

**EDUCATORS' EXPERIENCES OF THEIR ROLE IN
SUPPORTING CHILDREN FROM DIVORCED FAMILIES:
A Phenomenological Study**

By

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of the requirements for the degree of
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DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the work contained in this assignment is my own original work and that I have not previously, in its entirety or in part, submitted it at any university for a degree.

SUMMARY

Divorce is a common phenomenon throughout the world. According to the South African Population census in 1996 (Stats SA, 2001:1.7) almost a tenth of the individuals that got married that year, had been separated or divorced. In the United States of America it is estimated that almost one out of every two couples eventually divorce (Dreman, 1999:150).

According to Pedro-Carroll, Sutton and Wyman (1999:467) many children may be at risk as a result of the negative consequences of marital disruption. These children challenge us, as educators, to support them in ways that will reduce risk factors and promote resilient outcomes for them. The statement by Pedro-Carroll *et al.* (1999:467) provides a rationale for this study, namely that children from divorced families may need support when experiencing the consequences of divorce. I argue that the school system, especially educators, play an important role in supporting children from divorced families.

The school environment may serve as a source of support for children from divorced families, where educators are in a good position to be empathic to these children's problems and needs (Bray and Berger, 1992:73; Dreman, 1999:163). Therefore, I explored the phenomenon of educators' experiences of their role in supporting children from divorced families.

The methods I made use of was firstly, semi-structured interviews to gain the educators' experiences individually. Two focus group sessions followed, where I also determined their experiences in a group dynamic. Through the produced and transcribed data I gained new insights into educators' experiences on this matter, by identifying themes from their experiences.

One hundred and sixty one (161) themes were identified from the produced data. The findings were presented in four areas of experience, namely, educators' experiences in terms of: the *child*; *themselves*; the *school*; and the *parents*.

Some participants have experienced that generally children come across as uncertain and stressed, when their parents divorce, and that children may even feel that the divorce is his fault. It was also mentioned that children may exhibit psychosomatic symptoms due to the stress they experience. In terms of the educators' experiences of the school environment it was mentioned that the school provides structure for the children from divorced families. According to Wallerstein *et al.* (1980:277) the school can provide structure in a child's life at a time when the major structure of his life, the family, is crumbling.

Mostly, educators have experienced that they do play an important role in supporting these children. Some even mentioned that they, as educators, have to sometimes fulfil a parental role for that child. According to Ligon and McDaniel (1970:76) educators are of inestimable help to children who bring their problems to them.

I believe that the findings of this phenomenological study add credence to the research on educators as a supportive system for children from divorced families.

OPSOMMING

Egskeiding is 'n algemene verskynsel deur die wêreld heen. Volgens die Suid-Afrikaans Populasie sensus in 1996 (Stats SA, 2001:1.7), het ongeveer 'n tiende van die individue wat daardie jaar getroud is, geskei. In die Verenigde State van Amerika is daar beraam dat ongeveer een uit elke twee egpare uiteindelik skei (Dreman, 1999:150).

Volgens Pedro-Carroll, Sutton en Wyman (1999:467) kan baie kinders moontlik onder risiko geplaas word as gevolg van die negatiewe gevolge van 'n gebroke huwelik. Hierdie kinders daag ons, as opvoeders, uit om hulle op wyses te ondersteun wat risiko faktore sal verminder en veerkragtige uitkomst vir hulle sal bevorder. Die stelling gemaak deur Pedro-Carroll *et al.* (1999:467) voorsien die studie van 'n gegronde beredenering, naamlik dat kinders van geskeide gesinne moontlik ondersteuning benodig wanneer hulle die gevolge van egskeiding ervaar. Ek beredeneer dat die skool sisteem, spesifiek onderwysers, 'n belangrike rol speel in die ondersteuning van kinders uit geskeide gesinne.

Die skool omgewing kan moontlik dien as 'n bron van ondersteuning vir kinders van geskeide gesinne, waar onderwysers in 'n goeie posisie is om empaties te wees teenoor hierdie kinders se probleme en behoeftes (Bray en Berger, 1992:73; Dreman, 1999:163). Vir hierdie rede het ek die fenomeen van onderwysers se ervarings van hul rol in die ondersteuning van kinders uit geskeide gesinne, ondersoek.

Die metodes waarvan ek gebruik gemaak het was eerstens, semi-gestruktureerde onderhoude om die onderwysers se ervarings individueel in te win. Twee fokus groep sessies het gevolg, waarin ek ook hul ervarings bepaal het in 'n groepsdinamiek. Deur die geproduseerde en getranskribeerde data het ek tot nuwe insigte gekom rakende onderwysers se ervarings in hierdie verband, deur temas te identifiseer vanuit hulle ervarings.

Een honderd een en sestig (161) temas is geïdentifiseer vanuit die geproduseerde data. Die bevindinge is voorgestel in vier areas van ervaring, naamlik, onderwysers se ervarings van: die *kind*; *hulself*; die *skool*; en die *ouers*.

Sommige van die onderwysers het ervaar dat kinders oor die algemeen as onseker en gespanne voorkom wanneer hul ouers skei. Die kind kan selfs voel dat die egskeiding sy skuld is. Daar is ook genoem dat kinders psigosomatiese simptome kan toon weens spanning wat hul moontlik ervaar. In terme van die onderwysers se ervarings van die skoolomgewing is genoem dat die skool struktuur voorsien aan kinders van geskeide gesinne. Volgens Wallerstein *et al.* (1980:277) kan die skool struktuur voorsien in 'n kind se lewe in 'n tyd waar die hoofstruktuur van sy lewe, sy gesin, verbrokkel.

Die onderwysers het meestal ervaar dat hulle wel 'n belangrike rol speel in die ondersteuning van hierdie kinders. Sommige van die onderwysers het selfs genoem dat hulle somtyds 'n ouerlike rol vervul vir so 'n kind. Volgens Ligon en McDaniel (1970:76) is onderwysers van onskatbare hulp vir kinders wat hul probleme na hulle toe bring.

Ek vertrou dat die bevindinge van hierdie fenomenologiese studie geloofwaardigheid byvoeg tot die navorsing van onderwysers as 'n ondersteuningsstelsel vir kinders van geskeide gesinne.

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CHAPTER 1

CONTEXTUALIZATION AND ORIENTATION OF THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

According to Pedro-Carroll, Sutton and Wyman (1999:467) many children may be at risk as a result of the negative consequences of marital disruption. These children challenge us, as educators, to develop preventive strategies designed to reduce risk factors and promote competencies and resilient outcomes for children of divorce.

The above statement of Pedro-Carroll *et al.* (1999:467) provide a rationale for this study, namely that children from divorced families may need support when experiencing the consequences of divorce. Dreman (1999:161) states that research has been conducted on support systems directly available to children after divorce. The author mentions that family members may well be important to support the process of restructuring the family patterns, but non-family members may also be useful because they are involved less personally and may provide an outside perspective and relief from the stressful situation. Non-family members may include people such as psychologists and educators.

This project focuses on one of the many systems that can have an influential role in supporting these children from divorced families - the school system, and more specifically, educators.

My personal experience motivated the origin of this study. As a child I was confronted with the divorce of my parents. I was still in the early years of primary school and can only remember vague experiences of this shift in my family structure. What I do remember is experiencing great discomfort at school, especially in class. Luckily my mother had the insight to draw my teacher closer as a support system. This educator gave me opportunities to express my feelings and helped me to do so

when I was unable to do so. In a relatively short period I could function normally at school and I was on my way to achieve my potential.

Through this personal experience I have come to realize the important role that educators can play in supporting children through the process of divorce. However, this understanding is subjective by implication. Therefore, I decided to investigate the point of view of the educators that are faced with children with circumstances similar to my own.

In this study I place myself in the role of researcher, because I want to view the experiences of educators. I do acknowledge that my own experience could influence the meaning that I assign to what is discovered. Therefore, as the researcher my aim is to serve as a 'translator' in order to give the reader access to the experience-world of educators.

The main focus of this study is then to understand educators' experiences of their supporting role of children from divorced families. This aim can be achieved through an empathic identification with the educators and by trying to grasp their subjective experiences (Giddens, 1976, cited in Le Grange, 2000:193).

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Divorce is a common phenomenon throughout the world. According to the South African Population census in 1996 (Stats SA, 2001:1.7) almost a tenth of the individuals that got married that year, had been separated or divorced. In the United States of America it is estimated that almost one out of every two couples eventually divorce (Dreman, 1999:150).

Kalter (1990:1) states that societies, religious institutions, legislatures and courts have relaxed their restrictions regarding divorce and have become more tolerant and accepting of divorce as a solution to unhappy marriages. Due to this it would seem that divorce may become more common and affect more children. According to

Kalter (1990:3) the turmoil and changes usually accompanying divorce often disrupt smooth growth in children's developmental areas.

I have found that a great deal of research has been done in South Africa on the support and experiences of parents and children as they go through divorce. Kramer (1996:3) mentions that numerous studies have focused on the possible effects of divorce on children. To mention a few, Potgieter (1986:51) researched the emotions children experience when their parents divorce. Meyer's (1999:4) research proposes a divorce therapy programme for primary school children that could guide these children through the crisis that divorce induce. Woudstra (1997:158) focused her research on the educational psychologist's role in intervention within the whole family as they go through divorce.

However, my view is that a very important system in the child's life has not been sufficiently included in the research on divorce, namely the school and its educators. Robinson (1991:178) states that little has specifically been written for the educators of the children from divorced families. Where the school system has indeed been included in research, the focus was merely on programmes that could be implemented in schools (e.g. Mthombeni, 1993:128) or a short discussion of the role the school can play (Muller, 1998:76). The educators' views of their role in supporting children from divorced families lack in all the research mentioned.

Therefore, it seems that educators' experiences have mostly been left out of the picture where research is concerned. Seeing that the divorce rate in our country is approximately one tenth of all marriages (Stats SA, 2001:1.7), educators are in all probability being faced with children needing support, as they experience the impact of divorce. During an informal recording, at a primary school in Lephalale, it was estimated that approximately 17% of the learners come from divorced, single-parent or remarriage families. Educators were asked to indicate these figures by means of a questionnaire compiled by a Head of Department.

According to Muller (1998:76) schools can no longer deny their responsibility in the process of support during divorce. The author states that educators are often an

important source of support to the children of divorced families. However, educators' experiences on this topic seem to be unknown. Through this study I aim to use my personal experience as an interpretative tool to produce data that will portray educators' experiences of their role in supporting children from divorced families.

The discussed problem statement led to the formulation of the research question. According to Willig (2001:19) most qualitative research projects are guided by one or more research questions which are open-ended. The author also states that a research question calls for an answer that provides detailed descriptions and explanations of a phenomenon.

The research question that serves as the guideline for this study is:

- What are educators' experiences of their role in supporting children from divorced families?

I anticipate that the answers to this open-ended question will provide detailed descriptions of the phenomenon under investigation - the educators' experiences. To obtain the anticipated findings I have structured the research design accordingly.

1.3 RESEARCH DESIGN

According to Mouton (2001:55) a research design is a blueprint of how you intend conducting the research. Durrheim (1999:29) defines a research design as a strategic framework for action that serves as a bridge between the research question and the execution of the research. He further states that this framework should be coherent in order to provide valid answers to the research question (Durrheim, 1999:33).

Certain qualitative research designs are mentioned by Babbie and Mouton (2001:278), such as ethnographical studies or case studies. Le Grange (2002) argues the term 'qualitative research' in that it is rather research that produces qualitative data, than qualitative research in itself.

I have chosen to use a phenomenological research design that will guide the research process to produce qualitative data. Leedy and Ormrod (2001:153) explain the *phenomenological study* as a research design that attempts to understand people's perceptions of a particular situation. They also state that the researcher is interested in studying people's experiences and might even have had personal experience related to the phenomenon being studied (Leedy *et al.*, 2001:153).

Hatch (2002:29) confirms that phenomenological studies are used for the purpose of examining the lived experiences of the people being studied. In this case the lived experiences of the educators, from a primary school in Lephalale, are being investigated.

According to Tesch (1990:68) phenomenological researchers are interested in the way individuals experience their world and how they understand it. The author continues by stating that the researcher should also explore their own experiences, in order to gain access to others' experiences. As mentioned, I have briefly reflected on my own experiences during the process of the study. A more detailed discussion of the research design is presented in chapter three. Here follows a brief overview of the components of the research design.

1.3.1. Research Paradigm

An interpretive paradigm is presented as the framework from which this study was undertaken, within the phenomenological design. According to Terre Blanche and Kelly (1999:123) the interpretive research paradigm assumes that people's subjective experiences are real, that we can understand other's experiences by interacting with them and that qualitative research techniques are best suited for this task. They further emphasize the importance of ascertaining these experiences within the contexts that they do occur in (Terre Blanche *et al.*, 1999:125).

By making use of an interpretive paradigm, I investigated the subjective experiences of the educators and have come to understand these experiences by interacting with them in interviews and focus groups.

1.3.2. Aim of the Research

The aim of this research project lies in the exploratory nature of the conclusions I have drawn about the phenomenon under investigation. According to Durrheim (1999:39) exploratory studies are used to make investigations into relatively unknown areas of research and to look for new insights into phenomena. As I mentioned in the problem statement, educators' experiences regarding their role in supporting children from divorced families, are a relatively unknown and unresearched phenomenon.

I explored the phenomenon of educators' experiences by interviewing educators individually and thereafter conducting focus groups. Through the produced data I gained new insights into educators' experiences on this matter. A supplementary aim was then to share these findings and draw conclusions about them. These are presented in chapters four and five.

In this way, this study's aim was aligned on studying human action in the natural setting of the school, through the eyes of the educators themselves, with an emphasis on detailed description and understanding the phenomena within the context (Babbie *et al.*, 2001:278).

1.3.3. Context

I have chosen a primary school in Lephalale as the context for this research project. Lephalale is a town situated in the Limpopo Province approximately 80 kilometres from the Botswana border. I grew up in Lephalale and am well-informed regarding the socio-economic, political, social and schooling systems in

this town. This understanding gave me greater insight into the produced data. A broader discussion of the context is presented in chapter three.

1.3.4. Research Methodology

Gough (2000:4) states that methodology provides the rationale for the way the researcher will proceed. Mouton (2001:55) confirms that research methodology is the systematic, methodical and accurate execution of the research design where various methods and tools are used to perform different tasks. I will briefly explain what methods I used in conducting this study. These methods informed the process of data production.

