a code of conduct for the whole school. The rules should not be too many and they should be central to the well-being of the school as a whole. The code should be placed in a highly visible place, so that it is continuously in the view of all. Certain times should be set aside throughout the school year for reflection on the code of conduct and for the identification of any required additions or modifications (Porteus *et al.,* 2001:84).

3.7.3   Support service network

Many schools lack a good referral system, which is an organised way in which to call for assistance from other organisations or from other members of the community. While the support services in many communities are limited, there are often organisations and members of the community who can provide support.

3.7.4   Identification of opportunities for fun and privileges

Alternatives to corporal punishment are particularly effective if there are meaningful privileges available within the school for those who behave well, of which learners who consistently misbehave can be deprived. To be effective, learners must value the privileges concerned highly. A school debate could take place about the opportunities for fun and privileges that could be developed. Such opportunities might include sports programmes, art projects, drumming, or special field trips, or even a range of other activities that match the personality of the learners and the context of the school. A wide range of positive occasions should be held at school, including things to which children look forward, and that make them laugh or smile. Such occasions should be ongoing and regular (Porteus *et al*., 2001:85).

3.7.5   Forum for resolution

Clear procedures should be established for the resolution of conflicts that cannot be resolved at the classroom level. Conflict resolution procedures should take place on an individual basis (involving only those who are directly involved) and in private. A safe space should be created in which the learners concerned can explain how they perceived what happened and why, without fear of recrimination (Porteus *et al.,* 2001:86).

3.7.6   Violence prevention programme

A range of interventions exists for dealing with learners who behave violently. Psychologists reviewing interventions that are used in the United States have concluded that effective strategies combine changing a child‟s ideas about aggression („cognitive restructuring‟) with experiences of practising alternatives to violence („behavioural reversal‟). Whereas the former refers to reframing a child‟s attitudes, values and expectations concerning violence, and especially the legitimisation of violence, the latter refers to the actual practice of non-aggressive behaviours, including conflict resolution, mediation, and the choosing of alternative settings, among others (Garbarino, 1999:192).

3.7.7   Pastoral teachers

In every school, there are educators whom learners have come to trust over time. They are natural „magnets‟ to learners during times of trouble, whether such times involve personal troubles, problems that are experienced at home, or school conflicts. Such educators are important resources for the establishment and maintenance of school peace. The educators concerned should be made accessible to learners, by having their other duties reduced, and by allocating them pastoral or counselling duties. Some schools find ways in which to make such educators available at specified times or at set sessions during the day. Doing so addresses a range of learners‟ support needs and serves to pre-empt problems by providing a channel for learners to discuss their concerns without the fear of victimisation (Porteus *et al*., 2001:87).

3.7.8 Community mentors

In most communities, there are people who are respected and trusted by learners and educators alike. They might be religious leaders, sports coaches, professionals, community leaders, community organisers, respected elders, or just wise and loved individuals. Such people should be approached to play a special school mentoring role. In times of conflict, they can be called on to help find solutions to, and resolution of, a difficult situation.

3.7.9 Spiritual reflection

Research about violent youngsters suggests that such individuals have few opportunities to consider themselves in the context of a larger moral world than that which they perceive around them. It takes a special effort to resist the superficial pressures and materialism facing young people.

There is growing evidence that schools that provide space for spiritual reflection decrease the rate of behavioural problems among learners. The provision of such space does not suggest bringing religious beliefs into the classroom. In explaining that spiritual space is different from „religion‟, Garbarino (1999) recommends that educational efforts should, preferably, "focus on teaching guided meditation, offer purely spiritual guidance that does not invoke specific religions and create activities that naturally evoke a reflective and reverent attitude toward life". He suggests that, in practice, doing so could mean starting each school day with a short time for meditation, together with the reading of an inspirational, life-affirming passage, in order to calm the mind and spirit of both learners and educators. It could, alternatively, mean time set aside at lunch time for meditation and some statement of appreciation being given for the food.

3.7.10 Peer counselling

One of the most powerful ways of resolving conflict is through peer counselling, mentoring and mediation. Many psychologists argue that harnessing the positive power of peer groups might be one of the most important resources at the educator‟s disposal. At the heart of peer counselling (or „co-counselling‟) lies the involvement of an equal partnership:

two peers counsel each other, with neither partner being regarded as having more „expertise" or „status" than the other (Ernst & Goodison, 1981).

3.7.11 Students as counsellors

A more intensive level of learner involvement in counselling is possible in some school contexts, particularly at a senior secondary level. In most schools, there is an extensive need for basic counselling to help learners cope with and make decisions about a wide range of social and interpersonal problems. Some schools carefully select mature and sensitive learners to train in basic counselling skills (Porteus *et al*., 2001:88).

3.7.12 Involving parent figures

Perhaps the most important challenge for schools in establishing an effective disciplinary process at school – or simply in building a school that is safe and secure for both educators and learners – is the meaningful involvement of parent figures in the process. Again, doing so can often be a complicated task.

The following ideas might be useful in the above regard:

- Parent involvement in a code of conduct: Call a parent conference and design a process to allow parents to express their ideas regarding the school"s code of conduct. When a code of conduct has been established, find a way of ensuring that all parents have read or discussed the code. Perhaps you could give homework relating to the code of conduct to the children and the parents to think about at home and compare their findings with the school"s code of conduct. Alternatively, perhaps you could send copies of the code of conduct home and have the parents sign that they have discussed it with their child. In addition, perhaps you could design a better way of „getting the word out" than the above, so that your school"s approach can be supported from home as much as possible.

- Parent workshops regarding discipline: Arguably, one of the biggest challenges to the effective use of alternatives to corporal punishment in South Africa is the prevalence of corporal punishment at home. The school has an important role to play in providing parents with different ideas and new ways of thinking about

discipline in the home. Organise a workshop at which parents can discuss ideas pertaining to discipline. Make the sessions at the workshop interactive and non-judgmental. If parents feel judged, they are unlikely to involve themselves in the school in a useful way.

- Ongoing communication with parents: Find different ways of facilitating ongoing communication between educators and parents. The SGB, the school management team (SMT) and other educators should come together to brainstorm the best way to facilitate communication in your context.

- Parent communication about their child(ren)'s problems: The involvement of parents is particularly important regarding learners who are experiencing problems at school relating to learning barriers, behavioural problems and so on. Obtaining parents' involvement is a sensitive matter, as they tend to feel vulnerable under such circumstances. At other times, the source of the child(ren)'s problem is at home. Educators must use their own judgement as to how to involve parents in a meaningful and helpful way. Communication with parents should not only focus on the child(ren)'s problem or transgression. There should be a safe space in which the parents can explain their understanding of the problem and be able to discuss any problems that they are experiencing at home that might be worsening the problem. The discussion should also emphasise joint problem-solving.

- SGB: The SGB can play an important role in communicating with, and involving, parents, particularly those with children who are experiencing problems as learners. The use of community mentors can also be helpful in this area of concern.

- Following up on truancy: Truancy is often a sign that something is going wrong in a child's life. There might, for example, be a problem at home, with learning, or at school. Use truancy as a sign for the need to contact the parents of learners who are absent for days of schooling (Porteus *et al.*, 2001:88).

3.7.13 Building a community-orientated school

In his call to action in July 1999, the Minister of Education emphasised the importance of making schools the centres of community life. One of the most important ways in which a

school can decrease the amount of violence perpetrated over time is to become more meaningfully „open" to, and orientated towards, the community surrounding the school. Facilitate discussions among learners, parents, community leaders, members of the SGB, educators, clinic nurses, social workers, early childhood development (ECD) practitioners, local business people, the unemployed, religious leaders, youth leaders, women"s groups and societies, on creative ways of making the school a more central place to a positive community life (Porteus *et al.*, 2001:89).

3.7.13.1   Participatory action research

One of the most powerful approaches to research is that of „participatory action research". The method is particularly important when there is a practical question besetting a school or community that can only be solved through action and reflection. Suggest to your school community that, as a school, you are going to try systematically to reflect and document your ideas on effective alternatives to corporal punishment. Suggest that, as a school community, you are going to try to develop new knowledge about possible effective alternatives to corporal punishment in South African schools. Establish regular times for learners and educators to reflect on their experiences and what they have learned while undergoing change. Document the lessons learned, both in terms of your mistakes and your victories. Share what you have learned among those at both the district and higher levels (Porteus *et al.*, 2001:89).

3.7.13.2   Building a learning organisation

One of the most exciting developments over the past 20 years has been the worldwide exploration of how organisations change and grow. Several authors have concluded that change and conflict are so diverse and prevalent in our society that there is no way in which we can try to „stabilise" or even easily „structuralise" organisations to avoid „rough waters". Rather, they conclude that, if we can develop a spirit of reflection and learning (rather than a spirit of obedience and control) without our organisations, we will be better equipped to approach new problems with open minds and in the spirit of cooperation required to cope with contemporary challenges (Porteus *et al.*, 2001:90).

3.7.13.3   Learners with barriers to learning

In South Africa, learners who experience barriers to learning have been included in mainstream education since 2001, according to the principles of inclusive education (Department of Education, 2001b) promotes equal participation through non-discrimination against all learners in the learning process, irrespective of their abilities, within a single, seamless education and training system and within a continuum of learning contexts and resources, according to need. A long-term goal of an inclusive education system is the recognition and addressing of barriers to learning, and the recognition and accommodation of a variety of learning needs (Department of Education, 2001a).

Diversity in the classroom is a feature of most schooling systems across the globe. Historically, monocultural education systems are rapidly changing as the result of immigration, sociopolitical change and demographic shifts caused by urbanisation. Educators worldwide require approaches and strategies to assist them in creating an educational environment that provides optimal learning conditions for all children (Wolhuter, Lemmer & De Wet, 2007:183).

In addition, there have been incidents of racial intolerance in some schools and proof of an assimilationist approach, in terms of which black learners are expected to adapt to the unchanged white, coloured or Indian culture that has dominated the schools involved (McKinney, 2005:4).

3.7.13.4   Social capital theories and parent involvement

Recently, attention has been given to the kind of social capital provided by the school. Hargreaves (2001:500) argues that some schools are richer in social capital than are others, depending, among other things, on the prevailing school culture and on the strength of networks formed between teachers and between teachers and other stakeholders. Expanding the discussion of the role of capital provided by the school and the home on learner performance even further, researchers have also examined the community or ecological effect on a family, that is, how a family is affected not only by its own capital but also by the area in which it lives. Sun (1998:432) found that poor families living in

poor areas suffer a double disadvantage: first, from being poor themselves, and second, from the poverty of their neighbours.

In the light of the school"s contribution that can be made in poor communities with limited capital, it is important how teachers regard learners from impoverished families and what attitudes they demonstrate towards such families (Liddell, Lycett & Rae, 1997:331).

Teachers tend to disregard the ability of parents to supervise their children and to support their school (Edwards, 2004:79). Teachers in rural communities, in particular, tend to hold stereotypical views of rural families and to blame them for their children"s problems (Hertzog & Pittman, 1995:118). However, the children concerned might come to school ready and eager to learn and with high hopes for success, only to encounter barriers to their success within the school environment itself (Vernon-Feagans, Head-Reaves & Kainz, 2004:430). Moreover, poverty-stricken parents tend to cherish high aspirations for their children"s achievement, yet frequently feel helpless and uneasy in their relationships with teachers and schools (Fuller & Tutwiler, 1996:260). Where schools resort to unproductive blaming and fail to involve the poor and uneducated families in the activities of the former, there is great loss in social capital for the parent, the child and the school as a whole.

3.7.13.5   Comprehensive parent involvement programmes

Henderson and Berla (1994) advise that successful parent programmes must include the following characteristics:

- Comprehensiveness. The programmes should reach all families, and not just those most easily engaged, and must involve parents in a variety of roles.
- Good planning. The programmes must have specific goals, and there must be clear communication regarding what is expected of all parties concerned.
- Endurance. The programmes must be long-lasting, as opposed to typical short-term projects.

3.7.13.6   Advantages for learners of parent involvement

Research underscores that children are more successful students at all grade levels if their parents participate in school activities and encourage education and learning at home, regardless of the parents‟ educational background or social class. Dixon (1992:19) makes the same observation: "Research on parent/family involvement leaves little room for debate: Students who are academically successful tend to receive consistent support from their parents and other adults in the home". Moreover, Becher (cited in Henderson, 1987:17) found that parent involvement programmes, particularly those that trained low-income parents to work with their children, are effective in improving children‟s language skills, their performance in tests, and their behaviour in school.