All the fieldwork was conducted at the primary school in Lephalale. This school was selected through convenience sampling because I could easily gain access to the school. Convenience sampling is a non-probability sampling procedure that indicates that the researcher chooses the most convenient population element (Steyn, Smit, Du Toit & Strasheim, 1994:39).

Certain educators were identified as possible participants via purposive sampling. Steyn *et al.* (1994:39) state that purposive sampling is also a non-probability procedure where the researcher selects the participants according to his/her judgement on whether they represent the population. The educators were able to indicate whether they are willing to participate or not. The research process and ethical considerations were presented to the participants by means of a letter (Appendix A).

Eight educators participated. They represented all three of the phases in the primary school (foundation, intermediate and senior). Each participant was interviewed individually. The interviews were semi-structured and held on the school premises, where possible. The data produced from these interviews were documented and used as stimuli for the focus groups.

Two weeks after the individual interviews, two focus group discussions, with four educators each, were conducted with the participants. Here the themes identified from the individual interviews were presented and discussed by the educators, in group format. Some themes were verified, and new themes emerged. The produced data is presented in chapter four.

1.4 LITERATURE REVIEW

This section serves as a preliminary literature review to emphasise the focus of the research problem. A comprehensive literature review is presented in chapter two which forms a theoretical basis for the research by highlighting different aspects of divorce.

In research done by Wallerstein and Kelly (1984, cited in Woudstra, 1997:153) it was found that a third of their sample of children were suffering from mild to severe depression ten years after the divorce of their parents. In a South African study done by Woudstra (1997:210) it is mentioned that children whose parents are divorcing are generally at a school going age. The author further recommends that research should be done to implement a program for educators and schools in order to support children from divorced families. This recommendation substantiates the rationale behind this study, that schools and educators play an important role in supporting these children.

According to Mthombeni (1993:149) educators, in their daily contact with children, are in the best position to detect stress factors in children that may manifest themselves in many ways. Meyer (1999:19) emphasises that the school can provide the child with structure when the main structure in his/her life and family crumbles down. Therefore, it appears to be important that educators should be aware of the effects of divorce on children. This awareness can help the educators to evaluate behaviours upon which interventions can be based (Mthombeni, 1993:143).

The educator who anticipates a possible grief period (e.g. denial, anger and depression) from children of divorced families may react differently from one who

does not expect such responses (Mthombeni, 1993:143). Cantor and Drake (1983, cited in Mthombeni, 1993:143) state that by equipping educators with knowledge about children from divorced families, the educators can better support the children and their parents and know when and how to intervene.

According to Taylor (1994:169) there is a need for the development of a unified system of intervention amenable to all South African children. Thus, intervention should be focused to include all cultures, races, genders or ages. In the last decade South Africa has gone through rapid transformation, where the emphasis has shifted from exclusion to inclusion.

Just as South Africa is in a process of transition, so are the adults and children of this country. Transition presents itself in many forms such as political, economical and social transition. Divorce could also be seen as a form of transition in the structure of families. Furthermore, divorce as phenomenon is in a process of transition. Previously divorce was unacceptable in most cultures, but as Taylor (1994:1) states, the stigma of divorce has diminished in social circles.

According to Taylor (1994:169) educators can benefit from an increased awareness and understanding of the issues faced by children in transition. Educators should also understand the impact that divorce has on the South African child.

Various authors, as mentioned above, emphasise the importance of educators supporting children from divorced families. I aim to establish whether educators perceive this as part of their role.

1.5. CLARIFICATION OF CONCEPTS

- *Educator* : a person who "impart(s) information or skill to" (The Oxford English Minidictionary, 1997, s.v. 'teach') another person. In a study done by Bhavnagri and Vaswani (1999:297) educators are teachers who not only teach the school's curriculum, but also see to other needs of children such as their health. I have chosen to make use of the all-embracing word 'educators' and not 'teachers'. The

educators in this study are the adults who educate at the primary school in Lephhalale.

- *Experience* : "observation of facts or events, practice in doing something; knowledge or skill gained by this" (The Oxford English Minidictionary, 1997, s.v. 'experience'). It is the knowledge that an individual has gained through his participation in certain activities (Plug, Meyer, Louw & Gouws, 1986:245).
- *Children* : According to the Child Care Act 74 of 1983 (South Africa, 1983) children are individuals under the age of eighteen years. However, in this study 'children' only indicate individuals between the ages of six and fourteen years of age. In other words, children at a primary school going age.
- *Divorce* : "the legal termination of a marriage; separation" (The Oxford English Minidictionary, 1997, s.v. 'divorce'). According to Potgieter (1986:42) divorce implies the disintegration of a marriage in emotional, economic and legal terms. In this study divorce is used when referring to the legal dissolution of a marriage.
- *Divorced families* : family systems that have experienced, or are experiencing, 'divorce'. Ahrons and Rodgers (1987:viii) focus in their book, *Divorced Families*, on the "process of divorce grounded in a family systems orientation". In this study 'divorced families' refers to the familial background of the children mentioned within this context.
- *Lephhalale* : a town, previously known as Ellisras, in the Limpopo province.
- *Male gender* : whenever the male gender specification is used, it can also be applied to the female version i.e. *he* can be substituted with *she*.
- *Role* : "an actor's part; a person's function" (The Oxford English Minidictionary, 1997, s.v. 'role'). In this study 'role' refers to the function that the educators perform while supporting children from divorced families.

- *Support* : "bear the weight of; strengthen; supply with necessities; help, encourage" (The Oxford English Minidictionary, 1997, s.v. 'support'). Jackson and Veeneman Panyan (2002:201) believe that support indicates practices that assist children in experiencing stability when their well-being is shaken by internal or external causes.

1.6 STRUCTURE OF PRESENTATION

Chapter 1 has served to briefly inform the reader of the background, aims and procedures of this research project. The following chapters will discuss these aspects in a more comprehensive manner.

The second chapter is the theoretical foundation for this study. From this literature review the reader will come to understand the impact that divorce can have on children in the primary school phase of life, as well as the influences it might have on their functioning at school. Previous studies are included in this section.

Chapter 3 discusses the research methodology in depth. Here the research design is unfolded in terms of purpose, paradigm, context and methods (interviews and focus groups) used to produce the data. The primary school in Lephalale will be introduced to the reader in broader terms.

The findings and interpretations of the interviews and focus groups are discussed in Chapter 4. The identified themes from each interview and focus group are displayed thoroughly, as well as an integration of all these themes.

Finally, the implications of the findings are discussed in Chapter 5. In conclusion of this chapter the observed limitations of the study are then explained together with the recommendations for future research.

1.7 REFLECTION AND CONCLUSION

In reflecting on this chapter I have come to realise that my personal encounter with a divorce process strongly motivated me to undertake a study of this kind. I also understand that the meanings that I have assigned to divorce are subjective, and therefore, the reality as I view it. Throughout this study I cautioned myself to stay aware of this subjectivity. However, due to the study's interpretive paradigm I allowed this aspect to become a harmonious part of the data analysis process. The following chapter introduces the reader to a broader view of the divorce phenomenon, by discussing existing literature.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The present chapter construes discussions regarding different aspects of divorce. The aim is to promote a better understanding of the phenomenon of divorce and the possible effects it may have on role-playing parties.

Firstly, in this chapter, the legal aspects of divorce are briefly discussed. In the literature I studied, it was apparent that divorce is a process and therefore, I secondly focussed on the stages of divorce. These stages were drawn through to the suggested experiences that children have during the different stages of divorce. Children's experiences also vary during the various lifestages namely the foundation phase, intermediate phase and senior phase of primary school life.

Parents also seem to have distinct needs during the divorce process and these needs are highlighted. During divorce it may become necessary to include professional help for the children, as well as the parents. Other forms of support could also be employed like family, peer and community support systems.

Lastly, and highly relevant to this study, I discussed the role of the school system in supporting children from divorced families. Some of the roles that educators could play are mentioned as they are recorded in previous research and literature. However, these roles merely serve as background and should not be viewed as the ultimate roles that correlate with all educators' experiences.

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Divorce is a phenomenon that most people do not plan on happening to them. It is a wrenching experience for most adults and children (Kalter, 1990:393). Some people might think that divorce has become a widely shared experience due to its high prevalence.

Veevers (1991:101) argues that divorce has become a 'normal' experience, which occurs to many people, and which touches virtually all families either directly or indirectly. Yet, according to Kalter (1990:393), the experience of divorce is too new for society to have developed generally accepting and constructive responses. The author also states that it would be difficult to present an agreed-upon set of expectations for the course of psychological recovery after divorce.

One will be mistaken to think that one set of responses and expectations is applicable to all individuals who experience the impact of divorce. It is helpful to understand these different aspects in order to provide more effective supportive resources. Kalter (1990:394) explains that knowledge in this regard makes the divorce experience for children more understandable, but also provides specific strategies for alleviating the pain divorce brings.

Divorce is not only an emotional event that may provoke pain. It is also a legal process that could influence the well-being of the child. Following is a brief discussion of certain legal aspects within the divorce process.

2.2 LEGAL ASPECTS

According to Marlow and Sauber (1990:11) divorce can be viewed as a legal event because law regulates it, but it should rather be seen as a personal event, which at best only have legal implications. The legal aspects of divorce are an extremely important part to take note of because it might have a great impact on all the participants, especially the children. Due to the narrowed aim of this study, I only briefly discuss legal aspect concerning children and I do so from the framework of divorce mediation.

Divorce mediation is a common platform from where the legal aspects of divorce are discussed, usually with the parents who request a divorce. Hoffman and Wentzel (1992:8) mention that the principle focus of family mediation services rests on disputes arising from separation and divorce. Hoffman *et al.* (1992:11) also state that

mainly three professions, namely law, psychology and social work, have promoted the use of family mediation with particular emphasis on divorce mediation. Accordingly, I discuss some legal aspects of divorce from the perspective of a divorce mediator.

Potash (1992:28) states that in family law, when children are involved, a divorce can be particularly tragic. This author also states that it is in the best interest of the clients (the parents) and their children to settle the divorce on amicable terms. He suggests achieving this by assisting both parties with responsible attorneys, psychologists and social workers, in other words divorce mediators.

The family advocate plays an important role in divorce mediation. According to Bosman (1992:55) the functions of the family advocate can be said to be threefold, namely:

- *Monitor*

Bosman (1992:55) states that the Supreme Court is the guardian of all minor children and may intervene in any action or decision by parents in regards to the minor child. The family advocate and family counsellor merely act as fact finders by scrutinising all divorce proceedings (Bosman, 1992:55).

- *Mediate*

In short, the family advocate aims to settle the divorce matter between the parties on terms most favourable to the welfare of the children (Bosman, 1992:57).

- *Evaluate*

Bosman (1992:58) states that the involvement of a family advocate also implies an evaluation of the parenting abilities of the parties since the court needs to know that which is agreed upon would be in the best interest of the children. The children, depending on their age and intellectual and emotional maturity, are participants in this process (Bosman, 1992:58).

This brings the discussion to the important aspect of the involvement of children in the mediation process. Hoffman (1992:70) believes that divorce constitutes both a legal and a family process. Although the legal process involves the marital couple

per se, the family process suffers life-long consequences, both good and bad, for other family members, like the children.

The question arises, 'why should children be included in the mediation process?'. Saposnek (1983, cited in Hoffman, 1992:73) states that interviewing the child can often help to resolve discrepancies and bring the parents to a common view on the child's need. Other reasons would be that the child requested to speak to the mediator (Hoffman, 1992:73). According to Saposnek (1991, cited in Hoffman, 1992:74) all adolescents should be included in the process because of their cognitive ability and maturity.

However, Hoffman (1992:76) clearly states that the motivation for including children in mediation should never be to ask the children directly, which parent they love most or in the case of younger children, to find out which parent they want to live with. This could intensify the child's feelings of guilt, as they have to choose between parents (Hoffman, 1992:77).

Taylor (1994:7) states:

"To understand the effects of divorce, it is essential to envisage divorce as a sequence of transitional experiences rather than as a relatively short-term legal event"

According to Neumann (2003) mediation could be used at any time during a divorce, however, the mediator should then understand that the behaviour of the clients could be attributed to possible stages of the divorce. Following is a discussion on the stages that have been identified in the divorce process.

2.3 STAGES OF DIVORCE

According to Neumann (2003) when parents start the divorce process they go through a period of emotional transition, which can be described as a series of stages. The author describes five distinct emotional stages that comprise the divorce transition and these combined stages generally take an average of three years. Neumann's (2003) five stages are as follows:

- Stage one: The focus is on *blaming the spouse* for all the past, present and future problems in their life.
- Stage two: Here the primary focus is acknowledging the end of the relationship and *mourning the loss* of the spouse. It could entail profound grieving.
- Stage three: During this stage rage and *anger* are the dominant traits, and it can be so strong that it is upsetting to family and friends. The anger is mostly directed at the spouse. Parents might upset their children by reacting with sudden unexpected rage at the mention of their spouse
- Stage four: In this stage the person is experiencing what it means to *be single*. It has more to do with making their own decisions than with marital status.
- Stage five: *Re-entry* is the fifth and last stage of the divorce process. The predominant theme is the feeling of being in control of your life again. Individuals in this stage are able to make long-term plans and commitments.

Bogolub (1995:42-107) presents two stages in the divorce process that appear to be more restricted to specific experiences and circumstances. The first stage that the author mentions is the *pre-separation phase*. This stage is recognised by the marital discord that takes its toll on parents and children. It can probably be linked up with the first two, or even three, stages of Neumann (2003).

The second stage mentioned by Bogolub (1995:94) is called *divorce transition*. According to this author the divorce transition phase is an extremely challenging time, because of the numerous divorce-generated life changes. The first three stages of Neumann (2003), namely *Blaming the spouse*, *Mourning* and *Anger* can also be present in the stage of *divorce transition*.

Another division of divorce stages is made in the available literature. Kalter (1990:5) states that divorce is a process unfolding over many years and that it can be divided into three stages. The stages Kalter (1990) presents are:

- The Immediate Crisis Stage (Kalter, 1990:6)
This stage begins as parents separate and/or petition for divorce. Changes in the household become apparent as one parent leaves. The first three emotional

stages that Neumann (2003) mentions could probably be part of the parents' experiences in this stage. The *divorce transition phase* of Bogolub (1995:94) seems to describe the same circumstances in the divorce process.

- *The Short-Term Aftermath Stage* (Kalter, 1990:12)

This stage usually lasts for up to two years after the immediate crisis has passed. A deepening recognition of the realities of divorce set in and the turmoil and shock gives way. Conflict and hostility between parents continue to be common. Therefore, *blaming the spouse* and *anger* (Neumann, 2003) may still be emotional stages that the individual is experiencing.

- *The Long-Range Period* (Kalter, 1990:17)

This stage typically begins two to three years after the initial separation. However, the previous stage can be prolonged due to continued interparental hostility, which becomes the major stressor for children in this stage. It is also in this stage that the stresses of parents dating, give way to those stresses that remarriage brings. Therefore, in this phase children can be confronted with new family structures and adapting to stepparents and stepsiblings. It would seem suitable to say that Neumann's (2003) fourth and fifth stages can also describe the emotional stages that some individuals experience in the *long-range period*.

In viewing the above stages of divorce an overlap between the authors' presentations is noticeable. For practical purposes I chose to simplify the stages by making use of only three stages in discussing further aspects of divorce. They are well-grounded in the above-mentioned authors' stages of divorce and are presented as the following (also view Figure 3.1):

- Stage one: Pre-divorce
- Stage two: Divorce transition
- Stage three: Post-divorce

Table 3.1 Stages of Divorce as used in this study

Adapted from Neumann (2003), Bogolub (1995:42-107) and Kalter (1990:6-17)

Reference	Stages of Divorce			
This study	Pre-divorce	Divorce Transition		Post-divorce
Neumann (2003)	Blaming the spouse	Mourning	Anger	Re-entry Being single
Bogolub (1995)	Pre-separation	Divorce Transition		
Kalter (1990)	Immediate crisis		Short-term aftermath	Long-range period

In this study little emphasis is placed on the pre-divorce stage, because the focus of this study is from divorce onwards. Following is a discussion of children's possible experiences as they go through different stages of divorce.

2.4 CHILDREN'S EXPERIENCES OF DIVORCE

In this section I discuss general aspects that children may experience during different stages of divorce, as well as unique experiences pertaining to certain age groups. Here I also included babies and preschoolers, because their experiences might directly influence their primary school years.

Dreman (1999:152) argues that the reactions of children from divorced families have been compared to those of children who have undergone traumatic events such as natural disasters, or the death of a loved-one. The author continues by stating that divorce experiences are generally accompanied by stress for children, since they have to cope with situational changes. Children from divorced families may then grieve the losses they suffer during these situational changes.

In emphasizing the importance to understand the grief process in divorce, Lock and Ciechalski (1995:164) refer to the stages of grief as Kübler-Ross (1969) identified it. The five stages can be summarized as denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance. According to Ozydads (2003) the stages of Kübler-Ross can be applied to divorce in the following manner:

- *Denial* : This is where the child fails to believe that the divorce process is happening to him and his family. This may soften the impact of the reality for a while. The child may reassure himself that his parents will stay together, or if already separated, that they will soon reunite.
- *Anger* : The child may show resentment and even overt anger towards certain people for example, his parents.
- *Bargaining* : Now the fact of divorce is accepted, but an offer is made to postpone it. The child may think that good behaviour can keep his parents together just a little while longer.
- *Depression* : A pervasive sadness can be present that permeates every aspect of the child's life. They are sad and tired every day at school and at home. Children in this stage should be watched closely.
- *Acceptance* : When the earlier stages have been successfully expressed, the child will be able to accept the divorce. Acceptance occurs when the child has gained the emotional experience to see that perhaps the divorce was for the best.

The above stages can also be seen as a necessary process for some children, especially where emotional scars are left due to divorce. According to Prinsloo, Vorster and Sibaya (1996:212) an unstable home that is torn apart by parental conflict and divorce, results in many emotional scars. These emotional scars may manifest in different ways. Bogolub (1995:42) mentions that the manifestations of these experiences may include both externalizing problems (e.g., aggression towards peers, substance abuse) and internalizing problems (e.g., depression, and inability to concentrate on schoolwork).

Hetherington (1981, cited in Shaw, 1992:193) has found that children from divorced families demonstrate more disobedient and aggressive behaviour (externalizing

problems) than do peers from two-parent families. Other factors that relate to child externalizing problems, such as inconsistent disciplining practices and lowered family income, are known correlates of the divorce process and may explain the high incidence of externalizing problems associated with divorce (Loeber, 1982, cited in Shaw, 1992:194). However, Shaw (1992:194) argues that the relation between divorce and internalizing problems has been less compelling and relatively few researchers have found such a relation to exist.

One internalizing problem that has been correlated to divorce, is that the child may feel very uncertain of himself during this stage and may even think that the divorce is his fault (Bustanoby, 1981:34; Miller, 1996:107).

Another possible internal experience that children go through is the sense of loss. According to Bogolub (1995:102-105) there are three major losses that children may experience during the divorce transition stage:

- *Loss of the noncustodial parent :*

The major loss for children is generally the daily presence of the noncustodial parent, usually the father. The response to this loss is generally confusion. According to Lansky (1991, cited in Miller, 1996:107) children tend not to think of their parents as separate beings. Bustanoby (1981:34) agrees by stating that children find it difficult to accept that their parents fulfill other roles than being parents, and therefore, view them as being parents and being a unit.

Kalter (1990, cited in Bogolub, 1995:102) states that the loss of a parent is particularly painful if the relationship was warm and loving, though it may be counteracted, to an extent, by regular support, visits and phone contact. However, if the noncustodial parent reveals to be inconsistent in phonecalls and visits, the child might be placed on an emotional yo-yo.

- *Loss of the custodial parent through decreased involvement :*

Children may fear that they will lose their custodial parent, just as they lost their noncustodial parent, especially when the custodial parent changes their workload and routine.

- *Loss of predivorce standard of living :*

Newly middle-class or newly working-class children are suddenly without vacations, movies and new school clothes. The custodial parent may even delay visits to the doctor or laundromat, while awaiting the noncustodial parent contribution. Feelings of anger, deprivation and frustration may become prominent for these children. If there is a household move, children may lose friends and even switch schools.

The above-mentioned experiences are observations pertaining to children in general. However, it is also necessary to present children's possible experiences as they manifest at different ages. According to Miller, Ryan and Morrison (1999:285) reactions to the divorce are expressed differently, depending on the child's age. Following is a short discussion of how children may react to divorce at different ages:

2.4.1 Babies

Krantzler (1975, cited in Bustanoby, 1981:33) states that such a small child will sense his mother's sadness during divorce. Bustanoby (1981:33) mentions that the mother is most likely to be less warm and relaxed towards the baby or changes her eating and sleeping habits. The baby may then react by also changing his/her eating and sleeping habits (Bustanoby, 1981:33). According to Strasheim (2003) babies exhibit irritability and hyperactivity when their parents are stressed. The author elaborates that babies may react to the tension-charged atmosphere when they feel their security and safety is threatened (Strasheim, 2003).

According to Bray and Berger (1993, cited in Bogolub, 1995:106) very young children may tend to regress, losing recent developmental accomplishments such as toilet training, speech, or ability to drink from a cup rather than a bottle.

Due to the limited cognitive capacity of these youngsters, they simply cannot understand that one of their parents does not live with them anymore (Bogolub, 1995:102). According to Kalter (1990:42) this child may then be vulnerable to the stresses of divorce.

2.4.2 Preschool age children

Bogolub (1995:43) states that preschoolers are highly vulnerable to marital discord. Kalter (1990, cited in Bogolub, 1995:43) states that these children are dependent on adults, react strongly to any disruption of nurturance, and are too young to withdraw from stress into other activities or relationships. Bustanoby (1981:33) states that these children experience the loss of a parent and the disruption in their daily routine.

According to Dreman (1999:152) their limited cognitive development prevents them from accurately interpreting the events after the divorce, including their own role in the divorce process, as well as possible outcomes. Wallerstein and Kelly (1980:57) explain that regression is a common response and the child may return to a previous level of functioning, for example, lapses in toilet training.

Miller (1996:107) highlights the following aspects that children in this developmental level may experience:

- children may fear that their parents will stop loving them too, seeing that they don't love each other any more;
- it is common for the child to deny the situation initially, as though he does not understand the information;
- young children, because they are quite egocentric, often feel that they caused the parents to divorce;

- when children feel they caused the divorce, they sometimes think they can undo the divorce by being very obedient and loveable, by getting sick, or by becoming a problem at school in order to demand the attention of both parents;
- a child's self-esteem often suffers when he fails to reunite his parents or he may feel unimportant because he is not his parents' primary concern;
- children may feel abandoned by the absent parent and fear that the other parent will leave as well;

According to Strasheim (2003) children of this age believe the world revolves around them and therefore, they feel guilty when the family breaks up. Strasheim (2003) states that parental support is extremely important to these youngsters and contact with the opposite gender parent is essential for building gender-role identities. The author continues by stating that peers become important for additional support at this age.

2.4.3 Foundation phase and Intermediate phase children

According to Bray and Berger (1993, cited in Bogolub, 1995:106) children who are school age or older are not only able to express their reactions to divorce in words, they are also able to distance themselves emotionally from what upsets them. Bogolub (1995:106) states alternately that children may utilise defence mechanisms such as avoidance and sublimation, and escape from the concerns of the divorce transition into activities.

Kalter (1990:12) states that conflict and hostility between parents might continue, during the divorce transition phase. The author continues by stating that older children are frequently drafted by their parents to participate in this conflict as allies or go-betweens. These children could then be burdened, and even overwhelmed, by their parents' aspects of the divorce. Wallerstein *et al.* (1980:71) state that some children may experience conflict because of a division in loyalty between their parents, even when their parents were not pushing the child to take sides.

The divorce process may lead to where a parent tries to fill the gap that the spouse has left, by drawing the children closer. According to Kalter (1990:14) parents may even adjust sleeping arrangements after divorce, so that children share a room or bed with their parent. The author continues in saying that children may enjoy these arrangements, but they are emotionally costly to them. He argues that sleeping apart from parents is a developmental achievement for youngsters and through this they acquire a firmer sense of independence and competence. The child's ability to be on his own can effect feelings of independence in school and with friends (Kalter, 1990:14).

Another aspect of parents' changing lives, that could affect children, is that parents may start dating other adults. Kalter (1990:18) states that in the post-divorce stage the parent's dating usually changes to a more formal live-in arrangement or even marriage. He argues that children may experience competitive feelings toward the dating partner or stepparent and may feel uneasy, irritable and frightened (Kalter, 1990:19).

The above-mentioned aspects of parental dating and remarriage may also be present for children in the senior primary phase.

2.4.4 Senior primary phase children

According to Strasheim (2003) this group begins to understand the concept of morals. However, they may become confused when they are told to do moral things, but they see their parents breaking rules (Strasheim, 2003). This may lead to inner conflict for the child. Wallerstein *et al.* (1980:76) mention that the children in their study felt that their conscience had been weakened by their disenchantment with the parent's behaviour. Several children became involved in petty theft and lying shortly after the parental separation (Wallerstein *et al.*, 1980:76).

Bray *et al.* (1993, cited in Bogolub, 1995:106) states that when older children lack opportunities to distance themselves from their parents' divorce, or to express their feelings about the divorce in a healthy manner, they may act out their reactions self-destructively.

According to Bray *et al.* (1993, cited in Bogolub, 1995:106) these acting out behaviours may vary from blatant, dangerous, attention-seeking behaviour (e.g. shoplifting, substance abuse) to more subtle phenomena, such as constriction of creativity, somatization, or decrease in academic performance. Prinsloo *et al.* (1996:214) states that psychosomatic illnesses may also occur, where children complain of headaches, stomachaches, etc. The authors continue by stating that these physical difficulties sometimes have an emotional origin and not an organic cause.

As discussed earlier in this chapter (Bogolub, 1995:102), the child could experience the loss of the noncustodial parent within the divorce transition stage. He may also be experiencing the loss of the custodial parent in terms of emotional availability. The unavailability of a parent may force the child then to take on more responsibility in the household.

According to Ellwood and Stolberg (1991:158) the stress factor of being thrust into roles they do not have the requisite skills for, may impact negatively on children from divorced families, especially when they become older. Carlson (1992:37) states that the single-parent family is vulnerable to task overload and strain. The author continues to state that a task overload could occur when children assume responsibilities typically shared by the absent parent like, housekeeping tasks and taking care of younger siblings.

Therefore, according to Kalter (1990:15), the 'parenting child' provides realistic help to beleaguered parents, but at the cost of partially sacrificing important elements of childhood.

Another challenge that children of this age group can be faced with is the dating of their parents. This generally happens during the divorce transition stage. Kalter (1990:16) states that children are then faced with the conflicted prospect of fully acknowledging their parents' sexuality. However, one expects that most children in the senior primary phase understand the connection between sexual intercourse and having children. Therefore, parental dating may stir up conflicts for children, not only of a sexual nature, but also in terms of new competition for their parent's attention.

Wallerstein *et al.* (1980:73) mention that children in this developmental stage may try to overcome the unhappiness they experience by starting vigorously to participate in activities. For some of them the activity may even be to undo the parental separation and they address this task with energy (Wallerstein *et al.*, 1980:73). The authors state that this may have the psychological purpose of undoing their sense of powerlessness and passivity, which they find so oppressive.

Lastly, children of this age may feel insecure in their conception of who they are. According to Wallerstein *et al.* (1980:76) children who are in this developmental stage form their sense of identity in relation to their family structure and through divorce this family structure has changed.

In concluding this section on children's experiences of divorce, Shaw (1992:197) argues that the changes that accompany divorce, appear to be better predictors of child adjustment than is divorce itself. The author also urges educators not to expect certain children to show adjustment problems, simply based on their age and the fact that their parents are in the divorce process.

Kalter (1990:23) states that the stresses associated with each phase of divorce can be immense, even under the best of circumstances. The author raises the question of, what can be done to minimise this stress for children and how can healthy social, emotional, and cognitive growth be facilitated.

Wallerstein *et al.* (1980:36) believes that many children face the tensions and sorrows of divorce with little help from their parents. They state that this may be due to a diminished capacity to parent. Following is a discussion on various parental needs during the process of divorce.