3.7.13.7   Advantages for parents of their involvement

When teachers make parent involvement part of their regular teaching practice, the parents concerned tend to increase their interaction with their children at home and to feel more positive about their own abilities to help their children than they might otherwise (Dauber & Epstein, 1993; Hamby, 1992). Parents also benefit by being alerted to different and more effective ways of creating or developing learning opportunities and by being made aware, through parenting programmes, of stimulating experiences that are available for their children (Wolfendale, 1992:9). However, most parents need help in learning how to become productively involved in their children‟s education at each grade level (Dauber & Epstein, 1993:290).

Davies (1993:206) lists many benefits for parents that they can gain from becoming involved in the education of their children, including developing a greater appreciation of their own important roles; strengthening social networks; accessing information and materials; and improving their personal efficacy and motivation to continue their own education.

3.7.13.8   Advantages for educators and schools of parental involvement

Increased parent and community involvement can also bring multiple benefits to educators and schools, including helping to make the educators‟ work more manageable, as a result

of the parents and others who participate in the study being likely to be more supportive of the schools concerned (Davies, 1993:206). The above view is shared by Epstein and Dauber (1993:289), who state that parents tend to rate teachers higher overall when they are involved with the school in some way. Moreover, teachers come to know and understand the parents better when the latter play an active role within the school environment (Hamby, 1992:59). Doing so obviously increases the teachers" understanding of the children in the context of their family and helps to provide information that might be of value in dealing with specific children.

3.7.13.9 Advantages for the community of parent involvement

Increased linkages between school and community have been shown to have multiple positive results: increased access to school resources and facilities; cost saving and improved services through collaboration; increased capacity to solve community problems; and enhanced community pride (Davies, 1993:206). An organised parent leadership group can also bring additional resources into the schools; pressure other governmental bodies to improve the schools" physical environment; and help to support extracurricular activities (Jackson & Cooper, 1992:33). The benefits resulting from such expansion of resources especially hold true if a sense of ownership is also instilled in the parents concerned.

3.8 SUMMARY

In this chapter I attempted to highlight the dominant discourses on discipline as gleaned from the literature. I started by discussing the context of discipline in South African schooling. This chapter poses the key question: what constitutes discipline? I then considered learning barriers and social challenges which have a bearing on discipline in schools. Because of the critical theoretical approach I started a discussion on the change from corporal punishment to alternatives, and I explored a range of ideas on discipline for the whole school from a personal level, classroom level, and building a learning organisation, etc.

CHAPTER FOUR
NARRATIVE CONSTRUCTIONS

4.1   INTRODUCTION

Instead of labelling the current chapter just „case studies‟, I opted to follow the choice of wording used by Brain Fay (1996) and Van Wyk (2004), calling it „narrative constructions‟. Narratives are constructed, rather than discovered. They are creations after the fact, with one assigning – from one‟s own perspective – particular roles, in specific stories, to the various events and relationships of persons‟ lives (Fay, 1996:190). Narrative constructions in the current study are, in essence, voices: the stories of people. Having obtained the narrative constructions from interviews with people, I conceptualise my interview accounts in terms of narrative. Somers and Gibson (cited in Lawler, 2002:243) call such conceptualisation "conceptual narrativity".

Lawler (2002:242) does not use the term „narrative‟ to indicate a „story‟ that simply „carries‟ a set of „facts‟. Rather, the researcher regards narratives as social products that are constructed by people within the context of specific social, historical and cultural locations. He suggests that narratives do not originate with the individual. Rather, they circulate culturally to provide a repertoire (though not an infinite one) from which people can produce their own stories. For Lawler, stories that circulate culturally provide a means of making sense of the world, and also provide the materials with which people construct personal narratives as a means of constructing personal identities. Lawler (2002:242) also argues that narratives – which he defines as accounts that contain transformation (change over time), some kind of „action‟ and characters, all of which are brought together within an overall „plot‟ – are a central means by which people connect past and present, as well as self and other.

Iris Marion Young (1996:131–132) further explores the connection between storytelling and the social world, making three observations about narratives. First, narrative reveals the particular experiences of those in social relations, which experiences cannot be shared by those situated differently, although they must obtain some understanding in order to do justice to others. Second, narrative reveals a source of values, culture, and meaning.

Narratives can serve to explain to outsiders what practices, places, or symbols mean to the people who uphold them. Third, narrative not only exhibits experiences and values from the point of view of the subjects that have and uphold them, but it also reveals a total corpus of social knowledge reflecting the point of view of the social person concerned.

I now consider whether „case studies" and „narratives" are the same. In the opening paragraph to the current chapter, I mentioned case studies, and then went on to explore some theoretical underpinnings of narratives. I think that narratives, or narrative constructions, can result from case studies. Van Wyk (2004) uses elements (interviews, triangulation, and interview questions) of the case study to obtain narrative constructions. Stake (2000:435) makes the point that a case study is not a methodological choice of what is to be studied. Using whatever methods we choose, we opt to study a certain case. We could study it analytically or holistically, entirely by repeated measures or hermeneutically, organically or culturally, or by mixed methods, but, no matter what method we use, we concentrate on the case. For purposes of the current study, the case is a school and the method that I use is the narrative. I concur with Stake (1995:39) that the uniqueness of individual cases is important to understanding. In looking at each case, I want to further my understanding of the phenomenon of educational transformation, and again I concur with Stake"s (1995:43) statement that phenomena are intricately related through many coincidental actions and that understanding them requires looking at a wide sweep of contexts: temporal and spatial; historical; political; economic; cultural; social; and personal. Below follows an explanation of an important element of an empirical study, namely the interview methodology.

4.2   INTERVIEW METHODOLOGY

Further to my discussion of the nature of interviews in Chapter Two, in the current section I wish to reiterate that interviews are one of the most important sources of case study information (Tellis, 1997:9). Yet, Fontana and Frey (2000:645) contend, asking questions and obtaining answers is a much harder task then might at first seem apparent. They observe that the spoken or written word always has a residue of ambiguity, no matter how carefully we word the questions and how carefully we report, or code, the answers. Despite such being the case, Fontana and Frey regard interviewing as one of the most common and powerful ways in which we try to understand our fellow human beings.

If interviewing is a powerful way of coming to understand our fellow human beings, then the relationship between the interviewer and interviewee can also be interpreted as a relationship of power. As Reynolds (2002:303) notes that, at a very basic level, power might be vested in the researcher, in terms of the design, implementation and the final reporting of the data. However, the research participant also exercises power, in terms of actively selecting the information that is made available to the researcher during the interview. According to Foucault (1994a:340), the exercise of power is not simply a relationship between „partners‟, „individuals‟ or the collective, but it is a way in which some act on others. He also states that power exists only as it is exercised by some on others, and only when it is put into action, which means that power is not a matter of consent.

In the current study, I decided to interview individuals from two high schools in Oudtshoorn, in the Western Cape region, so I opted for a face-to-face, verbal interchange. I selected and interviewed individuals from three categories: a principal; a member of the SMT; and a Post Level 1 teacher.

The two schools were selected because they are neighbouring schools to my school, and I decided against using my own school for ethical reasons. I thought that doing research at my own school might bring me so close to the research that it might impact on the findings of my study. The two schools chosen have experienced many disciplinary challenges since the abolishment of corporal punishment. However, my initial research has indicated that great progress has been made in finding alternatives to corporal punishment at the schools. I decided to conduct interviews with the principals concerned because they are the persons who take overall responsibility for maintaining discipline in their schools. Their input on discipline, and the application thereof in their respective schools, has proved invaluable for the current study. I ascertained that the principals are also the first at the school to be contacted by members of the community when there are disciplinary problems at their schools. However, the principals are not solely responsible for discipline, as members of the SMT are also involved with such issues, as they are required to hold regular meetings regarding discipline, disciplinary measures, and the management and enforcement thereof. I also selected to interview Post Level 1 educators, because, of the educators, they have the most frequent contact with the learners, and are, therefore, at the cutting edge of all disciplinary processes in schools. They are expected to implement the education policies

that articulate the disciplinary processes, and are responsible for identifying offenders and for calling them to order.

Appointments for conducting the interviews were made with the principals concerned, with the interviews being conducted after school hours in the offices of the principals of the respective schools. The interviews with the other educators were conducted as per appointment, in the privacy of their respective homes. The venues specified were chosen in order that the participants might feel more comfortable in their familiar surroundings, which were intended to enable them to participate in the interviews without any interruptions or fear of intimidation.

The questions that were posed during the interview were circulated to the participants in writing one day before the interviews took place. The procedure concerned was followed so that they could familiarise themselves with the questions and consider what their responses would be to the questions asked. Semi-structured interviews were conducted, and the participants were encouraged to give their honest opinion regarding such matters.

The interviews were recorded on tape, with the consent of the participants, and varied from twenty to thirty minutes in length. The time frame concerned was determined by the responses of the interviewees. In order to show respect for the schedules of the participants, interviews were conducted over a period of three weeks.

4.3   INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Importantly, the interviews were conducted in Afrikaans, as it is the language spoken by the communities in which my research was conducted. For academic purposes, the responses were translated into English, with the original Afrikaans versions being included as Appendix A. The following interview questions were asked:

1.   Explain in detail which disciplinary system your school practises in order to maintain good discipline, and why.

2.   What challenges do you face and what can be done to make your disciplinary system more efficient?

3.   To what extent is corporal punishment (verbal and physical) practised at your school?

4. Which alternatives to corporal punishment do you practise?

5. Which learning barriers do your learners experience, and how do you address them?

6. What social challenges does your school face, and what is your response to such challenges?

7. a) Who decides on the rules at your school?

b) How does your school respond to those who break the school rules?

8. Describe in detail the parental involvement with respect to discipline at your school.

9. How do you practise democratic discipline in your classroom, and in the rest of the school?

10. What is your view on discipline in South African schools?

4.4 NARRATIVE CONSTRUCTIONS AT TWO RURAL SCHOOLS

For the purpose of the current study, I chose to focus on two schools in the Oudtshoorn district. School A is a high school that is situated in the Oudtshoorn district, with 1 396 enrolled learners and a staff of 41 teachers. The school is categorised as Quintile 1, as learners at the school are mostly from a disadvantaged background. The school has good facilities, due to the effective school management and the fact that it is a „focus" school. The school"s matric results are constantly higher than 90% on average, and it often receives awards from the Western Cape Education Department (WCED) for excellence.

In contrast, School B is a rural high school that is also situated in the Oudtshoorn district. There are 910 learners enrolled at the school, which has a staff of 28 teachers. The school is categorised as Quintile 1, and the learners at the school are from a disadvantaged background. Few economic activities are undertaken in the district, with most parents being unemployed or working in the surrounding towns and cities. As a result, most of the learners at the school grow up under the care of their grandparents or relatives other than their parents. The existence of many dysfunctional families in the area leads to a multitude of social problems. More than 60% of the adults and children in the town receive social grants from the state. Nevertheless, the school"s facilities are fair, and the matric results are constantly higher than 70%, due to the dedication of the teachers involved.

4.5   ANALYSIS OF NARRATIVES

The following themes (corresponding to the interview questions) were identified by means of the data analysis:

1.   Disciplinary system

2.   Challenges

3.   Use of corporal punishment

4.   Alternatives to corporal punishment

5.   Learning barriers

6.   Responses to social challenges

7.   School rules

8.   Parental involvement

9.   Democratic discipline

10.   Views on discipline in schools

Each theme is discussed with reference to the interview responses. Where possible, I draw on the literature reviewed in my comment.

4.5.1 Disciplinary system

Both schools have a disciplinary system in place. School A uses a disciplinary code as a system of maintaining discipline. According to the disciplinary action plan, offences are categorised from less serious ones to ones that are regarded as exhibiting serious misconduct. The school has also adopted a code of conduct that is a consensus document that was drafted in collaboration with teachers, learners and parents. Disciplinary responsibilities are assigned to grade heads, and reliable records are kept documenting all cases. A disciplinary action plan is also in place to ensure that cases are dealt with procedurally. One way of meting out discipline is imposing detention after school.