2.5 PARENTAL NEEDS DURING DIVORCE

Wallerstein *et al.* (1980:36) state that parental care is often diminished because the radical changes in their lives tend to focus their attention on their own experiences. Kalter (1990:394) confirms this by stating that parents may be blinded by their own distress and therefore not able to see their children as being in distress. Sammons and Lewis (2000:64) argue that divorcing parents are often emotionally distracted, fatigued, and not functioning well as parents. They continue by stating that educators are then frequently called upon to fill this parenting gap (Sammons *et al.*, 2000:64).

A parenting gap may occur when parents become occupied with their own emotions and experiences. Kalter (1990:10) states that social isolation, loneliness, irritability, depression, and anxiety may threaten to overwhelm parents in the divorce transition, and it could become almost impossible to be the attentive, caring and tolerant parents they usually are. The author continues by stating that the parents might throw themselves into work or social activities in order to escape from the tensions, and this ends up taking parents from their children.

According to Kiecolt-Glaser *et al.* (1987, cited in Dreman, 1999:157) research shows that divorce hampers the immunologic system, making parents more vulnerable to disease. Therefore, divorce places these parents at risk for both psychological and physical dysfunction.

Parents may also be at risk on a financial level. Cherlin (1992, cited in Bogolub, 1995:94) mentions that the custodial parent may experience drastically reduced income and drastically increased child-care responsibilities, within the divorce transition stage. For such a parent the list of child-care responsibilities may seem

endless and the parent is faced with working through a list alone that is generally designed for two.

Another factor is that the custodial parent, in many cases the mother, seeks extra financial security to provide for her family. In a study conducted by Wallerstein *et al.* (1980:24) many mothers began employment for the first time during the divorce transition stage. They state that in this stage two families have to be supported with what was formerly enough for one household. This forces a decline in standard of living and pressures many women to make life-changing decisions (Wallerstein *et al.*, 1980:23). This may add to a mother's lack of time to support her children efficiently.

Other factors, such as guilt, may then lead to the parent's behaviour disabling himself. Bustanoby (1981:38-42) highlights possible parental behaviour in the divorce transition and post-divorce stages:

- the *guilty parent* may feel horrible about what he allowed to happen to his children and therefore, feels that he doesn't have the right anymore to discipline and decide;
- the *permissive parent* feels guilty and tries to win the children's favour by letting them do what they want;
- the *over protective parent* tries to keep the child away from the impact of life just because the child has already experienced pain through the divorce;
- the *parent that makes excuses* tends to disguise the truth with false pictures about the absent parent;
- the *holiday parent* means well by inviting the other parent to special occasions like a birthday, but this gives unnecessary hope to the child.

Bustanoby (1981:43) states that when a child has experienced the tension of a divorce, parents may face certain fears regarding their children. The author mentions the following as being some issues parents might worry about:

- *Child delinquency* : out of a study done by Despert (cited in Bustanoby, 1981:43) it was found that the majority of children that violate laws come from emotionally

broken families. Most divorced families seem to be emotionally broken; therefore this concern of parents appears to be valid.

- *Homosexuality* : it is not the divorce itself that produces homosexuality, but the circumstances and shortfalls of the home and relationships that may lead to it.
- *The mother's responsibility* : when a mother has custody over her son it is very important that she takes care of what she says about his father in front of him. He must grow up wanting to be a man, even though his father may have some problems. The mother is the best person to set a feminine example for her daughter, even if she does not have custody over her.
- *The father's responsibility* : the father's regular and quality input in his son's life is very important for him to identify strongly with his own gender. Even though the father may be the absent parent, he is still the best person to set a masculine example. The father that has custody of his daughter must also emphasize and support his daughter's femininity by being loving and masculine.
- *Fear of sleeping alone* : another common problem that single parents are confronted with is the child's fear of sleeping alone. They might want to sleep in the parent's bed or room.
- *Poor school performance* : some children's reactions toward divorce are behavioural problems and poor school performance. This is not the ideal time to reprimand the child. The child needs assurance that she is loved and the focus should be emotional well being and not necessarily better school marks.

The overwhelming task of parenthood during divorce may lead to feelings of anger, resentment and emotional depletion. Therefore, it may be advisable for parents to seek professional help during these times.

2.6 PROFESSIONAL HELP

Highly stressed parents are not always reliable raters of their children's well being and therefore, professional support for the children could be useful (Bogolub, 1995:57). Kalter (1990:10) argues that parents may become so overwhelmed with their own experiences and feelings that their capacity to parent diminishes. This diminished capacity can lead to parents missing their children's symptoms of distress. Bogolub (1995:58) states alternately that parents may also pathologize healthy responses to parental distress because they fear an anticipated separation may psychologically destroy their children.

Therefore, parents and their children may need professional support from the pre-divorce to the post-divorce stage. Eddy (2003) presents ways in which therapy can be utilized to support parents and children professionally:

- *Deciding on a divorce*

This entails professional support in the pre-divorce stage. According to Eddy (2003) many people feel frustrated in their marriages, but are unsure about divorce. He suggests couples counseling before making such an important decision. Through this support, people may realistically see whether communication can be improved and problems brought under control. If they are not able to resolve these problems, they might better understand why their marriage ended. Parents may also learn the necessary skills to support their children through this stage.

- *Coping with the divorce*

During the divorce transition and post-divorce stages professional support (i.e. psychotherapy) can benefit all concerning parties. Eddy (2003) states that this can also be an opportunity to make personal changes, such as becoming more assertive, re-evaluating personal habits or changing how one chooses a partner. Parents could also learn to understand and support their children's reactions to the divorce process.

- *Divorce Therapy*

According to Eddy (2003) some divorcing couples are willing to proceed in counseling together for a few sessions to facilitate the divorce process. He states that this could also relieve the pressure on the children. In this post-divorce stage, parents can come understand their children's experiences and effective ways of supporting them

- *Counseling for children*

In many cases of divorce, it is a child's mood or behaviour which first draws attention to a need for counseling or therapy (Eddy, 2003). This author maintains that a therapist can work with each parent and the child to bring resolution to issues arising from the divorce process, especially pertaining the children.

Bogolub (1995:83) states that the therapist can also encourage children's connections to responsive adults in the extended family.

2.7 FAMILY SUPPORT

According to Bogolub (1995:44) children's experiences of parental discord can be buffered by other family members for example, siblings. Siblings can validate each others' reality testing regarding a new or puzzling home situation and so children can maintain confidence in the ability to understand the world around them (Bogolub, 1995:44).

Siblings can also help each other to refocus their attention to conflict-free and enjoyable arenas, listen to each other, and assist each other with concrete tasks (Bogolub, 1995:44). The author also mentions that one should not assume that siblings are always a blessing for each other when there is marital discord. He states that extremely rivalrous or distant siblings will not automatically transform into close allies, and self-destructive acting-out behaviour can become contagious.

According to Wallerstein *et al.* (1980:117) children of divorced families may be in the position where they take on so many responsibilities, that they are unable to sustain

their own development in the process. Sustaining development should really not be the child's own responsibility and this is where the extended family, like grandparents, could fulfil an important role.

Bogolub (1995:44) states that extended family members may carry out crucial work in parenting domains such as affection, guidance, and housework, partially compensating for the void left by preoccupied parents. However, the author argues that the custodial parents may become increasingly dependent on extended family during the divorce transition stage. This can influence the parent to become less and less involved in supporting the child.

2.8 PEER SUPPORT

Shaw (1992:198) maintains that peer support provides an opportunity for divorced children to share their experiences and learn specific skills related to interpersonal problem solving, communication, and the expression of anger. According to Jackson *et al.* (2002:206) the practices of peer support are designed to connect children more closely with each other so that they can assist their peers for behavioural, academic and social purposes.

In research done by Stolberg and Garrison (1985, cited in Teja, Sameera and Stolberg, 1993:46), it was found that children who benefited the most from the intervention were those assigned to a support group with other children. Teja *et al.* (1993:58) confirms this in their study by stating the following results:

- when children report higher peer support, teachers, parents and the children themselves report fewer behaviour and emotional problems;
- peer support was found to be related to children's adjustment

Kalter (1990, cited in Teja *et al.*, 1993:58) believes that the importance of peer support increases with age and is present for all children. Teja *et al.* (1993:58) argue that children who are better adjusted attract more friends and therefore have more peer support.

In a study conducted by Wallerstein *et al.* (1980:269) some of the children retained their ability to function academically, but lost considerable ground with their peers. This happened, especially, when the children expressed their anxiety of the divorce in ways that the peers could not understand, for example, aggressive behaviour (Wallerstein *et al.*, 1980:269). However, the authors continue to state that this behaviour only temporarily alienated the children from their peers.

Teja *et al.* (1993:61) emphasize that peer support should be maximized in a number of contexts, including the school environment. Following is a discussion of the supportive role the school can play in the divorce process.

2.9 THE ROLE OF THE SCHOOL

"Ultimately, aiding children in their efforts to grow up with divorce is best done by parents. Who else knows their child so well? Who does the child depend upon more? And who else cares so deeply?" (Kalter, 1990:395).

The author poses an important question, that I would like to answer with an argument from Bhavnagri *et al.* (1999:298). These authors state that educators are the only other adults, besides parents, who daily spend significant amounts of time with children. Ligon *et al.* (1970:76) confirm that educators are of inestimable help to children who bring their problems to them, such as divorce issues.

Therefore, educators do play a crucial role in supporting children from divorced families. The question is 'How do educators experience their role in supporting children from divorced families?'. In this discussion I focus on four areas that may be influenced by the role the school, and more specifically the educators, can play. The four areas being *children, parents, the school* and *educators* themselves.

2.9.1 Children

Miller (1996:109) mentions ways in which the educator can respond to children from divorced families:

- let the child know that you are aware of the situation and available to talk and listen, but do not pressure him to open up;
- introduce activities that will encourage children to express their emotions;
- talk about change and how to accept it;
- remind the child that he is not to blame for the divorce;
- emphasize to the child that his parents still love him even if they got divorced;
- reinforce the parents message that the child will be taken care of and protected and loved, no matter what the circumstances are;
- point out to the child all the different people who love them;
- provide consistency and therefore it may be best if the child does not change classes or educators at this time.

The above-mentioned recommendations should not be seen as absolute strategies for all children. Shaw (1992:199) cautions educators to treat every child from a divorced family as a separate and unique individual, given the great variation in child adaptation to the process.

Children who are directly involved in a divorce process may need support, but it may also be necessary to guide their peers. According to Miller (1996:110) educators can also provide guidance to the peers of the children experiencing divorce. She mentions the following:

- discuss words related to family life like mother, father, stepfamilies, single-parent families; build their vocabulary by talking about all kinds of families;
- display books that represent all different kinds of families;
- stop children from taunting the child going through the divorce process.

2.9.2 Parents

Frieman (1997:23) states that schools can mitigate the classroom effects of family breakups by recognizing and responding to the child's feelings and involving both parents in the child's school life. According to Jackson *et al.* (2002:203) a good relationship between parents and educators can help facilitate good relationships between children and their educators.

Miller (1996:111) suggests the following strategies that educators can utilize to build their relationships with parents:

- get the message across to parents that the educators need to be informed of any major changes at home that might affect the child's behaviour at school;
- do not criticise the parents, rather support them with respect and acceptance;
- do not get in the middle of things or take sides;
- present the child's possible perspective to the parent and make the parent aware of how to avoid possible damage to the child;
- recommend helpful reading materials for adults and children and refer them to other community resources such as psychologists;
- keep track of the child's living arrangements to know where to phone or send written messages;
- communicate with both parents as far as possible.

According to Sammons *et al.* (2000:65) it is in the best interest of the child when both parents work together with the educator. They continue to state that educators should consider sending newsletter and notices to both parents and scheduling individual feedback session if need be (Sammons *et al.*, 2000:65).

2.9.3 The School

According to Dreman (1999:163) the school environment may serve as a source of social support for children from divorced families. Miller (1996:106) confirms this by stating that the school may be the most stable element in the child's life during the divorce process. This stability can be gained through setting up a structured environment. Hetherington *et al.* (1978, cited in Dreman, 1999:163) states that children of divorce adjust better in school settings in which there is a structured and supportive environment.

From the arguments of the above authors it seems as if the school can play an important role in supporting children from divorced families. However, In a longitudinal study conducted by Wallerstein *et al.* (1980:279), little evidence was

found suggesting that the availability of school as a support system, determined the child's eventual adjustment. Rather, the course of the child's future was linked to the quality of support provided by the parents (Wallerstein *et al.*, 1980:279).

The question arises: what support is there for children who do not receive the quality of support they need from their parents? Shaw (1992:198) answers the question by stating:

"When a child from a recently divorced family is experiencing inconsistent and uninvolved parenting at home, a school that provides a structured but nurturant atmosphere can make a great difference in the child's adjustment".

From the above statement, it seems that the school system does have a role to play in certain cases. Following are various aspects of where the school could be supportive of children from divorced families:

2.9.3.1 Academic achievement

According to Rogers (1996, cited in Dreman, 1999:150) poor academic achievement is often associated with parental divorce. Shinn (1978, cited in Carlson, 1992:42) provides evidence that child-upbringing in father-absent families or in families, in which fathers have little supportive interaction with their children, is often associated with poor performance on intellectual functioning tests. Researchers have generally found that children from divorced families do more poorly on academic tasks than children from other types of single-parent families (Ferri, 1976; Gregory, 1965; Santrock, 1972; cited in Shaw, 1992:195).

Miller *et al.* (1999:287) urge educators to be tolerant of variability in the academic performance of children experiencing divorce. The authors also emphasize that care should be taken before interpreting declines in academic performance as due to lack of interest, laziness, or as intentional (Miller *et al.*, 1999:287).

Damon (1979, cited in Locke and Ciechalski, 1995:161) states that educators should be aware of custody and visitation responsibilities and therefore, be prepared to accept late assignments. These assignments may be late due to a visitation arrangement that could have hindered the child to complete it on time. In general, the demands in class might have to be adjusted to accommodate the child in distress. Ligon *et al.* (1970:77) state that when educators know about the child's situation they should adapt class assignments so that the child can keep up with his work.

Miller *et al.* (1999:287) suggest that educators should be careful of interpreting declines in academic performance as due to lack of interest, laziness or as intentional.

2.9.3.2 School policy and administration

Bray *et al.* (1992:74) mention that school administrators may need to examine school policies and the content of classes to determine if they are supportive or detrimental to children's adjustment. In example, stepparents should be appropriately recognized and included in school activities (Bray *et al.*, 1992:74).

Locke *et al.* (1995:161) believe that school activities should also be scheduled to accommodate different family structures. The authors elaborate by stating that school activities are often held at inaccessible times for parents, and that single-parents are often unable to provide transportation so that their children can participate in an activity. Due to this, I would assume that some children's participation may become restricted.

Further administrative supporting tools are sources that can provide educators with relevant information regarding children's circumstances. Ligon *et al.* (1970:77) state that children's portfolios may provide information, but it does not measure up to the kinds of information one can get from personal

knowledge of the child. An additional source of information could be to talk to the child's previous educators. According to Ligon *et al.* (1970:90) other educators can provide a valuable source of information, and so educators can support one another to be supportive of the children they work with.

2.9.3.3 After school care

As mentioned earlier, the custodial parent may start or increase employment in the *divorce transition phase* in order to make up for the loss of income due to divorce. The school can fulfil a critical role by providing services that will take care of the children until the parent can fetch them from school. Bogolub (1995:96) confirms this by stating that working single-parents are sometimes faced with the practical challenge of finding good childcare.

2.9.3.4 School-based intervention programs

School-based intervention programs have been found to be effective in improving emotional and social functioning of children from divorced families (Pedro-Carroll & Cowen, 1985, cited in Shaw, 1992:198).

Pedro-Carroll and Alpert-Gillis (1997:11) explain the curriculum they used in their study of the *Children of Divorce Intervention Program (CODIP)*, where they worked with children in groups. The five fundamental objectives (Pedro-Carroll *et al.*, 1997:11) they used are as follows:

- foster a supportive group environment;
- facilitate expression of divorce-related feelings;
- promote understanding of divorce-related concepts;
- teach competencies such as communication and problem-solving skills;
- enhance children's perceptions of themselves and their families.

In the above study educator ratings revealed that children attending the program were significantly less anxious, withdrawn, and tended to be less

disruptive than a non-program, divorce-control group of demographically matched peers (Pedro-Carroll *et al.*, 1997:17).

2.9.3.5 Enhancing supportive ability

According to Wallerstein *et al.* (1980:265) educators' psychological training and knowledge is limited, despite their genuine interest in children. They continue by stating that many educators may not understand the anxiety and tension provoked by a divorce process. Therefore, educators need to enhance their supportive ability to a certain extent.

Miller (1996:118) mentions the following important aspects that can enhance an educator's supportive role:

- inform the relevant educators of the child's circumstances;
- persuade educators to understand and apply confidentiality;
- preventing educators from becoming sounding boards for parents' complaints about each other;
- enable educators to refer parents to local counseling services.

Educators should also be assisted in referring parents and children to specialists. According to Locke *et al.* (1995:159) educators should refer the child to the school counselor. However, it is my observation that within the South African context the privilege of having a school counselor is limited to only a few schools. If this is the case, educators should then be able to refer to counselors, psychologists or social workers that will generally be outsourced specialists.

Locke *et al.* (1995:159) emphasize the importance for educators to develop basic counseling skills and that schools should increase opportunities for educators to learn such techniques through in-service workshops.

2.9.4 Educators

According to Bray *et al.* (1992:72) the first step in helping children from divorced families is to understand the context in which growing numbers of children live. They go on to say that educators are in a better position to be empathic to children's problems and needs (Bray *et al.*, 1992:73). Ligon *et al.* (1970:78) confirm this by stating that more learning actually takes place in a trusting, accepting atmosphere.

Locke *et al.* (1995:159) believe that educators need to know what can and cannot be done to support children through a disrupting period. The authors continue by stating that children need love and understanding more than anything else. Sammons *et al.* (2000:65) add to this by stating that educators should also listen to the child's point of view in a non-judgemental manner and reassure the child that you care.

Here follows other aspects that educators could consider in their supporting role of children from divorced families:

2.9.4.1 Preventive education

Dreman (1999:164) argues that if the family of divorce is perceived by society as a pathological entity with children at risk, this might result in a self-fulfilling prophecy producing adjustment difficulties. Therefore, the author argues that preventive educational work might be necessary to change prejudicial stereotypes and attitudes, including those of educators, which may affect the adjustment of children from divorced families. Locke *et al.* (1995:160) also emphasises the need for educators to examine their personal attitudes in order to avoid the self-fulfilling prophecy that children of divorced families are different and cannot cope.

Educators attitudes might have an influence on the way they treat children from divorced families. A study done by Grolnick (1987, cited in Grolnick & Ryan, 1992:287) suggests that educators end up spending the most

classroom time with children who receive the least attention and resources at home. This might be the case where children exhibit behavioural problems due to their home circumstances, such as divorce. This extra time might be negative in nature, mainly in the form of reprimands for disruptive behaviour and incomplete work. Therefore, Grolnick *et al.* (1992:287) suggest that educators initiate ways to provide positive, constructive attention prior to misbehaviour e.g. individual interactions, as a form of preventive education.

Another form of preventive education might be visiting the family in distress at their home. In a Epstein and Becker (1982, cited in Grolnick *et al.*, 1992:288) survey, many educators stressed the positive effect of a home visit by the educator at the beginning of the school year. This visit may open up dialogue between the educator and parent and facilitate a positive working relationship (Grolnick *et al.*, 1992:288).

2.9.4.2 Educators need to know

According to Locke *et al.* (1995:158) educators are often the last to know that a child's parents are in a divorce process. The authors ascribe this to the fact that parents sometimes fail to understand that a major crisis in the life of a child does appear to show repercussions in the child's behaviour and performances at school. Wallerstein *et al.* (1980:265) argue that parents may withhold such information because they are worried about prejudicing the educator against their child by labeling him as a child of divorce.

Miller (1996:105) highlights a case in her book where the educators were quite frustrated and felt that they might have handled situations with the child differently if they had known about the divorce of his parents, offering him more of the emotional support he needed. Locke *et al.* (1995:159) mentions that many educators can be immediately sensitive to a child's distress once they are aware of the circumstances.

2.9.4.3 *Educators as social resources*

"Because of children's dependent status, their adjustment can be affected more significantly than adults by the availability or unavailability of supportive relationships" (Procidano, 1992:298).

Therefore, educators' awareness of the nature and effects of social resources can help them to communicate more effectively with children and ultimately enhance their educational experience (Procidano, 1992:298).

Procidano (1992:298) provides the following recommendations to enhance educators' roles as social resources for children:

- design structured and predictable classroom environments;
- foster positive peer support through appropriate curricular and extracurricular activities;
- maintain continuity with the home environment, enhancing the support that they receive from their parents;
- provide assistance in interpreting life transitions, and help the child to find positive meaning in the events (Gottlieb, 1988, cited in Procidano, 1992:299);
- make referrals when appropriate.

Generally, educators should also know where the limitations of their roles are. Miller *et al.* (1999:288) suggest that educators should only focus on the divorce-related problems that affect the child's school behaviour and performance. This can provide educators with a strategy that will prevent them from getting drawn into the divorce process where they do not belong.

Schools are the centre of children's social lives (Coleman, 1961, cited in Opotow and Deutsch, 1999:205), and not merely a place for learning. According to Opotow *et al.* (1999:205) schools have to change in basic ways if they are to educate children so that they can develop the ability to cope with their conflicts constructively. These conflicts may also refer to the emotional turmoil that children experience when their parents divorce.

2.10 REFLECTION AND CONCLUSION

This chapter has dealt with the concepts and aspects of the divorce phenomenon. The discussion started off with certain legal aspects that are important to keep in mind when the best interest of the child needs to be established during the divorce transition stage. Three different stages of the divorce process were then presented to serve as a guideline for the subsequent discussions.

Children's possible experiences were then highlighted in terms of their various developmental stages. The conclusion was made that these experiences are merely possibilities and should not be generalized to all children. However, through this discussion it became clear that children need their support systems to be in place, especially their parents.

Parental needs were briefly outlined with the purpose of explaining the turmoil that parents may go through during divorce. Professional, family and peer support were then briefly presented as supplementary support systems in the world of a child from a divorced family.

Lastly, the major focus was placed on the role that the school system can play in supporting children from divorced families. It was argued that schools, and more specifically educators, do have an important role to play. The discussion was divided into four areas namely, *children*, *parents*, the *school* and the *educator*. Various important aspects of these four areas were presented to inform a broader understanding of the school's suggested involvement in supporting children from divorced families.

Through exploring the existing literature, my own perspective broadened on the topic of divorce. I also found it to be valuable in explaining my childhood experiences, as well as the irreplaceable role that my school played.

From the above literature review, one can deduct that support for children from divorced families are crucial. It is also clear that the school system, especially the educators, have a meaningful contribution to make in this support. Hopefully, this is also how educators view their role. The subsequent chapter will guide the reader through the process that was used to produce the data for this study.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides a thorough description of the phenomenological research design and the four coherent components thereof. Therefore, the research paradigm, purpose, context and methodology, that grounded this study, are presented. The chosen methods (semi-structured interviews and focus groups) that were used to explore the research question are discussed, as well as an outline of the research process as it developed.

3.2 THE RESEARCH QUESTION

"Most qualitative research projects are guided by one or more research questions. Research questions are different from hypotheses. A hypothesis is a claim, derived from existing theory, which can be tested against empirical evidence. It can be either rejected or retained. A research question, by contrast, is open-ended. That is, it cannot be answered with a simple 'yes' or 'no'. A research question calls for an answer which provides detailed descriptions and, where possible, also explanations of a phenomenon" (Willig, 2001:19).

Therefore, a research question guided this study to produce relevant data about the phenomenon under investigation. These detailed descriptions are presented in chapter four. The following research question served as the guide of this study:

- What are educators' experiences of their role in supporting children from divorced families?

As the researcher I serve as a 'translator' in order to give the reader access to the experiences of educators - experiences that might not be obvious. The main focus is to understand the phenomenon of educators' experiences of their supporting role. According to Giddens (1976, cited in Le Grange, 2000) this objective can be achieved through an

empathic identification with the educators and by trying to grasp their subjective experiences.

3.3 RESEARCH DESIGN

According to Mouton (2001:55) a research design is a blueprint of how you intend conducting the research. Durrheim (1999:29) elaborates by stating that a research design can also be seen as a strategic framework for action that serves as a bridge between the research question and the execution of the research. He further states that this 'framework' should be coherent in order to provide valid answers to the research questions (Durrheim, 1999:33).

"The design is coherent because the techniques of sampling, data collection and interpretation as well as the context of the study 'fit' within the logic of the interpretive paradigm and with the purpose of the research" (Durrheim, 1999:35).

Therefore, according to the above statement from Durrheim (1999:35), the research design can only be coherent when the *purpose* and *paradigm* of the study; the *methods* used for data production; and the *context* in which the study is undertaken, are complementary. Following is a figurative presentation of the cohesion of a research design.

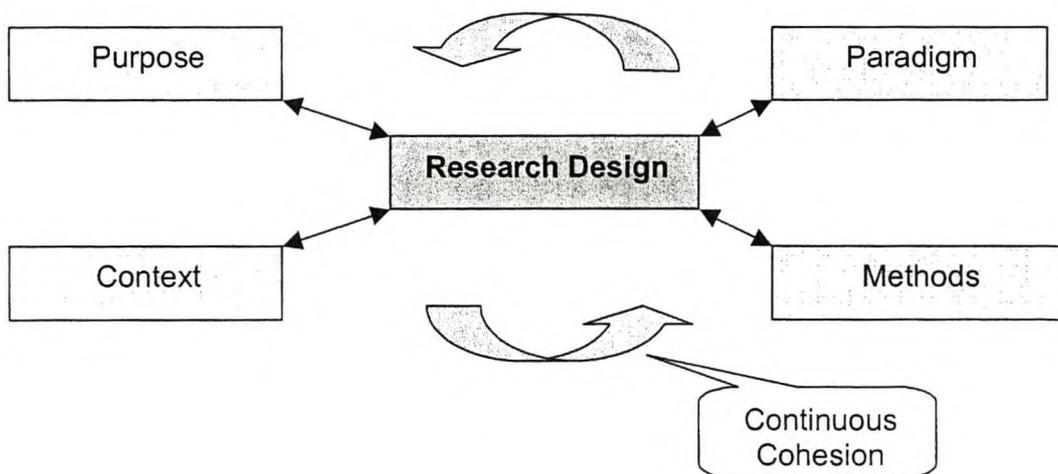


Figure 3.1 Research Design

Adapted from Durrheim (1999:33)

I have chosen to use a phenomenological research design that will guide the research process to produce qualitative data. Leedy *et al.* (2001:153) explain the *phenomenological study* as a research design that attempts to understand people's perceptions of a particular situation. They also state that the researcher might be interested in studying people's experiences and might even have personal experience related to the phenomenon (Leedy *et al.*, 2001:153), as in the case of this study.

According to Schwandt (1997:114) phenomenology is oriented toward describing the experience of everyday life as it is internalized in the subjective consciousness of the individual. Emphasis is placed on the fact that experiences are subjective and it is exactly the subjective experiences that this study aims to investigate. Creswell (1998:38) agrees that a phenomenological study investigates the individual's experiences regarding a certain phenomenon.

In this study, the people whose experiences were being studied, were the educators from a primary school in Lephalale. Through making use of two methods (semi-structured interviews and focus groups), I investigated the educators' experiences regarding the phenomenon of supporting children from divorced families. Before I explain these methods, I would like to present the research paradigm as it served as the framework for this study.

3.3.1 Research Paradigm

I utilized an interpretive paradigm to undertake this study. According to Terre Blanche *et al.* (1999:123) the interpretive research paradigm assumes that people's subjective experiences are real, that we can understand other's experiences by interacting with them and that qualitative research techniques are best suited for this task. They further emphasize the importance of ascertaining these experiences within the contexts they occur (Terre Blanche *et al.*, 1999:125).

“Interpretive researchers want to make sense of feelings, experiences, social situations or phenomena as they occur in the real world, and therefore want to study them in their natural setting” (Terre Blanche *et al.*, 1999:127)

The goal of an interpretive paradigm is the understanding of a social phenomenon (Schwandt, 1998:223). This study aimed to understand the social phenomenon of educators' experiences, by launching an investigation within the natural setting of the school.