At School B, a code of conduct is used as a starting point. Learners who violate rules are firstly addressed by subject teachers. If the offenders persist with committing violations, they are sent for detention on Fridays after school. The school also makes use of a system employing the heads of grades. One of the school's two deputies heads up the disciplinary committee. Matters that are dealt with unsuccessfully by the disciplinary committee are

referred to the principal, and then to the SGB. Educators should make full use of the procedures put in place to deal with transgressors of the code of conduct. Importantly, and in line with national policy, physical corporal punishment is not applied at the school. However, learners are sometimes verbally abused by teachers, who, on occasion, might use foul language against them when they become frustrated with them. In general, the class teachers maintain discipline, and grade heads are also in place for dealing with disciplinary matters, among other issues.

School B has adopted a system similar to that which is used by School A, in terms of which it uses a code of conduct as a starting point. When a learner transgresses one or two of the rules contained in the code of conduct, the said learner is sent to detention. If the transgressions persist, the parents are sent a warning letter. In general, discipline is maintained by class teachers, failing which the recalcitrant learner is sent to the grade head. If the problem persists, the learner is referred to the deputy principal, and finally to the principal. In such cases, the parents are called in an effort to find a solution to the problem. Detention classes are held on Fridays for learners who are late, and for those who do not submit their continuous assessment (CASS) tasks, among other misdemeanours.

4.5.2 Challenges

A major challenge at School A relates to the implementation of discipline. It is suggested that the system employed at the school could be made more effective if more emphasis were to be placed on the reinforcement of the positive behaviour of the learners. Also, there must be greater cooperation in respect of the disciplinary system by all stakeholders concerned, ranging from the class teacher to the SGB. The reprimanding of errant learners by the grade head tended to be neglected to a certain extent, due to the fact that the latter did not always have enough time to address all the learners concerned. In order to remedy the shortcomings that were perceived in the situation, it was recommended that a certain time slot should be allocated on the school timetable, at which time the grade head could meet with the class and subject teachers, in order to discuss learners with disciplinary problems and devise an action plan for the grade concerned. Another challenge lay in trying to attain greater cooperation in terms of the implementation of the system by all role-players involved. Achieving improved liaison between the subject teacher, the grade

head, the disciplinary committee, the office and the SGB, in cases where learners transgress, was shown to be desirable.

At School B, the SGB handles serious cases, with the emphasis being on trying to correct behaviour. The police and social services, among others, have been consulted on several occasions. The challenges encountered have included smoking and alcohol abuse. A major challenge relates to educators who fail to make full use of the set procedures, due to the large amount of red tape associated with following them.

4.5.3   Use of corporal punishment

In accordance with the education policy, both schools were found not to use corporal punishment (in the form of caning). However, it was admitted that teachers at School A use verbal punishment (sometimes on a daily basis) to control the learners. One participant was very critical of the use of verbal punishment, stating that it caused learners to feel ashamed and, as a result, they were scared to attend school. Such use was regarded as making the learners feel inferior, and the feeling was expressed that it affected them negatively.

The participants were emphatic that no corporal punishment was administered at School B. Instead, as has already been stated above, the learners were verbally reprimanded, with the educators sometimes swearing at the learners. The verbal abuse of learners by teachers often occurred out of frustration.

4.5.4   Alternatives to corporal punishment

Several alternatives (although limited) exist at the responding schools. At School A, detention classes are held on Fridays after school, and learners are assigned such tasks as having to pick up litter and clean toilets and changing rooms, among others. However, the learners are not keen to stay longer at school than usual. A disadvantage of detention is that, if a learner is repeatedly assigned such punishment, it tends to lose its effectiveness. Positive pressure can be enforced by boosting the image of learners who behave well and by emphasising that such is being done, which has led to an improvement in the school‟s results overall.

Detention on Friday afternoons seems to be the most popular alternative at School B. In severe cases, learners may be suspended for an entire week. Interestingly, parents have granted permission for learners to perform small tasks, like cleaning. However, being required to do chores is not very effective as a punishment, because learners like to be outside the confines of the classroom.

4.5.5 Learning barriers

Numeracy and reading skills are the biggest barriers to learning at both schools. To deal with such barriers, School A appointed a foundation phase teacher, who is paid by the SGB to minimise the above-mentioned barriers to learning. Reading problems are the main causes of learners" inability to study, which has been found to lead to disciplinary problems. The language teachers are required to identify learners who experience difficulty in reading, and certain teachers are assigned to work with the learners concerned. To this end, the school also has a special programme for learners whose reading skill is very poor. The learners involved are sometimes removed from certain other classes to attend special reading sessions. The lack of mathematical literacy skills also seems to be a major drawback, with the fact that every learner must now take either Mathematics or Mathematical Literacy being extremely problematic. A criticism in this regard has been that the system was implemented too expeditiously in schools.

School B has been found to experience an enormous learning barrier in terms of the lack of reading, literacy and numeracy skills. The school appointed a remedial teacher to help those learners who most notably experience difficulties with the above. The reading skills of learners must improve considerably for the school to experience much success in future.

4.5.6 Responses to social challenges

The learners at both schools under review come mainly from disadvantaged communities. The effects of adverse socio-economic conditions in the areas concerned have led to the development of serious social ills that have spilled over into the school. Challenges prevalent in the area are poverty; gangsterism; abuse of drugs, especially tik, and alcohol; and a high teenage pregnancy rate. Very little information is available in the area on the dangers of HIV/AIDS, which has led to a failure to discourage many children from

practising unprotected sex. In order to deal with spillovers, School A makes use of school psychologists, social services, FAMSA, peer educators, club coffee bars, and other services and facilities. Poverty is also widespread throughout the area, and many learners come to school hungry, which prevents them from concentrating on their schoolwork. A feeding scheme was, consequently, launched by the Department of Education to address the problem, whereby learners are supplied with food during breaktime. The scheme is a way in which the school reaches out to the community that it serves.

School B is situated in an area where most of the local residents are dependent on social grants, and most learners do not grow up within the normal nuclear family setting. As has already been stated, many of them live with a grandparent or with relatives other than their own parents. Partially as a result of the above, tik, dagga and alcohol abuse is common amongst the learners. Incidents of teenage pregnancy and domestic violence have also been found to occur. The school collaborates with the church, the local Community Police Forum and the Representative Council of Learners (RCL), in an effort to make a difference in the community. One of the social challenges that the school experience is the increase in the amount of violence spilling over into the school. Conflict situations amongst learners are on the increase.

4.5.7   School rules

At both schools, the rules are articulated in a code of conduct, in the drafting of which all role-players can participate. The code of conduct at School A is circulated to all parents of learners for comment every two years. The RCL, the educators and the SGB all have an opportunity to discuss the code and to make suitable recommendations. However, the final product consists of inputs emanating from staff contributions and does not really address the problems experienced by the parents, since their contribution to a revised code of conduct is minimal. All new parents receive a copy of the school"s code of conduct, with the hope that it can be made sustainable by making the parents aware of its implications. At the time of the current study, incidents of misconduct were handled mostly by the SGB.

Offences are ranked from less serious to serious in the code of conduct, with an example of the former being a learner wearing an earring to school and an example of the latter being a learner threatening to assault an educator. Different categories of transgression determine

the type of punishment involved. In the most severe cases, a learner can be suspended from school, but this has rarely happened, as has been the case with expulsion. Those who offend against the dictates of the code of conduct are dealt with in accordance with the disciplinary action plan of the school.

Educators at School B undergo a training process regarding progressive discipline, as contained in the Employment of Educators Act No. 76 of 1998. Learners who transgress against the code of conduct undergo the process set out in the school rules and sometimes appear in front of the SGB. In the case of serious transgressions, the SGB imposes a penalty, starting with a warning that can be followed by one week's suspension, and the learners can be subjected to a rehabilitation programme run jointly by the relevant social workers and the police.

4.5.8   Parental involvement

The schools in the current study are located in formerly disadvantaged areas. What stands out is the poor level of parental involvement. At School A, the RCL and prefects are actively involved in the application of discipline, and the parents are only asked to come to the school for an interview with the teachers concerned when their children are implicated in wrongdoing. A very frustrated participant summed up the situation as follows:

> Parents are not playing a role as far as discipline and involvement is concerned. Their response is limited to the occasions that their children transgress the school rules and the school expect them to see the principal before the child is allowed to attend classes, or they are expected to appear with their child in front of the SGB. Some parents simply refuse to take up their responsibility in this regard, resulting in a diminishing of parental involvement.

At School B, the parents tend to support the school in improving levels of discipline. Although the school recently established a Parent Teachers Association (PTA), it has proved very difficult to obtain the parents" involvement in the school.

4.5.9   Democratic discipline

The democratic discipline that is applied at School A varies from teacher to teacher. At the school, learners are allowed to voice their opinions and obtain a hearing, within certain limits, in class, as long as doing so occurs in an orderly fashion. However, proper planning

is essential to enable the educators to avoid chaos in the classroom. One particpant explained:

> I maintain a reasonably easy relationship in the classroom. There are times that you can laugh, and there are times that you cannot. There are times that we work, but there are, unfortunately, never times that we do not work. There are also times when learners can ask questions without the fear of a negative response from me.

At the above-mentioned school, educators have an action plan geared towards maintaining discipline in the classroom. If the educators were to enforce the action plan, the children would be kept busy, and the amount of discipline practised in the class would improve. In this regard, a participant cautioned that the degree of discipline would deteriorate if an educator were to ignore the committing of an offence by a learner. In contrast, discipline would improve at the school if all educators were to act as a team in enforcing the action plan and everyone were to do their best to maintain discipline.

A participant at School B stressed that one needs to listen to the problems that learners report experiencing, and that they should be encouraged to play an active role in class. It was also stated that the rights of learners should not be undermined.

4.5.10   Views on discipline in schools

In my interaction with many teachers, I encountered the perception that learners tend to be given too much freedom, which results in a lack of discipline. Unsurprisingly, a participant at School A echoed the sentiment, stating:

> Learners have too much freedom and cannot cope with the responsibilities associated with it. Discipline in schools will succeed if learners exercise self-discipline. Parents should become more involved in the discipline of their children.

The South African Constitution was blamed for introducing many evils that it cannot remedy at the current stage. Giving freedom to learners who lack the ability to handle it, due to their low level of experience and due to the deterioration of parental and school authority has proved to be an unwise move that is likely to impact on communities for a long time yet. The problem involved can only escalate if the freedom given to children cannot keep track with their ability to handle it. A participant remarked that the levels of discipline declined with the abolishment of corporal punishment, forcing teachers to find

alternatives, since, without the threat of such punishment hanging over them, certain learners simply refused to listen to the educators concerned. Lack of parental involvement was also cited as worsening the problem, and lack of respect in the home was seen to result, at least in part, from the poor behaviour of some parents, as well as their alcohol abuse, poor social conditions and illiteracy. Such a lack of respect manifests itself also at school.

Those learners who tend to give disciplinary problems might just need to be heard, as their misbehaviour might be a cry for help. Many boys seek attention, especially from female teachers, since motherly love is absent in their own homes, as a result of their parents not regularly communicating with them, due to work demands. Finally, the participants at School A concluded that the school is in a fortunate position, as it does not experience serious disciplinary problems. Approval of, and satisfaction with, the WCED‟s installation of security cameras and, in some cases, metal detectors was expressed.

In contrast, the participants at School B felt that the Department of Education should develop and implement a uniform policy regarding what discipline and punishment measures could be taken at school. Learner discipline required more emphasis than did the transgressions of educators. It was strongly felt that, if the school did not become involved in restoring discipline in the home, through involving the parents and the church in re-establishing order, the school would have ongoing serious disciplinary problems.

The picture, however, need not be daunting. If each structure, including the church, brigades, male choirs and women‟s associations, for example, could make a difference in its own way, each could boost the amount of discipline practised by the parents, so that they could discipline their children more effectively. Much progress would then be made regarding discipline in our schools and community.

4.6   SUMMARY

In accordance with the work of Fay (1996) and Van Wyk (2004) this chapter deals with „narrative constructions‟. Due to the philosophical nature of this study, narrative constructions provided me with an opportunity to analyse narratives of people philosophically. I also discussed the interview methodology employed for the study. I

constructed themes from the interview questions and analysed the narratives according to the themes.