Schwandt (1998:225) explains that *understanding* can be described as the process by which the researcher arrives at the interpretation of human action. The author continues by stating that *understanding* is:

"... less like a process of getting inside the actor's head than it is a matter of grasping intersubjective meanings and symbolizing activities that are constitutive of social life" (Schwandt, 1998:226).

In this study the process of *understanding* was informed by the data analysis process, which is discussed later on in this chapter. I made use of an integration of the *Interpretive Analysis* and the *Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA)* methods to analyze the produced data, which revealed themes that could symbolize the experiences of the educators. These two methods are explained later on in this chapter.

Therefore, by making use of an interpretive paradigm, I investigated the subjective experiences of the educators. This brings me to a specific challenge that I experienced in maintaining objectivity. I was confronted with my own experiences as a child, my subjective understanding of this particular school, and the anticipated responses of what the educators' possibly experienced. All these were intertwined with the actual subjective experiences that the educators shared with me.

Schwandt (1998:223) states that interpretivists wrestle with maintaining the opposition of subjectivity and objectivity. The author argues that interpretivists celebrate the individual's subjective experience, yet they seek to disengage from that experience and objectify it. In this study I tried to stay objective toward the educators' experiences by making use of tried and tested data analysis methods, while still respecting the experiences as they were subjectively voiced.

3.3.2 Aim of the Study

The aim of this research project lies in the exploratory nature of the conclusions I will draw about the phenomenon under investigation. According to Durrheim (1999:39) exploratory studies are used to make investigations into relatively unknown areas of research and to look for new insights into phenomena. As I mentioned in the problem statement, educators' experiences regarding their role in supporting children from divorced families, is a relatively unknown and unresearched phenomenon. Therefore, the research question was used to explore the educators' experiences regarding this phenomenon.

I explored the phenomenon of educators' experiences by interviewing educators individually and by conducting focus groups. Through the produced data I gained new insights into educators' experiences on this matter. A supplementary aim was then to share these findings and draw conclusions about them. These are presented in chapters four and five. Following is a brief description of the context wherein the data was produced.

3.3.3 Context

I have chosen a primary school in Lephalale as the context for this research project because I grew up in Lephalale and feel I understand the socio-economic, political, social and schooling systems in this town to a certain extent. This understanding gave me greater insight into the produced data.

The Lephalale primary school has approximately 470 learners, averaging between six and fourteen years of age. Although the school is making use of Afrikaans and English as parallel mediums for education, the majority of the school is Afrikaans speaking.

The school recently celebrated their 75th year of existence and proudly shares its background with those who show interest. The school places emphasis on leadership development, academic quality and participation in various extramural activities.

The feeder areas for this school stretches as far as Botswana and therefore, hostel facilities are available. The demography of the surrounding areas is largely of an

agricultural, game farming and mining nature. The farming families specialize in different industries, such as cattle, crops and tobacco. Game farms and lodges serve as a big tourist attraction and a large number of foreigners are drawn to Lephalale through this means. The Grootegeluk Coal Mine and the Matimba Eskom Powerstation provide Lephalale with diverse citizens that are from management to working force individuals. Lephalale also has a military airforce base that is close to the participatory school. A large amount of children from this airforce base are enrolled in the aforementioned school.

Twenty educators share the responsibility of educating the school's learners. The principal and two heads of department constitute the executive committee. The governing body comprises of five parents, the principle, two educators and one non-educator.

As a concluding remark to this section I would like to relate to Babbie *et al.* (2001:278) in the following way: As researcher, my emphasis is on studying human experience in the natural setting of the school, through the eyes of the educators themselves, with a further emphasis on describing and understanding the phenomena within the context.

3.3.4 Research Method

Gough (2000:4) states that methodology provides the rationale for the way the researcher will proceed. Mouton (2001:55) describes research methodology as the systematic, methodical and accurate execution of the research design where "... various methods and tools are used to perform different tasks".

A distinction can be made between the terms *methodology* and *method*. According to Harding (1987, cited in Le Grange, 2000:192) *methodology* is an interpretive framework that guides the research process, whereas, *method* refers to the techniques used to produce the data.

3.3.4.1 Sampling

This study made use of two non-probability sampling procedures, namely convenience and purposive sampling. Merriam (1998:61) confirms that non-probability sampling procedures are the preferred choice for most researchers who aim to produce qualitative data, as is the case with this study.

I have applied convenience sampling by specifically choosing a primary school in Lephalale because of its availability and accessibility. I grew up in the town Lephalale and therefore, I could easily gain access to the school's educators.

I applied purposive sampling when I selected the specific educators from the above-mentioned primary school. Merriam (1998:61) explains that purposive sampling is based on the assumption that the researcher wants to understand a phenomenon and must therefore, purposefully select a sample from which the most can be learned. Wood (1992:2823) states that purposive sampling is done so that participants are included who are knowledgeable or 'information rich'.

"... *purposive sampling*, whereby participants are selected according to criteria of relevance to the research question. This means that the group of participants is *homogeneous* to the extent that they share the experience of a particular condition, event or situation" (Willig, 2001:58), (emphasis in original text).

Therefore, purposive sampling was performed to include knowledgeable participants that could share their rich experiences, and not to include just any willing participant.

Criteria was set up beforehand to indicate certain prerequisites that the participants had to comply to. Vaughn, Schumm and Sinagub (1996:58) state that in purposive sampling the participants should be selected via predetermined criteria. The criteria that I used in the purposive sampling process were the following:

- educators from the different phases in the school;
- some educators have had personal divorce experience and others not;

- educators with many years of teaching experience and others being relatively new to the profession;
- the educators vary in their ages.

The chosen participants formed a homogenous group in terms of their experience as educators at the same school. In terms of their other characteristics, such as marital status, years of teaching experience, age and divorce experience, a more heterogeneous group was formed.

The primary school in Lephalale has approximately 20 educators at the school. The goal was to include eight educators into the research sample, at least two educators from each phase (foundation, intermediate and senior). In a discussion with the Head of Department possible participants were identified purposefully according to the set criteria.

I compiled a letter wherein I explained the research question, purpose and methods (Appendix A). The Head of Department circulated this letter to the prospective participants in order to test their willingness to participate in the research project. The consenting educators were then interviewed individually, and in focus groups, on what their experiences are of their role in supporting children from divorced families.

In the following section I explain the techniques I used in proceeding with the research and so to produce data.

3.3.4.2 Data Production

According to Le Grange (2002) data production techniques could include questionnaires, participant observation, interviews, workshops, focus group discussions, etc. This study made use of two techniques to produce data according to the research question, namely semi-structured interviews and focus group discussion.

3.3.4.2.1 *Semi-structured Interviewing*

According to Hatch (2002:91) interviews are used to uncover the meaning structures that participants use to organize their experiences. The author distinguishes between formal and informal interviews and states that formal interviews are also called 'semi-structured' interviews (Hatch, 2002:94).

Willig (2001:22) describes a semi-structured interview as an opportunity for the researcher to hear the participant talk about a particular aspect of their experience. It is the research question that drives the interview and the emphasis is on meaning (Willig, 2001:22). Van Manen (1990, cited in Hatch, 2002:94) states that phenomenologists may even use one question designed to get the participants talking about the phenomenon. The research question, as mentioned earlier in this chapter, was employed to guide the interviewing.

During the formulation of the research question, as I used it in the interviewing, I scrutinized the layout and applicability of the question according to certain guidelines. These guidelines for effective questioning is presented by Hatch (2002:106) and I implemented some of them in the following manners:

- *The question should be open-ended*

The question I used provided for the participants to share their unique experiences in their own words, without guiding their answers in certain directions.

- *The question should be clear*

The above-mentioned research question clearly communicated what I expected from the participants and on what aspect of their experience they should have focused.

- *The question should use language that is familiar to participants*
The educators at the primary school in Lephalale are all Afrikaans speaking. Therefore, I conducted the interviews in Afrikaans to provide them with the easiest possible means of expressing themselves. Further, the language used was free from jargon so that the interviews could flow easily and meaning could be conveyed.

- *The question should be neutral*
The question I asked was neutral in the sense that it did not point the participants in directions that would favour my perspective or the outcomes of the data.

- *The question should respect informants and presume that they are knowledgeable*
The above-mentioned question was formulated to invite the participants to teach me about what they experience and know. The way the question was formulated indicated to the participants that I valued their insights and shared experiences.

- *The question should generate answers related to the objectives of the research*
This one question inspired the participants to talk about the topic under investigation. Therefore, the information gained from the interviews was used to address the research question and produce descriptive answers.

I conducted eight individual semi-structured interviews with the eight participatory educators. Biographical information was obtained from the participants after each individual interview. To view an example of the biographical questionnaire, that the participants completed, see Appendix B. Following is a brief presentation of the eight participants that took part in the individual interviews (Figure 3.2):

Figure 3.2 Biographical information of the participants

Biographical Information	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Phase of school	Intermediate	Foundation	Foundation	Senior	Senior	Intermediate Senior	Foundation	Intermediate
Number of years in teaching	>15 years	>15 years	>15 years	5-15 years	>15 years	>15 years	>15 years	5-15 years
Years at this primary school	5-15 years	<5 years	5-15 years	5-15 years	5-15 years	5-15 years	5-15 years	<5 years
Age	>45 years	30-45 years	30-45 years	30-45 years	30-45 years	>45 years	>45 years	30-45 years
Marital status	Married	Married	Married	Married	Married	Married	Married	Divorced
Personal divorce experience	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
Gender	Female	Female	Female	Male	Male	Female	Female	Female
Do they have children of their own	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Do they have step-children	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No

According to Willig (2001:30) different methods of producing data can be used in combination to view the same phenomenon from different angles and this constitutes a form of triangulation. For this reason I made use of focus groups as well, in order to view the data from the interviews from a 'different angle'. Therefore, through the open-ended research question data was produced in the interviews, from which I could identify themes (see Chapter 4). The themes were then presented to the focus groups and used as stimuli for the discussions. Following is a discussion of the focus group method.

3.3.4.2.2 Focus Groups

According to Hatch (2002:131) many researchers adapt focus group methods as supplemental sources of data. This informs the use of focus groups in this study and that is to supplement the data produced from the individual interviews.

According to Willig (2001:29) a focus group is really a group interview that uses the interaction among participants as a source of data. It relies on the interactions that take place between participants to generate data (Hatch, 2002:132).

The produced data from the interviews reflect the experiences of only one person at a time. While, the produced data from the focus groups reflect the experiences of the group as they discussed the phenomenon with each other. Therefore, focus groups were used to explore the phenomenon further from what was gained in the interviews.

Fern (2001:149) states that exploratory tasks require the focus group participants to share their unique experiences with each other. According to Morgan (1998b:45) a less structured approach is called for in focus groups when the goal is exploratory. The purpose is then to discover the range of issues that need to be understood (Morgan, 1998b:45), in regards to the research question. For this reason, I tried not to structure the focus groups too much. The group members could use the freedom to discuss the experiences they felt was relevant to the topic. Part of the structure I

provided was the list of experiences produced via the interviews, and I represented the research question to the focus groups.

Another form of structure I supplied was to focus the group's discussion on the specific topic. According to Hatch (2002:132) focus groups are designed to focus on a particular topic and therefore, a lot of data can be generated in a relatively short period of time. Wood (1992:2822) states that in focus group interviews the topic should stimulate discussion and be important to the participants. She also mentions that the focus group discussions should elicit definite feelings, and encourage participants to relate personal experiences, and not to express opinions or attitudes (Wood, 1992:2822).

In the focus groups my aim was to create a less structured environment so that the participants could explore the topic as widely as possible. However, I still provided enough structure for the participants to stay on the topic. Following is a discussion of the different aspects of focus groups that I considered, where the role of the moderator is the first mentioned aspect.

▪ ***The Moderator***

As the researcher I took the role of moderator for the focus group discussions. As mentioned earlier, each participant was also interviewed individually, before the focus group discussions. This interaction elicited the unique ideas and experiences of the educators. Within the focus group sessions I tried to blend into the group in order to also obtain their shared experiences (Fern, 2001:168).

According to Fern (2001:168) the focus group moderator should be more detached when seeking unique ideas, but when uncovering shared ideas, the moderator should be more like the participants and blend into the group. It was difficult to establish whether unique or shared ideas are the ideal answer to the research question. In hindsight, both seem like valuable data. Therefore, I aimed to uncover both unique and shared ideas within the focus groups.

Hatch (2002:135) warns researchers that when they act as the moderator of a focus group, it may be difficult not to subtly interject their own perspectives into the conversation or to ask leading questions. Therefore, I decided to only present the themes generated in the individual interviews as stimulus for the discussions and emphasize the research question. Through this approach I strived to influence the outcomes of the focus groups as little as possible.

- ***Group Composition***

Fern (2001:155) states that group composition is important because it affects compatibility, cohesiveness, the group process and ultimately the group productivity. He also argues that group cohesion will increase conformity among group members and this will cause individual responses to be interdependent rather than independent (Fern, 2001:155-156). Therefore, the educators might have regressed their experiences toward the perceived group norm. Consequently, my role as moderator was to generate a wide-ranging discussion to encourage the participants to share different points of view, but still to carefully contemplate the composition of the groups (Morgan, 1998a:50).

The focus group composition could either be homogeneous or heterogeneous. Fern (2001:160) states that heterogeneity among group members is desirable when one is trying to uncover unique perspectives in exploratory research. However, Fern (2001:160) warns researchers that heterogeneous groups can keep returning the discussion to what they share, regardless of how trivial it is. Therefore, the moderator's role in focussing the discussion is important.

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the focus groups were mostly heterogeneous, but their teaching experience at the primary school in Lephalale will make them a homogeneous group to a certain extent. Mostly I assume that this homogeneous aspect made them comfortable in sharing experiences with one another.

Willig (2001:29) states that focus group participants should interact with one another in the same way that they would interact with peers outside of the research context, and that this is more likely if participants are already acquainted. The educators of the Lephalale primary school are familiar with one another and this made it possible for them to interact in a more natural way within the focus group discussions.

▪ **Group Size**

According to Fern (2001:161) focus groups should be composed of eight people, give or take two. He states that the group size should be examined from the perspective of the researcher's goals in terms of the type of information desired (Fern, 2001:161). My aim was to produce data in order to supply the reader with a broad understanding of these educators' experiences of their role in supporting children from divorced families.

According to Morgan (1998b:73) smaller groups increase the participants' opportunities to express themselves and therefore, it would be obvious to use groups of six or less when each participant has a lot to say. Morgan (1998b:74) further states that when a participant does not have much to say, that fact can be useful data in itself. Hatch (2002:135) confirms the use of smaller groups by stating that it would make more sense, having fewer in the group, if the participants have strong connections to intense issues. Through informal discussions with a Head of Department at the mentioned school, it seemed that a number of educators have previously discussed the relevancy of divorce in their context. In the hope of the educators having strong connections to the topic, I decided to keep the groups small.

Fern (2001:161) states that smaller groups of four or five participants make more sense when the interest is in a specific segment of research. My interest was in the unique experiences of each educator and therefore, I decided to group the eight educators into two groups of four educators each.

▪ **Number of Focus Groups**

According to Morgan (1998b:77) deciding on the right number of groups is a matter of hearing what there is to hear and when the groups become repetitive, you have reached a point of "theoretical saturation". Vaughn *et al.* (1996:49) confirms that focus group interviews should be conducted until the moderator can predict the participants' responses because they are redundant, and this indicates 'saturation'. According to Belle Brown (1999:118) the central issue is establishing how many focus groups are required to reach saturation.

On the other hand, Goldman and McDonald (1987, cited in Fern, 2001:162) state that the number of focus group sessions seems to depend on the research complexity and the researcher's interest in different variables. As I mentioned earlier, there is one research question that can serve as a variable that I am interested in. That is to establish educators' experiences of their role in supporting children from divorced families. This study has only one variable and is therefore not very complex.

A further consideration in determining the number of focus group discussions is the research progress. Fern (2001:163) states that the number of group sessions also depends on the rate of progress toward answering the research question. Due to the fact that I had to travel 300 kilometres to conduct the research, time and funds were restricted to a minimum. Therefore, I aimed to answer the research question as rapidly as possible. Fern (2001:163) indicates that fewer group sessions are required for rapid progress.

In light of the above, I conducted two focus group sessions. Each session being approximately one to one and a half hours long. Belle Brown (1999:119) indicates that focus groups need to be one to two hours in duration to avoid the risk of not fully exploring the topic under inquiry.

3.3.4.3 Data Analysis

According to Hatch (2002:148) data analysis is a systematic search for meaning and a way to process data so that what has been learned can be communicated to others. This means organizing the data in ways that will allow me, as the researcher, to see patterns, identify themes and make interpretations (Hatch, 2002:148). Mouton (2001:108) confirms the above by stating that the aim of analysis is to understand the various elements of one's data and to identify patterns or themes in the data.

"Faced with a mass of unstructured data, the urge of any researcher is understandably to break these down using some kind of system" (Hollway and Jefferson, 2000:68).

The way in which I aimed to 'break' down the data was to identify themes. According to Barrit (1986, cited in Leedy *et al.*, 2001:153) the central task of data analysis within a *phenomenological study* is to identify common themes in the participants' descriptions of their experiences. Belle Brown (1999:122) states that as the analysis cycle proceeds, the generated ideas will begin to cluster under major themes until there are no more themes emerging - hence, saturation has been attained.

Creswell (1998, cited in Leedy *et al.*, 2001:154) describes a few typical steps of data analysis. Here follows a brief explanation on how I implemented them:

- *Identify statements that relate to the topic*
I repeatedly read the transcripts of the interviews and focus groups and identified those statements that related to the topic under investigation. The statements that were irrelevant were left out of the analysis.
- *Group the statements into meaningful units*
As I systematically moved through the data certain units became apparent for example, statements regarding children; statements regarding parents; and statements regarding the school. I grouped these statements together.

- *Seek divergent perspectives from the various participants*

The themes that were identified in the interviews served as stimuli for the focus groups. Here I also sought the participants' perspectives on the produced data and themes were verified.

- *Develop an overall description of the participants' experiences of the phenomenon*

I developed an overall description of the themes identified in the interviews and focus groups. This can be viewed in chapter four.

In a search through relevant literature I also came across a method for data analysis called *Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA)*, which I used to inform this study's data analysis. Jonathan Smith, the founder of IPA, characterizes IPA as "an attempt to unravel the meanings contained in ... accounts through a process of interpretative engagement with the texts and transcripts" (Smith, 1997, cited in Willig, 2001:53).

The *engagement* that Smith (1997, cited in Willig, 2001:53) talks about is facilitated by a series of steps that allows the researcher to identify themes from the transcripts and integrate them into meaningful clusters, first within and then across interviews. Before analysis can start the participants within the semi-structured interviews and the focus groups need to generate transcripts. As mentioned earlier, I recorded the interviews and focus groups and then transcribed them. Willig (2001:54) states that these transcripts then have to be analysed one by one.

Hatch (2002:179-191) describes a model for analysing the produced data, called *Interpretive Analysis*. It is a process for constructing meaning from data, where the emphasis is on the researcher's interpretations as an active part in the research process (Hatch, 2002:180). I have incorporated aspects of Hatch's model into the following steps of analysis undertaken in *Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis*, as Willig (2001:53-60) presents it:

- *Initial encounter with the text :*

The first stage of analysis involves the reading and re-reading of the transcripts (Willig, 2001:54). The researcher produces notes of issues that come up upon the initial encounter with the text (Willig, 2001:54). Hatch (2002:181) suggests that the researcher should start the analysis by just reading the data to get a sense of the whole - what's included and not included in the data. In this step of the analysis I will present a brief image of my experience when reading the text for the first time.

- *Identification of themes :*

The second stage of analysis requires the researcher to identify themes that characterize different sections of the text. The theme titles should then capture the essential quality of what is represented by the text (Willig, 2001:55). Mason (1994:91) believes that the purpose is to search the data set for themes, develop analytical categories and to index the data accordingly.

According to Willig (2001:53) *Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis* is a version of the phenomenological method which accepts the impossibility of gaining direct access to research participants' life worlds. As a result, the analysis produced by the researcher is always an interpretation of the participants' experiences (Willig, 2001:53).

"Taking the considerable time necessary to find and code all the places where your interpretations are addressed gives you the data necessary to make good decisions about whether interpretations ought to be reported or not" (Hatch, 2002:186).

I present the theme titles in English, even though the data was produced in Afrikaans. Therefore, the identified themes encompass a translation from the Afrikaans text as well as my own interpretation of the meaning of the text.

- *Clustering of themes :*

Willig (2001:55) mentions that some of the themes in stage two form natural clusters of concepts that share meanings or references. The author further states that the clusters need to be given labels that capture their essence and

it should make sense in relation to the original data. An example of a clustering of themes is, '*the child's reactions*'. Here the essence of the statements, made by educators, is what they have experienced the child's reactions to be when his parents are going through the process of divorce. These clusters can be viewed in chapter four.

- *Production of a summary table :*

Willig (2001:55) states that the fourth stage involves the production of a summary table of the structured themes, together with quotations that illustrate each theme. Hatch (2002:187) describes this as the time to bring the pieces together into a meaningful whole. Willig (2001:55) states that the summary table should only include themes that capture the quality of the participants' experiences about the phenomenon. Here a distinction is made between relevant and irrelevant themes, and some of the themes from stage two might have to be left out (Willig, 2001:55). However, I left out the irrelevant statements when I identified the statements relevant to the topic, as discussed earlier from the steps of Creswell (1998, cited in Leedy *et al.*, 2001:154)

Hatch (2002:188) includes another facet to the analysis and that is to review the interpretations with the participants before writing the final report. I analysed the produced data from the semi-structured interviews and presented it in the focus groups so that the participants could have the chance to verify the interpretations. However, I did not review the final data that was produced in the focus groups, with the participants.

- *Integration of the interviews and focus groups*

This section involves the final step of analysis in *Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis*. Because of the fact that the participants are homogeneous in terms of their teaching experience at the primary school in Lephalale, it made sense to look across the entire corpus of data (Willig, 2001:58). According to Willig (2001:58) the first interview is used to set up the table. This is then used as the original list of themes to code the other interviews, adding or elaborating themes in the process (Willig, 2001:58). Mason (1994:105) describes this function as the principle of following up

similar themes in the different data sets as a way of linking the data. See Appendix E for a sample of a coded transcript.

The integration of all the interviews and focus groups should then generate master themes "which captures the quality of the participants' shared experiences of the phenomenon, and which, therefore, also tells us something about the *essence* of the phenomenon itself" (Willig, 2001:59). *Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis* continues until that which is shared between the participants has been identified and captured in master themes (Willig, 2001:59).

Morgan (1998b:83) states that when one analyses data, making comparisons across multiple groups provide a better sense of which themes are most important. Each individual or focus group will have themes that they emphasize more than the others do (Morgan, 1998b:83). Therefore, in comparing the two focus groups and individual interviews, it will reveal which experiences are specific to a certain person or group, and which themes came up repeatedly. This is illustrated in Tables 4.1 to 4.4, in chapter four.

According to Willig (2001:60) the section of the report, where the data analysis is presented, may be structured around master themes, where each theme is introduced with its various manifestations. Chapter four contains the presentation of the analysed data.

3.3.4.4 Study Implementation

According to Terre Blanche *et al.* (1999:127) one must consider interpretive research as a process rather than a set of distinct procedures. In this section I explain the process that I used in conducting this research study.

The first step in the process was to gain access to the primary school in Lephalale. The permission for this access was received from the Department of Education in the Limpopo Province, as well as the principle of the primary school in Lephalale. Telephonical permission was obtained from the Department of

Education, and written permission was obtained from the principle of the primary school (Appendix C).

After permission was received the sampling process began by identifying possible participants in a discussion with the Head of Department. Possible participants, that met the criteria, were approached with a letter explaining the purpose and process of the study. Educators that agreed to participate indicated this by completing the informed consent form (Appendix A), and by providing possible dates and times for their individual interview and focus group discussion. The eight participants were then contacted to confirm their dates of participation.

The interviews and focus groups were then conducted as described above. The interviews were done two weeks prior to the focus groups. This allowed enough time for the interviews to be transcribed and themes to be identified.

Atkinson and Heritage (1984, cited in Silverman, 1993:117) point out that the production and use of transcripts are essentially "research activities" and it involves close repeated listening to recordings. These research activities in itself are cyclical in nature. I transcribed the interviews and focus groups myself. This strengthened my exposure to the data and provided me with broader insight into possible themes.

The themes generated from the individual interviews were used as stimuli for the focus group discussions. The two focus groups were also recorded and transcribed. Verification of themes took place, but new themes also emerged during the focus groups. All these themes were identified and recorded. The themes generated in the interviews and focus groups were documented as findings in the following chapter.

3.3.4.5 **Data Verification**

3.3.4.5.1 **Validity**

According to Willig (2001:16) validity can be defined as the extent to which the research describes, measures or explains what it aims to describe, measure or explain. Merriam (1998:201) addresses internal and external validity in research. Internal validity reflects how the research findings match reality. External validity is concerned with the extent to which the findings of the research can be applied to other situations, in other words generalized (Merriam, 1998:207).

External validity was not obtained in this study because there was no means by which the findings of this study could be generalized. According to Willig (2001:17) one cannot generalize from small-scale qualitative research, as this project, where a small number of participants are used. The author continues by stating that we might not know how many people share a particular experience, but we do know that it is available within a specific culture, society, or school.

To enhance the internal validity of this study, I applied the following basic strategies of Merriam (1998:204):

- *Triangulation*

According to Leedy (1993, cited in Prinsloo *et al.*, 1996:290) the method of triangulation involves the use of two or more methods of research in which the one method complements the other in researching the specific phenomenon. Merriam (1998:204) elaborates by stating that triangulation implies using multiple methods to confirm the emerging findings. The present study utilized multiple methods namely, semi-structured interviews and focus groups.

However, using two methods does not seem to be enough to constitute triangulation, as some authors would suggest. Mathison (1988:13) states that triangulation is when multiple methods, data sources, and researchers

were used. Terre Blanche *et al.* (1999:128) state that triangulation is often not feasible for smaller research projects, because it is too labour-intensive. It might appear that triangulation could not be obtained in this study. However, there could be different methods of triangulation.

Denzin (1978, cited in Mathison, 1988:14) outlines four ways of triangulation namely, 1) data triangulation, 2) investigator triangulation, 3) theory triangulation, and 4) methodological triangulation. In this study I have applied two of these ways in the following manners:

- *Data triangulation* : Denzin (1978, cited in Mathison, 1988:14) states that this simply refers to the use of more than one source (e.g. more than one individual) as a source of data. The author also states that data should be produced at different times and in various settings. In this study eight individuals were used as sources of data. They were interviewed individually and in a group format, at different times. However, the setting mostly stayed the same.
- *Methodological triangulation* : According to Denzin (1978, cited in Mathison, 1988:14) this refers to the use of multiple methods in the examination of the phenomenon. This study made use of two methods, interviewing and focus groups.

A further argument is made by Mathison (1988:15) when she states that triangulation provides a rich description of the phenomenon, but rarely does it provide a clear path to a singular view of the case at hand. I deduct that this study did make use of triangulation, but only two forms of it, namely, data and method triangulation. These two forms of triangulation provided the complex and rich information that was called for to describe the phenomenon.

- *Member checks*

Member checks imply taking the data and tentative interpretations back to the participants to confirm if they think the results are plausible (Merriam, 1998:204). As I mentioned earlier in this chapter, the member check in this study took place in the focus groups discussions, where I presented the findings from the semi-structured interviews to the participants.

▪ *Peer examination*

According to Merriam (1998:204) peer examination implies asking colleagues to comment on the findings as they emerge. I shared the emerging findings with fellow intern psychologists, whilst still holding true to the ethical considerations.

Although, validity can be a problematic concept for researchers producing qualitative data, concerns about validity can be addressed by keeping the following in mind:

- ensuring that participants were free to challenge my assumptions and even obtaining feedback from the participants on the preliminary findings of the study;
- not having to extrapolate from an artificial setting, such as a laboratory, to the real world seeing that the research takes place in a real-life setting, the school. This indicates higher 'ecological validity'; and
- by ensuring that the research process as a whole was scrutinized throughout and that I continuously reviewed my role in the research by means of reflections (Willig, 2001:16).