CHAPTER FIVE
FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1   INTRODUCTION

My research question deals with the form of discipline used at two rural schools. The literature indicates that alternative forms of discipline exist to the canings that were inflicted in the past, which have now been outlawed. Furthermore, many educators believe that parents and learners have come to have too many rights, and learners have become less respectful and more disruptive because of the abolishment of corporal and physical punishment. The perceived lack of discipline among learners currently is seen as hampering effective teaching.

Effective alternatives to corporal punishment are not obvious. Before deciding on alternatives, it is advisable that teachers go through an experimental phase, and be prepared to make adjustments along the way. The literature also shows that classes with fewer behavioural problems have teachers who tend to use non-violent and child-centred approaches to classroom discipline. Studies show that the vast majority of disciplinary problems result from the circumstances in which such learners find themselves, which are characterised by problems at home, learning barriers, trauma, and ineffective teaching methods. I conclude that the application of corporal punishment aggravates such problems, rather than solving them. Present-day educators are required to fill a greater pastoral role than they did in the past, as learners nowadays tend to face many more difficult challenges than they used to do in the past and also are likely to experience less support outside the school. Most educational psychologists recommend that educators place learners, in cases of them suffering from emotional problems, child abuse, sexual abuse, HIV/AIDS, or alcohol and drug abuse, in an intensive process of counselling, with them being referred to experts in the fields of reference (Porteus *et al.*, 2001:45).

Attempts to improve classroom discipline, however, can be effective if the whole school community is involved. One of the ways in which the whole school community can become involved in attaining a better discipline system is through the adoption of a code of conduct that is arrived at by means of consultation, persuasion and agreement with all role-players concerned. The maintenance of such a code is, however, only likely to be

successful if it is strictly enforced and the appropriate sanctions are imposed against those who violate it.

5.2 FINDINGS

The findings of the current study emanate from two sources: the literature and the narrative constructions created. Because neither alternatives to corporal punishment nor in-depth training in possible alternative methods were provided to educators when such a form of punishment was outlawed, many have come to believe that there *are no effective alternatives*. They feel that corporal punishment is the only strategy for effectively maintaining discipline in the classroom. Admittedly, alternatives to corporal punishment are *not easy* to implement. Effective alternatives must be grown through a process of experimentation, group support and reflection (Porteus *et al.*, 2001:1).

In the context of South African schooling, we have come to understand the concept of „discipline" much more narrowly as meaning the same as „punishment", with the concept often including reference to forms of physical or psychological punishment, such as humiliation. The current study shows that forms of physical punishment and humiliating or degrading punishment are most likely to be associated with discipline. The present study also shows that it is prudent to understand the difference between punishment and discipline. Many mistakenly equate „punishment" with „discipline". Disciplined behaviour means ways of behaving that show respect and responsibility. Self-discipline means achieving disciplined behaviour through one"s own efforts, rather than through external monitoring or force. The use of punishment does not promote self-discipline, but only temporarily stops misbehaviour. The imposition of punishment might achieve a short-term goal, but also undermines the accomplishment of the long-term goal of self-control (Vally, 2005:3).

Since 1994, several laws have been passed outlawing the physical and psychological abuse of young people. The first case after 1994 involved the making of a decision regarding the constitutionality of whipping as a sentence that was imposed by the criminal courts. Constitutional Court Judge Pius Langa, before finding on the matter, reviewed international cases covering the issue. In 1995, he found that judicial whipping not only

violated the constitutional right to respect and personal dignity, but that it also violates international law. He said that corporal punishment:

> is a practice which debases everyone involved in it…so close to the 21st century, juvenile whipping is cruel, it is inhuman and it is degrading. No compelling interest has been proved which can justify the practice. Nor has it been shown to be a significantly effective deterrent. Its effect is likely to be coarsening and degrading rather than rehabilitative.
>
> (Vally, 2005:11)

Many schools have, since then, adopted a code of conduct. It has to be pointed out that a school code of conduct cannot be in opposition to, or in contradiction of, South Africa"s Constitution, which means that, for example, the code cannot unfairly discriminate on the basis of gender, colour or religion. At all times, any action that is performed by a school – whether towards learners, parents, or educators – must respect the constitutional principles of protecting the basic human rights to dignity, equality and freedom (Vally, 2005:18).

I propose, in the current study, that educators must rethink the issue of discipline on three levels, namely in terms of the personal level, behaviour modification, and democratic discipline. Firstly, changing our approach toward discipline in our classrooms is most importantly rooted in our own personal conviction of the need to make a change. Considering one"s relationship with one"s profession is important for the building of respect and discipline in one"s classroom. Building positive respect in one"s classroom largely depends on the level of one"s commitment to being a teacher.

Some educators who pride themselves on having moved away from the use of corporal punishment have replaced such punishment with methods of humiliation, sarcasm and neglect. The adoption of the latter strategies, which are based on the removal of the self-respect of learners, are not an effective alternative to corporal punishment. For very similar reasons to those outlined above, humiliation is not an effective long-term strategy for classroom discipline. A recently completed study on out-of-age learners and out-of-school children provides strong evidence to suggest that learners can lose their confidence in their own learning process as a result of being subjected to humiliation and shame by others, including educators (Porteus *et al*., 1998). Garbarino (1999) cautions adults to be particularly careful not to adopt strategies of neglect or avoidance of young children with

chronic behaviour problems. Avoidance and neglect is likely to make such children „act up‟ more, not less.

Secondly, behaviour modification should be undertaken at classroom level. The school of thought involved is based on the premise that we learn best when our behaviour is reinforced, often by reward or recognition. The approach is based on the common-sense ideas that emerge when we thoughtfully observe behaviour and the motivations underlying behaviour. Behaviour modification can be accomplished through abiding by the following principles:

- The upholding of clear and consistent rules. Children like rules, because they provide them with a sense of structure, as long as the rules concerned are clear and can be seen to make sense.

- The positive reinforcement of constructive behaviour. There are two important ways in which positive reinforcement is used. First, children who behave in positive ways are positively reinforced or recognised, with such reinforcement and recognition encouraging to repeat the constructive behaviour concerned. Second, bad behaviour is prevented.

- The application of consistent consequences: Once expectations are clear, it is very important for there to be clear *consequences* for misbehaviour, with the consistent application of such. Consequences should be designed to teach learners that their behaviour, in a certain instance, was wrong and that the choice they made was not a good choice. Consequences should NEVER make learners feel that they are bad as a person.

- The modelling of good behaviour: The final cornerstone, yet one that is extremely important, consists of the necessity for educators to model good behaviour. Educators who are effective at working with learners tend themselves to exemplify good behaviour and caring values. The importance of modelling good behaviour is rooted in the simple fact that children learn from the role models around them. If adults model violence, children are more likely to do so too. If educators model frustration and intolerance, children are more likely to express themselves with frustration and intolerance. If educators model compassion, patience, values, and a light touch, children are more likely to model such behaviours (Porteus *et al*., 2001:29–38).

The third way of rethinking discipline is by putting a special emphasis on the importance of participation and involvement in the thinking and decision-making processes that take place within a classroom. The school of thought concerned emphasises the importance of self-discipline (and the development of shared responsibility) that emerges from meaningful participation in decision-making processes by youngsters. The adoption of a democratic approach to classroom discipline emphasises the need to share responsibility in the thinking and decision-making about, and the implementation of, classroom discipline. Democratic discipline in a classroom puts a special emphasis on the process by which rules are made. Educators facilitate a participative process with learners and parents to establish the „rules of the game‟ and the consequences for good and bad behaviour. Educators who effectively practise such a democratic approach to classroom discipline tend to develop more peaceful classrooms over time.

There are several resources for helping educators to establish a more democratic approach toward discipline. The steps that are commonly suggested for drawing up a code of conduct include the following: Step One: facilitate learner reflection; Step Two: facilitate the creation of a classroom code of conduct; Step Three: ensure consistency in the school process; Step Four: involve other family members in the process; and Step Five: Revisit the process. The adoption of such steps and ideas helps in finding ways of establishing a more democratic approach to discipline in the classroom. It is important to note that democratic discipline must be located more broadly within a democratic classroom approach (Porteus *et al*., 2001:63).

5.3   RECOMMENDATIONS

My recommendations, in the light of my research question, are the following:
- Learners should be more involved in the maintenance of good discipline in high schools and must be fully involved in setting school rules. Too many schools involve only the RCL in the compilation of the school rules. If the learners were to be involved at grassroots level with compiling school rules, they could identify themselves with those rules, because they would be aware that they had played a role in their construction, and they would be able to take at least partial ownership in them. Currently, many schools' disciplinary committees still consist only of educators and parents. The composition of such committees

should be transformed to include representation of the learners who usually form the majority of the school population. Emphasis should also be placed on reinforcing the positive behaviour of learners. More internal motivation and internal discipline, which can lead to a reduction in the number of disciplinary problems experienced, should be encouraged. Learners should be encouraged to volunteer to perform community service, which could lead to the development of a sense of respect and the desire to care for others.

Educators' attitudes regarding the enforcement of discipline must change in order to bring about improvements in the system of schooling, with educators realising that corporal punishment may no longer be applied in South African schools. Educators should always be sensitive to the underlying causes that might be giving rise to a learner's unacceptable behaviour. Educators can also treat such learners with a greater sense of compassion, attempting to understand them better than they have before, in order to win their trust and to encourage the development of positive behaviour exhibited in the spirit of ubuntu. Teachers should attend school regularly and punctually, so that they can work optimally in class.

- The disciplinary systems in schools should be revisited and improved. Many schools have excellent school rules in writing, but when it comes to the applying of the rules, major shortcomings can be discerned. The grade head system is a good one, and schools should do everything within their power to cover up any loopholes. Recordkeeping should also be simplified and administrative red tape should be eliminated. Educators need to apply the disciplinary system uniformly and to relate it consistently to all learners. Schools should continue to network with other schools both nationally and worldwide, in order to refine their disciplinary systems. The National Education Department can help educators who are frustrated by the present system to establish a uniform sanction (punishment) policy as a guideline for improving learners' behaviour.

- Schools must do everything in their power to improve parent participation in schools. It is in the schools' interest to ensure that parents become involved in

this way. Closer contact between teachers and parents can lead to the learners concerned taking care to attempt not to break school rules. Parents can add great value to a school if they feel that they are involved in their child(ren)'s learning process. Schools must, therefore, find innovative ways of encouraging parent involvement.

5.4   LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The narrative constructions posed several challenges. First, I had to interview the participants in the language in which they were most comfortable (which, in the current case, was Afrikaans). Then I had to translate the narratives into English for my research report. Finally, it was difficult to formalise appointments with participants, as they were not available at the times that I preferred. The narrative constructions were, however, extremely useful, as they provided in-depth knowledge of how discipline was being maintained at the sites of research.

5.5   NARRATIVE REFLECTION ON MY STUDY

In the final chapter, I reflect on my interest in the specific field of research covered. I also supply reasons why the particular research method and methodology chosen were used. In addition, I emphasise the gaps and challenges that characterised my studies, and discuss possibilities for further investigation in the chosen field.

The current study was very demanding on me, as I could not foresee how much time and effort would be needed to complete the study. As a consequence, I struggled initially with the conceptualisation of the study, and it took several months of immersing myself in the relevant philosophical debates before I made real progress with conceptualising the field of study. Once I had read up substantially on the philosophy of education, I was able to decide on the research methods and methodology to be used in the study.

Another limitation of the study was that it was found very challenging to make the conceptual link between the coursework and the thesis component. I felt either that the coursework did not adequately prepare me for writing the thesis, or perhaps I failed to

develop a sufficient understanding of the coursework before I proceeded to the thesis component.

The main reason for my interest in alternatives to corporal punishment in schools is my having, as a teacher, experienced that teachers (educators) are struggling to apply discipline effectively in schools, due to the abolishment of corporal punishment in South African schools. I have experienced that learners at high schools have a precise idea of what is defined as right and wrong in schools, but have difficulty in applying such knowledge in regard to their own behaviour. Learners eagerly claim their democratic rights and make much mention of them, but when it comes to them fulfilling their responsibilities and obligations as disciplined members of civil society, they tend to fall short. It became clear to me, in the course of the study, that the majority of learners at schools accept discipline and are disciplined. However, a small percentage of learners appear not to want to accept authority and, consequently, intentionally or otherwise, tend to have a disruptive effect on the rest of the school population. In my research, it became clear that such learners tend to experience the trauma of having to live under adverse socio-economic conditions and should, therefore, be treated with compassion. In my chapters on the literature review (Chapter Three), research at schools (Chapter Four), and results of investigation (Chapter Five), I proposed strategies for how to transform the behaviour of learners who tend to disrupt classes into desired behaviour.

The majority of educators currently practising in South Africa started teaching prior to 1996, so have emerged from a culture in which corporal punishment was practised. The abolition of corporal punishment by the Schools Act No. 108 of 1996, consequently, presented them with a major challenge. As a result, thousands of educators left the profession, because they found themselves unable to accept the new challenge. Those who remained in the education system had to work out new strategies as an alternative to corporal punishment. The strategies employed had constantly to be adapted to keep pace with the changing challenges of discipline. Consequently, no series of constants exist as satisfactory alternatives to the administration of corporal punishment in South African schools. In the current study, I, therefore, investigated which, and to what extent, alternative systems to the administration of corporal punishment are available for use, and are being used, in schools, so that the learners involved can come to play their rightful place in society as a result of them having experienced ongoing, effective discipline in

school. As, at least in part, a result of my studies, I would like to see staff at schools continuously striving to work together continuously in their quest for the most suitable alternative to corporal punishment, in order to improve the discipline practised at schools.

5.6 RESEARCH APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

The research method that I used in the current study, and which I considered to be the most appropriate for conducting my research, is conceptual analysis. I used the specified method because it is inextricably linked to the social life of a group and because it was a necessary prerequisite for the asking of other related philosophical questions. The analysis of a concept also enables seeing how a concept is connected with other concepts, as well as how the social life is dominated by a network of mutually held beliefs (Hirst & Peters, 1998:33, 36).

Conceptual analysis is an analytical and theoretical tool that is used in the Philosophy of Education, in terms of which concepts are understood in relation to other concepts (Van Wyk, 2004:29). I have, therefore, used the method to research, and to attempt to gain a better understanding of, the concept of „discipline‟. In my research, I found that discipline is a very complex concept, and the interviews conducted for the present study show that schools are struggling to put workable forms of discipline in place.

According to Kotze (2004:14), the third dimension of Habermas's critical theory involves the organisation of action, which suggests that the communicative interaction between learner and teacher should lead to the systematic embodying of new knowledge in the process of change. Such theory has practical applications involving the taking of appropriate action. In my research, I found that the vast majority of teachers failed to implement communicative interaction effectively. In other words, not enough time was allowed for the teachers and learners to talk through disciplinary issues in an open and sincere manner.

The perspectives on discipline found in the relevant literature have been highlighted, and critically dealt with, as being important alternatives to corporal punishment in schools, so that educators might become conscious of the benefits, as well as of the disadvantages, of the alternatives concerned, and can respond correspondingly.

I used qualitative research because it is based on social circumstantial evidence and its consequences. The sociological eye focuses on the interplay between structure and action. The emphasis of this methodology is how people are part of a larger social and cultural context, and the actively help shape the world which the individual form part of (Gerson & Horowitz, 2002:203). Qualitative research thus involves direct interference with the world, whether in the form of the daily conduct of life or interactions with a selected group. The qualitative approach gives particular attention to dynamic processes, and it strives to create new concepts to explore and develop (Gerson & Horowitz, 2002:199). I deem it important that the learners in this study, develop a sense to become part of a broader social and cultural context and that their positive participation in society of which they share is a contributing role for an acceptable community to help shape what so many strive for Marthinus (2005:74).

5.7   CONCLUSION

Corporal punishment has been practised in South Africa for centuries. The history of slavery, colonialism and apartheid is also the history of the whip, the lash and the sjambok. During the apartheid years, corporal punishment was used widely in classrooms. The statistics show that every year, until 1994, an average of 40,000 young people was whipped in our country. During this period alternative forms of discipline were rarely explored or there were not enough attention paid to such.

The advent of democracy in South Africa was heralded by greater introspection, and corporal punishment was abolished. However, this resulted in a growing perception that learners became more ill-disciplined and teachers being disempowered. Some educators who pride themselves on moving away from „corporal punishment" have replaced corporal punishment with methods of humiliation, sarcasm and neglect. To my mind these strategies, which are based on humiliation and the removal of self-respect, are not an effective alternative to corporal punishment.

Critical Theory helps us to look at education differently. As a result I find that that is a gap in the literature. I will first discuss my findings from the literature and then I will explore possible gaps. To move away from corporal punishment, it is important that educators start from a personal level. Educators must realise that it is difficult to move away from corporal

punishment. Porteus *et al.* (2001:45) mention that research on human learning and change shows us that change causes stress. To replace Corporal Punishment with methods of humiliation, sarcasm and neglect, are not an effective alternative to Corporal Punishment. Research has shown that these strategies will make these children „act up" more, not less.

It is important for teachers to establish clear rules in classrooms which are directly linked to behaviour and maintaining high academic excellence. Teachers must make use of positive reinforcement in order to encourage good behaviour. Teachers should be good adult role modelling – models especially in the area where I, the author, done my case study.

The literature indicates that learners should be involved in the thinking and decision-making within classrooms. Such an approach could lead to greater self-discipline because learners take ownership of those rules. Parents should also be involved in the drafting of the code of conduct because it will ensure that parents will understand the rules and expectations for their children.

There are many ideas how to change schools so they can have a better environment, and can be as an alternative to corporal punishment. The staff can establish a support group consisting of teachers, administrative staff and workers where disciplinary matters can be discussed. Schools must increase their support networks. The school must have a master plan how to effectively communicate with parents and their best way to get them involved in school activities.

The learners are easily influenced by the group in which it is. The group provides the security and acceptance to the learner which is in direct conflict with those values that the schools are transferred. There exists a limited basis for learners to act morally at their homes.

Schools place great emphasis on the punishment of offenders rather than to encourage meaningful self-discipline. The disciple system does not work at all schools effectively due to the fact that heads of departments and teachers are overloaded with administrative duties and teaching. Interviews show that parents must become more involved in discipline at school because it will have positive effects for the school. The monitoring, follow-up and

remediation of learners' behaviour is not effective enough. The discipline system is not effectively implemented by all teachers. The detention system at schools shows many shortcomings. Numeracy and reading skills as barriers to learning, provide many challenges to schools due to overcrowded classes, the large workload of teachers and lack of respect between children and adults together.

I want to explain some challenges in terms of interviews discussed. Firstly I do not see the position of the researcher as neutral. May (2002:2) states:

> Particular ideas of neutrality, such as the maintenance of objectivity through positioning the researcher as nothing but a passive instrument of data collection, are now exposed as falsehoods that seek the mask the realities of the research process. The knower (as researcher) is now implicated in the construction of the known (the dynamics and content of society and social relations).

Secondly, I accept there is a power relationship between the researcher and the people who conduct the interviews. Reynolds (2002:303) states it thus: "Power relations exist between the researcher and the research participant are in constant state of flux because each of them moves to occupy a position of power and authority during the interview. At a very basic level, power may be vested with the researcher in terms of the design, implementation and the final reporting. However, the researcher participant also exercises power in terms of actively selecting the information they will make available to the researcher during the interview."

The two aspects, as discussed, could have an influence on the data made available, but it did not prevent interviews from taking place. Thus, I can come to the conclusion that my research question was adequately explored. The reason is the existence of barriers, as already mentioned, that strain the effective application of discipline in secondary schools. From my situation analysis, it was clear that the vast majority of the educators, in spite of the obstacles, look to alternatives for corporal punishment as a priority in an attempt to send a morally responsible learner into the community.

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ADDENDUM

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Verduidelik breedvoerig watter dissiplinêre stelsel gebruik u skool om goeie dissipline te handhaaf, en hoekom.

2. Watter uitdagings t.o.v. die stelsel moet u skool nog aansluit en wat dink u kan gedoen word om die stelsel effektiewer te maak?

3. In watter mate word lyfstraf (verbaal en fisies) by u skool toegepas?

4. Watter alternatiewe pas u skool toe in die plek van lyfstraf?

5. Watter leerhindernisse ervaar leerders aan u skool en hoe spreek u dit aan?

6. Watter sosiale uitdagings staar u skool in die gesig en hoe reageer u skool daarop?

7. a) Wie is betrokke by die opstel van die skoolreëls?

    b) Hoe tree u skool op teen diegene wat die skoolreëls verbreek?

8. Beskryf volledig ouerbetrokkenheid m.b.t. dissipline aan u skool.

9. Hoe pas u demokratiese dissipline in u klaskamer toe en hoe word dit in die res van u skool toegepas?

10. Wat is u siening van dissipline in Suid-Afrikaanse skole?

RESPONSES RECEIVED
SCHOOL A

VRAAG 1.   Verduidelik breedvoerig watter dissiplinêre stelsel gebruik u skool om goeie dissipline te handhaaf, en hoekom.

Participant 1

Skool gebruik "n gedragskode wat "n konsensusdokument is omdat ouers, opvoeders en leerders geraadpleeg is en deur al drie komponente aanvaar is. Skool maak gebruik van graadhoofstelsel waarvolgens elke graad "n graadhoof het wat verantwoordeliik is vir dissipline in daardie betrokke graad. Die gedagte is om "n meer „hands-on approach" te hê, sodat sake vinniger afgehandel kan word. Baie word staatgemaak op rekordhouding van klasonderwysers en vakonderwysers ten einde dokumentasie en bewyse te hê in probleemgevalle.

Participant 2

Gedragskode wat aan die nuwe leerders en ouers gegee word op "n ope aand. Aan die begin van die jaar verduidelik die klasonderwysers van die nuwe leerders wat hierdie gedragskode behels. Die skool het ook "n dissiplinêre aksieplan in plek om die opvoeders te help om dissipline in hul klasse te handhaaf. Geen skool kan funksioneer sonder dissipline nie, en dit is dus belangrik dat die skool hierdie dissiplinêre stappe in plek het, anders sal chaos heers by die skool.

Participant 3

Oortredings word ingedeel in kategorieë wat wissel van minder ernstig tot uiters ernstige wangedrag. Die straf verskil na gelang van die graad van oortreding. Detensie word na skool gehou. Detensie laat mens voel dat dit meer die opvoeder is wat gestraf word, omdat die tyd wat die opvoeder aan administratiewe take kon spandeer, moet hy stout kindertjies besig hou, terwyl die oortreders besig is om agterstallige werk op datum te kry. Ouers word per brief versoek om die skool te besoek, sodat die ouers, reeds vanaf die tweede oortreding, bewus is van die probleme wat die leerder gee en dat hulle saam met die opvoeder "n oplossing kan vind om die dissiplinêre probleme aan te spreek.

VRAAG 2. *Watter uitdagings t.o.v. die stelsel moet u skool nog aansluit en wat dink u kan gedoen word om die stelsel effektief te maak?*

Participant 1

"n Stelsel is net so goed soos hoe dit toegepas word. Ongelukkig is die kantoor en die prosedure wat voorgestel word dat die opvoeders "n sekere werkswyse moet volg werk nie altyd in die prakrtyk soos voorgestel nie, omdat die kantoor baie keer as die eerste verdedigingslinie moet dien, wat nie goed is vir die leerkrag nie, want hulle sukkel daarna om die klas te beheer, as hulle voortdurend die klas "n aanduiding gee dat hy hulle nie kan hanteer nie. Die stelsel kan meer effektief gemaak word indien die stelsel gevolg word wat in die gedragskode saamgevat is. Die stelslel kan ook meer effektief gemaak word indien mens meer daarop fokus om positiewe gedrag by leerders te versterk en nie soseer die gedragskode te gebruik as "n manier om die kinders ekstern te dissiplineer nie. Meer interne motivering en meer interne discipline sal die dissiplinêre probleme in "n mate beperk.

Participant 2

Die leeders se oortredings word opgeteken in "n oortredingsboek, en dan moet die graadhoofde dit op "n gereelde basis intrek, en dan word hierdie leerders eerstens aangespreek. Die tweede stap is dat, indien leerders weer oortree, gaan daar "n brief na die

ouers en, indien hulle [d.w.s. die leerders] weer oortree, word hulle [d.w.s. die leerders] voor die beheerliggaam gedaag. In die stelsel word die aanspreek van leerders deur die graadhoof nog ietwat vernalatig. Die rede hiervoor is dat die graadhoof nie voldoende tyd het om al die leerders aan te spreek nie. Om dit reg te stel, moet daar in die skool se jaarprogram spesifieke tye uiteengesit word wanneer die graadhoof met die vak- en klasonderwysers bymekaar kom, en daar word dan ooreengekom of bespreek watter leerders dissiplinêre probleme gee, en dan word daar ʼn aksieplan vir die graad uitgewerk.

Participant 3

Groter samewerking t.o.v. die implementering van die stelsel deur alle rolspelers. Beter skakeling tussen vakopvoeder, graadhoof, dissiplinêre komitee, die kantoor en SBL in gevalle waar leerders reëls oortree.

VRAAG 3.   In watter mate word lyfstraf (verbaal en fisies) by u skool toegepas?

Participant 1

Fisiese lyfstraf is nie "n opsie nie en, volgens my, nie iets wat binne die klasse plaasvind nie. Verbale lyfstraf is "n manier om kinders tot orde te roep en somtyds wonder mens of die skade wat op die manier aangerig word nie erger is as fisiese lyfstraf nie. Dat lyfstraf nog nou "n verskil sal maak word betwyfel. Ek dink ons is verby daardie punt.

Participant 2

Geen fisiese lyfstraf word by skool toegepas nie.

Participant 3

Verbale lyfstraf veroorsaak dat leerders skaam en bang is om skool toe te kom. Hulle voel minderwaardig en hulle hele menswees word daardeur negatief geraak. Verbale lyfstraf vind daagliks by ons skool plaas.

VRAAG 4.   Watter alternatiewe pas u skool toe in die plek van lyfstraf?

Participant 1

Iets wat baie goed werk is dat leerders nie baie inskiklik is om langer in die middag by die skool wil wees as wat hulle veronderstel is om te bly. Voorbeeld een Maandag het ek (prinsipaal) gedreig om die ongeveer 200 leerders te laat detensie sit. Teen einde van die week was die aantal laatkommers enkelsyfers. Nadeel van detensie – indien dit nie volgehou word nie, sal dit platval. Die versterking en beklemtoning van die leerders wat hulle wel goed gedra is as iets wat jy in "n positiewe druk kan omskep en dit het gelei tot die verbetering van die skool se uitslae.

Participant 2

Detensieklasse word Vrydae na skool gehou. Optel van papiere. Skoonmaak van toilette, kleedkamers, ens.

Participant 3

Detensie. Leerders wat die middagklasse moet bywoon en dit wil vir my voorkom asof dit al is wat "n mens in daardie opsig kan doen. Die vraag is wie straf jy tydens detensie, want die opvoeder moet sy tyd gebruik om na daardie leerder te kyk. Fisiese arbeid is in die verlede gebruik waar leeders gevra is om die papiere op die werf op te tel, klaskamers skoon te maak, saal uit te vee, maar dit is gestaak, want ons het in die verlede probleme daarmee gekry by die Onderwysdepartement. Alternatiewe is daar weinig sprake van behalwe detensie, klasse te belet en die leerders te vra om in die middae daardie klasse by te woon, omdat hulle steurnis is gedurende die normale skooldag.

VRAAG 5.   Watter leerhindernisse ervaar leerders aan u skool en hoe spreek u dit aan?

Participant 1

Syfervaardigheid en leesvaardigheid is die grootste leerhindernisse. Skool het uit eie fondse "n grondslagfase juffrou aangstel met die doel om leerders wat groot agterstande in hulle leesvaardighede het ten minste waarde toe te voeg in die jaar wat hulle by die skool is. Die agterstande tussen dit wat die kind weet en moet weet is ongelukkig so groot en die getal kinders wat met die probleme sit is so baie dat die enkelinge wat jy aanspreek op die stadium al barometer is van die sukses wat jy op die manier kan behaal. Kinders met aandagafleibare sindroom wat net nie lank genoeg kan aandag gee nie [en] kinders wat nie suksesse binne die klasse behaal nie en dus maklik afwesig bly of klasse ontwrig as gevolg van hulle onvermoë om te verstaan wat in klasse aangaan is van die tipiese probleme wat die skool ervaar.

Participant 2

Leesprobleme veroorsaak dat leerders nie goed kan leer nie en dit gee aanleiding tot dissiplinêre probleme. Die taalonderwysers identifiseer die leerders wat "n problem het met lees en sekere opvoeders werk met hierdie leerders wat leesprobleme ondervind.

Participant 3

Lees is die skool se grootste problem. Dit is "n universele problem in Suid-Afrika. Die skool het "n leesprogram waar leerders elke Dinsdag en Donderdag na hulle klasonderwysers gaan. Die skool het ook spesiale klasse vir die leerders wat baie swak lees en hulle word in sommige gevalle uit die klasse onttrek om die spesiale leessessies by te woon, want dit baat nie jy sit in "n klas en jy weet nie waaroor dit gaan nie, dan kan jy maar die hele dag in "n læsklas sit, waar jy ten minste vir jouself kan lees.

Tweedens blyk dit of die Wiskunde Geletterdheid "n groot problem te wees. Die feit dat elke leerder nou Wiskunde of Wiskunde Geletterdheid moet neem is "n groot tamelletjie. Dit is "n goeie ding aan die een kant. Die stelsel het te gou op skole afgekom. Die leerders is nie goed voorberei en selfs van die opvoeders is nie goed genoeg gevat om dit te hanteer nie. "n Mens kan sien hoe die leerders sukkel met die interpretasie van veral die vraestelle. Dit is weer waar die leesprobleem inkom. Leerders lees en lees, maar verstaan nie eintlik waaroor dit gaan nie.

VRAAG 6.   Watter sosiale uitdagings staar u skool in die gesig en hoe reageer u skool daarop?

Participant 1

Die skool is geleë in "n gebied waar leerders nie baie goed vaar in die skool nie, waar hoë werkloosheid voorkom, derhalwe sit die skool met leerders wat betrokke is by bendebedrywigheid; leerders wat hulle skuldig maak aan dwelmmisbruik, in besonder tik; leerders wat sterke drank gebruik; [en] hoë getalle tienerswangerskappe, soveel as twintig per kwartaal. Laasgenoemde is "n aanduiding dat daar geen klem gelê word op die gevare van VIGS nie, ens. en onbeskermde seks aan die orde van die dag is. Pogings word aangewend om rehabilitasieprogramme aan die gang te kry, bv NICRO, wat betrokke is by misdaad; "n groep jongmense is besig met "n uitreikingsprogram; maatskaplike dienste. Leerders wat bereid was om oop karate te speel t.o.v. hul afhanklikheid van dwelms is deur onderwysers onder die hande geneem en naweke uitgeneem om hulle omgewing te manipuleer, en daar is later bevind dat hulle lidmaatskap aan die program gebruik is as "n skuilbos, terwyl hulle nog steeds aangegaan het met hulle dwelmgebruik. Ouerbetrokkenheid versleg jaarliks, veral nadat die skool nou "n geen skoolfonds skool is, en dit lyk asof die ouers se afstand van die skool nog verder toegeneem het. Die skool maak gebruik van die skoolsielkundiges, skoolmaatskaplike dienste, [en] FAMSA. Die skool het "n diensverskaffer vir 2009 aangestel om die dwelmprobleem verder vas te vat en voorsien dat van die leerders vir "n tydperk aan die skool onttrek sal moet word om vir rehabilitasie te gaan. Die beheptheid met satanisme is op die stadium kommerwekkend en dit kan veral in die toilette waargeneem word dat daar leerders is wat "n alternatiewe belangstellingsveld toon.

Participant 2

Armoede in die gemeenskap is een van die grootste probleme. Leerders kom honger skool toe en "n honger kind sukkel om te konsentreer. "n Voedingskema van die Department van Onderwys is geloods om hierdie problem aan te spreek, deurdat hulle voedsel gedurende pouse kry, en op hierdie manier reik die skool uit na die gemeenskap. Maatskaplike probleme word ervaar soos bv. kinders wat by hul oupas en oumas groot word, ma en pa is afwesig, enkelouers, en dies meer. Van hierdie leerders gee probleme. Die skool is in noue kontak met die maatskaplike dienste. Baie kinders kom uit ongelukkige ouerhuise en by die skool openbaar hulle aggresiewe gedrag. Baie opvoeders besef nie met watter sosiale en maatskaplike probleme kinders by die huis worstel nie. Die skool dien dan as "n uitlaatklep, waar die leerders deur hulle aggressiewe gedrag aan opvoeders wil tuisbring

dat hulle hulp nodig het. Die opvoeders moet dus daar wees om daardie hulpkreet raak te sien en iets daaromtrent doen. Skoolsielkundiges se hulp word ook ingeroep vir leerders wat erge aggresiewe gdrag openbaar om sessies met hulle te hê. Daar word na "n tyd deur opvoeders bemerk dat dit werk, omdat leerders iemand het met wie hulle vertroulik kan gesels. Baie leerders wat so aggressief is het onttrekkingsimptome. Tik is "n groot problem op die skool. "n Nuwe ding wat sy kop uitsteek is dat leerders Rastas is, maar nie die geloof ken nie en die meeste van hulle behoort myns insiens tot "n groep waar hulle aanvaar kan word om dinge wat verkeerd is te doen. Die skool dra kennis van leerders wat seksueel gemolesteer word. Daar is op die skool opvoeders wat „pastoral care" kursusse geloop het en hulle word aan elke graad toegeken en leerders en opvoeders bou "n vertrouensposisie sodat leerders deurlopend na die opvoeders kan gaan vir hulp en ondersteuning. Die skool het "n beleid oor HIV wat geskoei is op die Department [van Onderwys] se beleid in die verband en hoe die skool die gevalle moet hanteer. Alle leerareas op die skool raak MIV/Vigs aan. FAS (Fatale Alkoholsindroom) gevalle kom voor by die skool. Opvoeders kom baie kere agter dat die leerders is soms heeltemal afwesig in jou klas. Dit lei tot leerprobleme , want leerders kan nie goed konsentreer nie en is nie opgewasse vir die hoofstroom onderwysstelsel nie. Die gemeenskap se probleme word dus oorgedra na die skool. Die skool is betrokke by die Club Coffee Bar se „peer educator"s"program en op die manier word leerders bemagtig om ander leerders te help en leiding te gee.

Participant 3

A.g.v. die omgewing waaruit leerders kom is hoofsaaklik maatskaplik van aard. Dit is probleme soos drank, dwelms, Tik, seksualiteit, ens. Wat dwelms betref, is dit moeilik vir die skool om konkrete bewyse te bekom om te bewys dat leerders onder die invloed van dwelms, onder andere dagga of tik, by die skool aankom. Daar is wel van hulle maatjies wat sommige kere hulle verklap, maar die skool het nie die bevoegdheid om daardie leerders van die skool af te neem of om die polisie te laat inkom om hulle te toets nie. Vroeë seksualiteit is ook "n ernstige probleem – tienerswangerskappe gaan gepaard met vroeë skoolverlating wat "n bekommernis vir die hele gemeenskap is. Die skool het ondersteuningsnetwerke om hom by te staan, o.a. maatskaplike dienste. Leerders voel baie keer gemakliker om met iemand anders as "n onderwyser aan die skool te gesels. NGO"s soos die Portuur Opvoeders, waar leerders hulle probleme met mekaar deel en oplossings vir mekaar bied. Baie leerders is bang om vir professionele hulp te gaan, want in baie gevalle is hulle ouers nie bewus dat hulle met hierdie dinge besig is nie.

V RAAG 7.   *a) Wie is betrokke by die opstel van die skoolreëls?*

                b) Hoe tree u skool op teen diegene wat die skoolreëls verbreek?

Participant 1

a)   Probeer sover as moontlik alle komponente van skool raadpleeg. Elke tweede jaar word skool se gedragskode na ouers uitgestuur vir kommentaar, die VRL kry geleentheid om dit te bespreek en aanbevelings te maak, die opvoeders en SBL kry geleentheid om aanbevelings te maak. Die finale produk is 4 343 hoofsaaklik insette wat gemaak is deur die personeel en, as sulks, spreek dit nie eintlik die probleme wat die ouers ervaar aan nie, omdat die ouers baie min bydraes maak tot "n aangepaste gedragskode. Alle nuwe ouers ontvang "n gedragskode met die hoop dat die gedragskode lewensvatbaar gemaak kan word en sodat ouers bewus is van die implikasies van die gedragskode. Huidiglik word ernstige wangedrag die meeste aangespreek deur die SBL.

  b)   Reeds aangespreek – sien die antwoorde op vrae 2 en 4.

Participant 2

a)   Die skool het "n dissiplinêre komitee wat bestaan uit die graadhoofde en een adjunk-hoof en ander opvoeders wat bereid is om te dien op hierdie dissiplinêre komitee. Die dissipline aksieplan en gedragskode word jaarliks hersien en word voorgelê aan die personeel, SBL [en] VRL, en nadat al drie komponente dit goedgekeur het, word dit uitgegee aan die begin van die jaar aan die nuwe ouers en leerders.

b)   Skoolreëls wat verbreek word word uitgestippel in die skool se aksieplan. "n Aksieplan is in plek waarin uitgelê word hoe oortredings aangespreek kan word. Klasonderwysers spreek leerders aan, dan graadhoof, daarna word ouers ingeroep, daarna verskyn leerders en ouers voor die SBL. In gevalle van oortredings deur opvoeders spreek prinsipaal eers opvoeders aan. Hulle kry daarna "n waarskuwing, hulle teken die waarskuwingsbrief en die oortreding word aangeteken en op opvoeders se lêer geplaas. In die geval van herhaalde oortredings en ernstige oortredings word "n dissiplinêre verhoor gehou ooreenkomstig die beleid van die DOE, soos uiteengesit in wetgewing.

Participant 3

a)   Die hele skoolgemeenskap. Leerders, ouers, opvoeders en beheerliggaam. Skoolreëls word opgestel onderhewig aan die Skolewet. Skoolreëls word deurgetrap met al bogenoemde rolspelers sodat daar nie misverstande mag wees wanneer dit kom by die toepassing van hierdie reëls nie.

b)   Stelsel van minder ernstige tot ernstige oortredings. Minder ernstige – leerder vergeet om sy oorringetjie uit te haal. Meer ernstige oortredings is waar leerder bv. dreig om onderwyser aan te rand. Verskillende kategorieë oortreding bepaal die tipe sanksie wat daaraan gekoppel word. In die ergste gevalle vra ons vir uitsetting uit die skool uit. Dit het nog min by skool gebeur. Skorsing ook nie veel nie. Dissiplinêre komitee hanteer jou saak, en daar moet jy eerstens "n skulderkenningsbrief teken, daarna word jou ouers ingeroep, daarna verskyn jy voor die beheerliggaam, wat kan vra vir uitsetting of skorsing.

Wat die opvoeders betref is skool gelukkig dat daar weinige oortredings is. Ernstigste is "n minuut of twee laat wees. Hulle word aangespreek en by herhaalde oortredings word opvoeder aangespreek, daarna skriftelike waarskuwing.

VRAAG 8.   *Beskryf volledig ouerbetrokkenheid m.b.t. dissipline aan u skool.*

Participant 1

Ouers is ten opsigte van dissipline en betrokkenheid afgeskakel en die respons is beperk tot wanneer kinders oortree en die skool verwag dat hulle die skoolhoof moet kom sien voor hulle klasse mag bywoon of hulle saam met hul kinders voor die SBL moet verskyn. Sommige ouers weier om hulle verpligtinge in die verband uit te voer, met die gevolg dat ouerbetrokkenheid al swakker word. Ouers moet deesdae hulle rapporte self by skool tydens "n vergadering kom afhaal. Maart-maand 90% opkoms gehad, maar soos die dae kouer word het ouers kwartaal na kwartaal al swakker opgekom. Juis as gevolg van die feit dat die ouerbetrokkenheid verswak, gaan die skool binnekort probeer om "n OOV (ouer onderwyservereniging) op die been te bring met leerders se ouers uit die lae grade (grade 8 en 9), omdat dit lyk asof hulle nog meer entosiasties is ten opsigte van "n hoërskool, in vergelyking met kinders wat al drie of meer jare op die hoërskool is. Daar word ook uitgereik na die beheerliggaam, omdat aanstellings in betrekkings in betrekkings veroorsaak dat daar "n redelike gaping tussen die personeel en beheerliggaam ontwikkel, veral as die aanstellings nie gemaak word soos wat die personeel dit verlang nie.

Participant 2

Ouers is baie afwesig, nie betrokke by skool, woon oueraande swak by. Indien ouers meer betrokke gekry word, sal hulle meer insae het in dissipline. Slegs ouers wat op die SBL dien het goeie insae in dissipline.

VRL speel 'n rol by die opstel en aanvaarding van die gedragskode. Die prefekte, wat deel vorm van die VRL, tree oortredings van leerders aan in die oortredingsboek wat hulle saamdra van klas tot klas. Die oortredingsboekies word gegee aan die graadhoof. Die klasonderwysers teken wanneer leerders oortredings begin. Die prefekte is die opvoeders se oë en ore op die skoolterrein en die meeste van hulle voer hul pligte nougesette uit.

Participant 3

Ouers word net gesien wanneer daar probleme opduik, veral wanneer ouers ingeroep word vir dissiplinêre probleme wat kinders gee. Mens kom dan agter dat die kind se gedrag is swakker by die skool as by die huis. Dit kan toegeskryf word aan streng ouers en min swak gedrag toegelaat word, en by die skool is hy tussen sy portuurgroep en elkeen wil dan wys hoe braaf hy is en doen dinge by die skool wat hy nie by die huis sou doen nie. Die ouers is dan baie ongelukkig om te hoor wat leerders by die skool aanvang en dit lei tot wrywing tussen die ouers en die opvoeders by die skool. In baie gevalle wil ouers nie hoor en erken dat dit hulle kinders is wat die probleme gee by die skool nie. In ander gevalle gaan die kind 'n verwronge beeld gee van wat by die skool gebeur het. In die meeste gevalle kies die ouers eerder hulle kind se kant en nie noodwendig die opvoeder s'n nie.

VRAAG 9. *Hoe pas u demokratiese dissipline in u klaskamer toe en hoe word dit in die res van u skool toegepas?*

Participant 1

Participant handhaaf 'n redelike gemaklike verhouding binne in die klas. Daar is tye wanneer jy kan lag en tye wanneer jy nie kan lag nie. Daar is tye wanneer ons werk, maar daar is ongelukkig nie tye wanneer ons nie werk nie. Daar is ook tye wanneer leerders kan vrae vra sonder dat hulle 'n negatiewe houding van my as onderwyser ontlok. Die leerders het ook definitiewe lyne waarbinne hulle nie beweeg nie, en opvoeder laat nie toe dat sy gesag binne in klas uitgedaag word nie en tree dan op volgens voorskrifte wat die gedragskode toelaat. Die klasse wissel tussen periodes baie goed gedissiplineerd en dit hang baie af van die mate waartoe die onderwyser nog beheer oor die klas het. Een van die dinge wat uitstaan is die ledigheid in klasse en lesse wat in sommige gevalle nie baie goed voorberei is nie. Dit ontlok, behalwe kinders wat natuurlik ontwrigtend is, dissiplinêre probleme in klasse.

Participant 2

Opvoeders het 'n aksieplan vir dissipline in die klaskamer. As elke opvoeder hierdie aksieplan toepas, en kinders word regtig aktief besig gehou sal die dissipline in die klas

ook verbeter. Opvoeders moet nie net leerders vir wie hy les aanbied aanspreek nie. Telkens wanneer leerders oortree oor die bree spectrum van die skool moet die oortreders aangespreek word. Indien ˈn opvoeder hom blindstaar oor oortredings wat leerders begin gaan dissipline daarmee heen. As al die opvoeders as ˈn span inkoop by die aksieplan en almal doen hul beste om dissipline te handhaaf sal dissipline verbeter aan die skool.

Leerders word toegelaat om in opvoeder se klas sy eie mening te gee op ˈn ordelike wyse. Fyn beplanning is belangrik vir ˈn opvoeder om chaos te vermy. Opvoeders moet in staat wees om die klas te beheer en te lei. Leerders moet ook geleer word om mekaar se menings te respekteer wat daartoe sal lei dat hulle goeie burgers van die land sal word.

Participant 3

 Opvoeders moedig leerders aan om nie bang vir haar te wees nie. Daar moet ˈn goeie verhouding wees tussen leerders en die opvoeder, maar dit is baie belangrik dat ˈn kind respek vir ˈn opvoeder het. Sodra ˈn kind nie respek toon vir my nie, gaan hy my kwaad kry. Opvoeders is in die plek van ouers (*in loco parentis*) en moet probeer om van die leerders volwaardige volwasse persone te maak.

VRAAG 10. Wat is u siening van dissipline in Suid-Afrikaanse skole?

Participant 1

Te veel vryheid sonder verantwoordelikheid. Die wonderlike grondwet het saam met hom ook opdrifsels saamgebring wat die grondwet op die stadium nie kan regkry. Vryheid sonder verantwoordelikheid is op die stadium nie „n opsie nie, vryheid aan leerders wat nie die vermoë het om vryheid te hanteer nie as gevolg van hulle ervaringsvlak, die afbreek van die gesag van die ouer, die afbreek van die gesag van die skool is pyne wat ons vir ˈn lang tyd nog in ons gemeenskap sal moet dra. As die vryheid wat aan kinders gegee word, nie tred hou met die kinders se vermoë om dit te hanteer nie, sit ons met ˈn probleem wat net kan eskaleer.

Dissipline sal eers heeltemal tot sy reg kan kom as ons leerders so ver kan kry om hulself te dissiplineer. ˈn Gedragskode is iets van buite af en ˈn gedragskode wat kinders so ver kan kry om op te tree volgens dit wat die gedragskode voorskryf is net effektief as kinders sonder die gedragskode dieselfde gedrag kan openbaar. Op die stadium is ons baie laag in ons ontwikkelingsvlakke af as ons dissipline net afhang van druk van buite die skoolgaande persone af. Die idée is dat ons met verloop van tyd ook daardie interne

structure by die leerders kan vestig om hulleself te kan dissiplineer is ons grootste vraagstuk op hierdie stadium.

Participant 2

Dissipline het agteruit gegaan nadat lyfstaf afgeskaf is en onderwysers moes vinnig iets in plek kry om opvoeders te help omdat ons gevoel het jy gaan mal raak, want kinders het eenvoudig nie geluister nie. Die probleem wat ook bydra tot dissiplinêre probleme is dat ouers onbetrokke is. Die ouers verwag van onderwysers om hul kinders te dissiplineer, terwyl dissipline veronderstel is om by die huis te begin. Indien ouers ingeroep word oor die dissipline van leerders kan opvoeders nie glo hoe ouers toelaat dat kinders hulle op 'n swak manier aanspreek nie. Die respek by die huis is nie meer wat dit vroeër was nie. Die rede hiervoor kan wees a.g.v. die ouer se optrede, drankmisbruik by die huis, die swak omstandighede by die huis, [en] ongeletterdheid van baie ouers, wat daartoe lei dat die kind neersien op sy ouers. Ons sit dus met 'n gemeenskapsprobleem. Opheffingswerk moet myns insien eers by die ouers gedoen word en hier moet die maatskaplike werkers (alhoewel oorlaai met werk) ingaan na ouerhuise om vir ouers raad te gee hoe hulle kan optree met hierdie problem kinders. Ouers moet aanspreeklik gehou word vir hul kinders se gedrag en nie die opvoeders nie. Respek dwing respek af.

Die manier hoe opvoeders leerders aanspreek, hul stemtoon speel 'n groot rol. Die opvoeders se benadering tot leerder kan help. Heel moontlik het hierdie leerder wat dissiplinêre probleme gee net 'n oor nodig om geluister te word en sy gedrag kan 'n hulpkreet wees en opvoeders moet hulle beskikbaar stel vir daardie hulpkreet. Baie seunsleerders het net aandag nodig. Veral by die damesonderwysers soek die leerders moederliefde, omdat ouers a.g.v. hul werkomstandighede nie gereeld kommunikeer met hul kinders nie. Die manier hoe ons gesels met leerders sal miskien veroorsaak dat hulle beter sal optree, want hulle kry nou daardie broodnodige aandag wat hulle soek.

Participant 3

In dagblaaie lees mens van die erge dissiplinêre probleme wat dwarsoor die land ervaar word en dit is 'n bron van kommer. Gelukkig is die skool in die posisie dat dit nie ernstige dissiplinêre probleme ervaar nie. Regering sal dratiese stappe moet neem om die veiligheid van leerders by skole te verseker. Daar sal definitief daarna gekyk moet word om 'n sekuriteitstelsel by skole te kry om die situasies te „monitor". Dit is verblydend om te sien dat die WCED besig is om sekuriteitskameras en, in sommige gevalle, metaalverklikkers in te bring, maar is nog te min. Daar is baie maniere om verby

metaalverklikkers te kom bv. gooi 'n byl oor die draad, gaan deur die metaalverklikkers en tel hom aan die binnekant van die skoolterrein op. Mens wil nie elke keer die polisie betrek by sake nie, omdat hulle ander werk het. Die Onderwysdepartement en regering sal definitief iets drasties moet doen om die veiligheid van leerders te verseker.

SCHOOL B

VRAAG 1.   Verduidelik breedvoerig watter dissiplinêre stelsel gebruik u skool om goeie dissipline te handhaaf en hoekom.

Participant 1

Klasonderwysers handhaaf dissipline. Daarna word leerders na graadhoofde verwys, daarna na die adjunk-hoof en uiteindelik na die prinsipaal. Ouers word ingeroep en 'n oplossing word vir probleem gevind.

Participant 2

Die skool maak gebruik van detensie op 'n Vrydagmiddag vir leerders wat laat kom [of] nie DASS-take inhandig nie. Skool stuur intervensiebriewe aan ouers vir 'n onderhoud. Die ouers is dan op hoogte van die kind se doen en late en kan ook iets aan die saak doen.

Participant 3

Die skool gebruik die gedragskode as vertrekpunt. Indien leerders een of meer van die reëls in die gedragskode oortree, moet hulle detensie sit. Indien oortredings voortduur, kry die ouer 'n waarskuwingsbrief om die skool te besoek. Die oortreding word met die ouer en kind bespreek en 'n oplossing word vir die problem gevind. Volharde oortredings en baie ernstige oortredings word na die beheerliggaam verwys vir beslissing.

VRAAG 2.   Watter uitdagings t.o.v. die stelsel moet u skool nog aansluit en wat dink u kan gedoen word om die stelsel meer effektief te maak?

Participant 1

SBL hanteer erge gevalle. Probeer om gedrag te korrigeer. Polisie, maatskaplike dienste, ens. word betrek. Ouers bring kinders tot by die skool en sien toe dat leerders 'n program vir 'n dag of twee voltooi.

Participant 2

Rokery, onder invloed van alkohol, wegloop van die skool tydens skooltyd. Die skool het begin om leerders wat neig na kriminele oortredings na die gevangenis te neem onder leiding van 'n korrektiewe beampte, sodat die leerders die binnekant van die gevangenis en

wat daar aangaan te sien. Op hierdie manier kan hulle sien wat die gevolge van hulle dade kan wees.

Participant 3

Ek dink die gedragskode dek in "n redelike mate alle oortredings wat leerders gewoonlik begin. Opvoeders maak egter nog nie ten volle gebruik van die prosedures wat in plek gesit is nie as gevolg van die geweldige administratiewe rompslomp wat dit meebring.

VRAAG 3.   In watter mate word lyfstraf (verbaal en fisies) by u skool toegepas?

Participant 1

Geen fisiese lyfstraf word toegepas nie. Verbaal vind dit plaas in sommige gevalle deurdat van die opvoeders kragwoorde gebruik.

Participant 2

Lyfstraf word nie toegelaat by die skool nie, alhoewel dit nog deur sommige opvoeders op "n skelm manier toegepas word. Dit sluit in om leerders "n hou met die plathand te gee, wat natuurlik teen die wet is.

Participant 3

Geen fisiese lyfstraf word by die skool toegepas nie. Leerders word egter nog soms verbaal te na gekom – baie keer uit frustrasies by opvoeders.

VRAAG 4.   Watter alternatiewe pas u skool toe in die plek van lyfstraf?

Participant 1

Detensie op "n Vrydagmiddag. Daar is toestemming by ouers gekry om leerders klein takies te gee bv. skoonmaakwerk.

Participant 2

Detensie en werkies verrig. Die verrig van werkies is nie so doeltreffend nie, omdat leerders daarvan hou om buite te wees. Die alternatiewe vir lyfstraf bly maar "n turksvy.

Participant 3

Alternatiewe vir lyfstraf is detensie, en in erge gevalle word leerders vir "n week uit die skool gesluit. Leerders word ook vir "n tydperk deelname verbied aan buitemuurse aktiwiteite, soos bv. netbal en rugby.

VRAAG 5.   Watter leerhindernisse ervaar leerders aan u skool en hoe spreek u dit aan?

Participant 1

Leerders ervaar hindernisse met betrekking tot lees en syfervaardigheid. Dit lei weer tot dissiplinêre problem, want leerders kan nie bybly by die skoolwerk. Die skool het 'n opvoeder aangestel om leerders te help met leesprobleme. Leerders word ook in die rekenaarlokaal blootgestel aan lees- en syfervaardigheidprogramme.

Participant 2

Lees en syfervaardigheid. Skool het 'n remediërende opvoeder aangestel om die leerders wat leesprobleme ondervind te help tydens taalperiodes en naskool. Die leerders se lees verbeter aansienlik.

Participant 3

Ons skool het 'n geweldige leerhindernisprobleem te opsigte van taal-, lees- en syfervaardigheid. Leerders in grade 8 tot 12 kan feitlik glad nie lees nie en opvoeders beskik nie oor die vaardigheid om leerders te leer lees nie. Ons skool spreek egter die problem aan deurdat 'n gekwalifiseerde opvoeder tydens fleksietyd inkom om leerders wat leerhindernisse ervaar te help.

VRAAG 6. *Watter sosiale uitdagings staar u skool in die gesig en hoe reageer u skool daarop?*

Participant 1

Die skool is geleë in 'n toelaagdorp. Die meeste leerders raak nie in 'n normale gesinsopset groot nie. Baie van hulle bly by hulle oumas of ander familielede. Tik, dagga en drankmisbruik kom algemeen voor onder leerders. Baie van die skool se vennote bv. die polisielede is bevriend met die leerders en dit bemoeilik die skool se taak. Die skool het 'n „adopt-a-cop‟ vennootskap met die polisie en werk nou saam met die polisie om te kyk [hoe] om die probleme aan te spreek. Ouers het toestemming gegee dat polisie leerders ondersoek.

Participant 2

Dit is sosiale probleme van die gemeenskap en dit dui op die verval in terme van die euwels wat in die gemeenskap heers, soos die gebruik van dwelms, drankmisbruik, tienerswangerskap, familie geweld, ens. Die skool betrek die kerk, die polisieforum [en] die VRL, sodat hulle die verskil kan maak in die gemeenskap waarin hulle woon.

Participant 3

Een van die sosiale uitdagings wat ons skool ervaar is die toename in geweld in die gemeenskap wat oorspoel na die skool. Leerders is op 'n baie meer gereelde basis in konflik met mekaar betrokke en rand mekaar gedurig aan. Dwelmmisbruik is ook in 'n

geringe mate ŉ problem. Ons skool het egter die „adopt-a-cop‟ stelsel, en ons is in noue samewerking met die gemeenskap polisie forum. Daar word ook beoog om twee keer ŉ kwartaal leerders se sake te visenteer in samewerking met die ouers.

VRAAG 7. *a) **Wie is betrokke by die opstel van die skoolreëls?***

*b) **Hoe tree u skool op teen diegene wat die skoolreëls verbreek?***

Participant 1

a) SBL, leerders, opvoeders, VRL en ouers.

b) Opvoeders gaan deur ŉ proses van progressiewe dissipline ingevolge die Wet op die Indiensneming van Opvoeders. Leerders wat oortree gaan deur ŉ proses volgens die skoolreëls en verskyn, indien nodig, voor die SBL. Die maksimum straf wat hulle oplê is uitsetting vir ŉ week, of hulle verwys leerders om ŉ gepaste rehabilitasie program te volg.

Participant 2

a) SBL, SBS, die VRL en Safe Schools beampte.

b) Leerders verskyn voor die SBL tydens ŉ dissiplinêre verhoor. In die geval van ernstige oortredings lê die SBL ŉ straf op wat begin met ŉ waarskuwing, daarna ŉ skorsing vir ŉ week en hulle onderlê aan ŉ rehabilitasieprogram deur die maatskaplike werkers en die polisie. Opvoeders gaan deur ŉ proses van progressiewe dissipline.

Participant 3

a) Opvoeders en leerders.

b) Normale prosedure – minder ernstige oortredings – detensie vir leerders. Meer ernstige oortredings – ouers word ingeroep en daarna verskyn leerder saam met ouer voor beheerraad. Opvoeder – word ŉ mondelingse waarskuwing gegee, daarna skriftelik, en daarna, as geen vordering gemaak word, word so ŉ opvoeder dissiplinêr aangekla.

VRAAG 8. Beskryf volledig ouerbetrokkenheid m.b.t. dissipline aan u skool.

Participant 1

VRL doen tereindiens en help met die opstel van skoolreëls. Ouers ondersteun skool om dissipline te verbeter.

Participant 2

Die skool het 'n OOV wat besig is om aan die gang te kom. Dit is baie moeilik om ouers by 'n skool betrokke te kry. Die leerders wat op die VRL dien word meestal betrek by die OOV, sodat die ouers ook kan weet waarin hulle behoort en hulle dienooreenkomstig kan ondersteun in hulle pligte en die ouers ook deelmaak van die opstel en toepassing van die skoolreëls as gemeenskap. Die leerders is betrokke by die opstel van die skoolreëls deur die VRL en prefekte wat, nadat hulle 'n werkswinkel bygewoon het, hulle baie beter op hoogte is van die toepassing van die skoolreëls.

Participant 3

Leerders word betrokke gekry deur die aanstel van prefekte en leerderraad wat help met die handhawing van dissipline. Ouers se betrokkenheid is nie noodwendig wat dit behoort te wees nie. Daar is nog baie ruimte vir verbetering.

VRAAG 9.   Hoe pas u demokratiese dissipline in u klaskamer toe en hoe word dit in die res van u skool toegepas?

Participant 1

Daar moet geluister word na leerders se probleme. Leerders word aangemoedig om aktief deel te neem aan aktiwiteite in klas.

Participant 2

Ek tree eenders op teenoor kinders om nie leerders se regte te ondermyn nie.

Participant 3

Leerders word aangemoedig om aktief deel te neem aan die besprekings in die klas.

VRAAG 10.   Wat is u siening van dissipline in Suid-Afrikaanse skole?

Participant 1

Departement van Onderwys moet eenvormige beleid t.o.v. dissipline en strawwe vir skole opstel en laat deurvoer. Daar moet meer gefokus word op leerderdissipline en nie net op opvoeders se oortredings nie.

Participant 2

Dissipline begin by die huis, en as ouers nie hulle kinders dissiplineer nie gaan ons altyd dissiplinêre probleme in die skole hê, want die probleme van die gemeenskap waardeur dissipline toegepas in die huis of die vernalating daarvan ontstaan gaan oorspoel skooltoe. As die skool nie intree in die gemeenskap om dissipline in die huise te vestig nie d.m.v. die ouers en die kerke nie, gaan ons altyd ernstige dissiplinêre probleme in skole het. Die

prentjie hoef nie so donker te wees nie. As elke struktuur net "n verskil wil maak daar waar hy is: die kerk maak "n verskil, die Sondagskool, die brigade, die mannekoor, vroue vereniging, ens. en elkeen van hulle dra "n deel by tot die dissiplinevan die ouers sodat hulle die kinders kan dissiplineer, dan behoort ons ver te vorder met

dissipline in ons skole en gemeenskap.

Participant 3

As elke struktuur net "n verskil wil maak daar waar hy is: die kerk maak "n verskil, die Sondagskool, die brigade, die mannekoor, vroue vereniging, ens. en elkeen van hulle dra "n deel by tot die dissipline van die ouers sodat hulle die kinders kan dissiplineer, dan behoort ons ver te vorder met dissipline in ons skole en gemeenskap.