Churchill (2000:44) includes the concern of 'distortion' in the question of the validity of narratives from participants. He states that research participants describe their experiences with defences and self-deception that were inherent in the experiences they share. The participant may not have the ability to report accurately what is taking place internally (Averill, 1983, cited in Churchill, 2000:44), and this too will influence the validity of the data. However, I had no means of establishing whether the participants had the ability to accurately communicate their experiences. Out of respect for the participants, I viewed their experiences as knowledgeable and valuable.

3.3.4.5.2 Reliability

According to Merriam (1998:205) reliability refers to the extent to which research findings can be replicated. Reliability is achieved when a measurement can yield the same answer on different occasions (Willig, 2001:17).

Willig (2001:17) argues that researchers conducting qualitative research are less concerned with reliability because they explore a particular, possibly unique, phenomenon or experience in great detail. Merriam (1998:205) further states that reliability is problematic in social sciences simply because human behaviour is never static, and so is human experiences.

“Qualitative research, however, is not conducted so that the laws of human behavior can be isolated. Rather, researchers seek to describe and explain the world as those in the world experience it” (Merriam, 1998:205).

The purpose of this study was not to isolate all possible experiences of educators regarding their role in supporting children from divorced families. The aim was to report on the experiences of eight educators from a primary school in Lephalale.

I understand that the data produced in the semi-structured interviews and focus groups are not reliable from a traditional perspective, because the participants' experiences might not be the same the next time they report it. In fact, I hope that their participation sensitised them for other experiences regarding this topic and therefore, the findings might differ dramatically.

Lincoln and Guba (1985, cited in Merriam, 1998:206) state that the question should not be whether findings will be found again but whether the results are consistent with the produced data, therefore, is the data dependable. This addresses the aspect of the interpretation of the data, which I discussed earlier in this chapter. Through using effective data analysis techniques, the produced data could be viewed as dependable.

3.4 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

According to Merriam (1998:198) ensuring validity and reliability in qualitative research involves conducting the investigation in an ethical manner. The ethical considerations of this research project are grounded in the *Ethical Code of Professional Conduct* (HPCSA, 1999).

3.4.1 Informed Consent

According to Willig (2001:18) participants should be fully informed about the research procedures and give their consent to participate in the research. A consent form is signed by the participants, acknowledging an understanding of the purpose and process of the study (Wood, 1992:2824). This ethical consideration was addressed in the letter circulated to the possible participants (Appendix A).

3.4.2 Deception in Research

Willig (2001:18) states that deception of participants should be avoided altogether. The researcher should never deceive the participants about significant aspects that would affect their willingness to participate, such as physical risks, discomfort, or unpleasant emotional experiences (HPCSA, 1999).

3.4.3 Confidentiality and Anonymity

Complete confidentiality regarding any information about participants acquired during the research process, should be obtained (Willig, 2001:18). I addressed this aspect in the aforementioned letter (Appendix A), as well as the fact that the participants' identity would not be used in the final research report or any other presentation of the research.

3.4.4 Voluntary Participation

The participants were free to choose whether they wanted to participate in the research process or not. According to Willig (2001:18) the participants should also feel free to withdraw from participation in the study without fear of being penalized. Therefore, the participants should be informed that they are free to participate or to decline or to withdraw from the research (HPCSA, 1999). These two aspects were addressed in the aforementioned letter (Appendix A).

3.5 REFLECTION AND CONCLUSION

This chapter has provided a thorough discussion of the research design, which comprises the research paradigm, the purpose of the study, the context of the study and the methods used to produce the data. A theoretical basis was employed to firmly ground the above discussions.

In my opinion, the phenomenological research design appeared to be coherent with the interpretive paradigm that emphasises the understanding of a social phenomenon. In this study the understanding was focused on the phenomenon of educators' experiences of their role in supporting children from divorced families.

The aim of this study explored the mentioned phenomenon as a relatively unknown area of research and searched for new insights into the phenomena. Further more, the context of the school environment was presented and appeared to promote the aim of this study. Lastly, the methodology complemented the way in which the research proceeded to investigate the phenomenon. This included the methods used to produce the data.

The data production methods of semi-structured interviewing and focus group discussions were explained as they were executed. The processes of data analysis and interpretation were also described as well as the implementation of ethical considerations, promoting the value of this study.

The practical implementation of this chapter will be elicited in the chapter to follow, where the research findings will be presented.

CHAPTER 4

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STUDY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter starts off with a brief discussion of the research process as it occurred while producing the data. In the subsequent sections I present the data produced from the interviews and focus groups. The method of presentation is as discussed in the previous chapter, under the section of data analysis, as Willig (2001) presents it.

4.2 RESEARCH PROCESS

Shortly after the necessary permission was obtained from the Department of Education and the school principal (see Appendix C), I contacted the Head of Department at the primary school in Lephalale. This Head of Department served as the contact person to the school and I mostly worked through her. She helped me to identify possible participants and circulated the information letter and consent form to all the identified educators.

Eight educators were identified purposively and all of them indicated that they would be willing to participate in the study. These educators provided me with times that would suite them for their individual interview, as well as for their focus group discussion.

I conducted the individual interviews during a four-day period, during which time I also transcribed the recorded interviews. Most of the interviews were conducted in a private office on the school premises. The interviews were done two weeks prior to the focus group discussions. This allowed enough time for the interviews to be analyzed and themes to be identified.

The themes generated from the individual interviews were used as stimuli for the focus group discussions. I compiled a summary of the identified themes in table format (see Appendix E). Each participant received a copy of these themes before the commencement of the focus groups. This summary was merely utilized as stimuli to prompt discussions on the topic of the phenomenon.

The eight participants spontaneously divided themselves into the requested two groups of four educators each. Two focus group sessions were held, two weeks after the last individual interview. These sessions were also held on the premises of the school, without interfering with the educators' responsibilities towards the school.

During the focus groups, verification of themes took place, but new themes also emerged. All these themes were recorded, transcribed and coded (see Appendix F for an example of the coding). The themes generated in the interviews and focus groups are documented in this chapter. Below is a presentation of those themes, starting off with the interviews, moving on to the themes from the focus groups and lastly presenting an integrated table of all the identified themes.

4.3 PRESENTATION OF PARTICIPANT INTERVIEWS

4.3.1 Participant 1

▪ Stage 1 : Initial encounter with the text

It seems to be important to this participant that the educator should be aware of the child's situation in order to support him/her. She has the experience that the educator needs to adjust their expectation and demands of the children from divorced homes. "Die onderwyser moet bewus daarvan wees dat die kind uit 'n gebroke huis uit kom, omdat die eise wat 'n mens stel, daai kind baie keer nie by sal kan uitkom nie". A further expectation that she shared was that it is not just children from divorced homes that need educators' support. "Ouers wat voldag werk het miskien maar dieselfde probleem". View Appendix E-1 for an extract from the original text. This extract will also illustrate how I analysed the text by coding the different themes.

▪ Stage 2 : Identification of themes

Working through the text line-by-line, I identified the following themes:

1. If you are aware, you can help (“Die onderwyser moet bewus daarvan wees”).
2. Support is easier in the Intermediate and Ground phases, you see them the whole day (“die junior fase en intermediêre fase ... is dit makliker, want dan't ons die kinders die hele dag”).
3. Support is more difficult in the Senior Phase, you see them a short time of the day (“...wissel van vak tot vak... tel mens dit dalk nie so gou op nie”).
4. Educator can detect quickly that there is a problem (“jy kom baie gou agter as daar 'n probleem is”).
5. Detect it in the child's behaviour, emotions and socialisation (“Jy kom gou-gou agter as die kind emosioneel omgekrap raak”).
6. Detect it in the child's school work (“... of as sy werk skielik agteruit gaan”).
7. Educator can guide the child and give advice (“... kan vir die kind raad gee”).
8. Children have unique and individual experiences (“... dan wissel dit ook nou maar van kind tot kind”).
9. Financial difficulty (“... dan het hulle ook nie byvoorbeeld, ekstra geld om die kind in 'n naskoolsentrum te sit”).
10. Inform relevant educators through case discussions (“gevalle bespreek in die personeelkamer”).
11. The educator plays an important role (“die skool kan 'n baie groot rol speel”).
12. The school provides security for the child (“...want baie keer is die skool al vastigheid wat die kind beleef”).
13. The educator provides empathy (“... en simpatie met die kind moet hê”).
14. Single-parent struggles and is tired (“'n enkelma is, uhm, nie by alles kan uitkom ... Sy's moeg”).
15. Registration form is source of information (“die inskrywingsvorm wat ons by die skool het, dui die ouers gewoonlik aan uit watter groepe huwelikke”).
16. Stepparents bring extra problems to the fore (“stiefpa of 'n stiefma, wat nou weer ander probleme veroorsaak”).
17. Adjust the demands in class (“die eise wat 'n mens stel, daai kind baie keer nie by sal kan uitkom nie”).
18. Two parental homes differ in standards (“die standaarde by die twee huise blykbaar nie dieselfde is nie”).

19. Parents use children to put each other down (“ouers wat die kinders teen mekaar afspeel”).
20. Child is uncertain (“ek kan agterkom dat sy baie onseker voel”).
21. Child’s circumstances change (“skielik weer trek na ‘n ander plek toe”).
22. Siblings should support each other (“die kinders self, onder mekaar... ondersteun”).
23. Child’s primary needs should be addressed (“kyk of die kind dalk fisies goed nodig het”).
24. Home visits was previously helpful (“vroeër jare... huisbesoek... dan het jy die omstandighede rondom die huis baie beter verstaan”).
25. Educator can just support up to a certain extent (“maar ek dink nie jy kan fisies inmeng in ‘n huwelik”).
26. Information from different provinces differ (“elke keer as kinder by jou instap van ‘n ander provinsie dan die hele profiel ... sal verskil van ... Wat sou gehelp het is as mens ‘n eenvormige stelsel sou gehad het”).
27. Divorce is not that common in Ellisras (“meeste kinders by ons het albei ouers”).

▪ **Stage 3 : Clustering of themes**

Some of the themes identified in stage two share reference points and can be grouped into clusters. Following is a list of clusters that represent groupings of themes:

- Cluster 1: Child’s reaction in the school (themes 5, 6, 8)
- Cluster 2: Educator’s observation about support (themes 1, 2, 3, 4, 23, 25, 27)
- Cluster 3: Educator’s role in support (themes 7, 10, 11, 13)
- Cluster 4: Parent’s needs (theme 9, 14)
- Cluster 5: What the school provides (theme 12)
- Cluster 6: Sources of information (themes 15, 26)
- Cluster 7: Step-family (theme 16)
- Cluster 8: Possible solutions (theme 17, 24)
- Cluster 9: Parent versus Parent (theme 18, 19)
- Cluster 10: Child’s experience (themes 20, 21, 22)

▪ **Stage 4 : Production of a summary table**

Below is a summary table of the analysis of this participant's interview:

Cluster 1: Child's reaction in the school (themes 5, 6, 8)

- Detect it in the child's emotions ("emosioneel omgekrap").
- Detect it in the child's school work ("werk skielik agteruit").
- Children have unique experiences ("wissel ... van kind tot kind").

Cluster 2: Educator's observation about support (themes 1, 2, 3, 4, 23, 25, 27)

- If you are aware, you can help ("bewus daarvan wees").
- Easier in the Intermediate and Ground phases ("makliker ... junior fase en intermediêre fase").
- Support is more difficult in the Senior Phase ("wissel van vak tot vak").
- Detect quickly that there is a problem ("kom baie gou agter").
- Child's primary needs ("fisies goed nodig het").
- Just support up to a certain extent ("nie ... fisies inmeng in 'n huwelik").
- Divorce is not that common in Ellisras ("meeste kinders ... albei ouers").

Cluster 3: Educator's role in support (themes 7, 10, 11, 13)

- Guide the child and give advice ("raad gee").
- Inform relevant educators ("gevalle bespreek").
- Educator plays an important role ("baie groot rol speel").
- Educator provides empathy ("simpatie").

Cluster 4: Parent's needs (theme 9, 14)

- Financial difficulty ("nie ... ekstra geld").
- Single-parent struggles and is tired ("nie by alles kan uitkom ... moeg").

Cluster 5: What the school provides (theme 12)

- The school provides security ("vastigheid").

Cluster 6: Sources of information (themes 15, 26)

- Registration form ("inskrywingsvorm").
- Different provinces differ ("ander provinsie ... hele profiel ... verskil").

Cluster 7: Step-family (theme 16)

- Step-parents bring extra problems ("ander probleme veroorsaak").

Cluster 8: Possible solutions (theme 17, 24)

- Adjust the demands ("eise wat mens stel").
- Home visits ("vroeër jare... huisbesoek").

Cluster 9: Parent versus Parent (theme 18, 19)

- Two parental homes ("standaarde ... twee huise ... nie dieselfde").
- Parents use children ("kinders teen mekaar afspeel").

Cluster 10: Child's experience (themes 20, 21, 22)

- Child is uncertain ("onseker voel").
- Child's circumstances change ("skielik weer trek").
- Siblings should support each other ("kinders self ... mekaar... ondersteun").

4.3.2 Participant 2**▪ Stage 1 : Initial encounter with the text**

This participant experiences relief that most of the children from divorced homes that she encounters, had one parent at least who stayed involved. "Gelukkig is daar altyd die geval gewees van een van die ouers wat nog baie betrokke is". She seems to have experienced that children can adapt easier to divorce when the parents stay involved. "Dis baie keer opvallend dat een van die ouers genoeg betrokke is by die kind om hom op te vang ... so 'n kindjie is vir my meer gestabiliseer". View Appendix E-2 for an extract from the original text. This extract will also illustrate how I analysed the text by coding the different themes.

▪ Stage 2 : Identification of themes

Working through the text line-by-line, I identified the following themes :

1. Children hide the divorce ("... so kind baie terughoudend kan wees en glad nie wil praat nie ... kinders praat nie sommer daaroor nie").
2. The educator overlooks children easily when they hold back ("mens sien hierdie outjies - wat so terughou - maklik oor").

3. The educator is not aware of the situation ("in meeste gevalle het ek gesien is dit nie maklik beskikbaar nie").
4. If you are aware, you can help ("dan begin 'n mens beter verstaan as jy net eers weet").
5. Educator can detect quickly that there is a problem ("... wat mens tog vinnig optel").
6. Detect it in the child's behaviour, emotions and socialization ("soms is daar van hulle wat vir jou gou emosioneel onstabiele sal toon ... hetsy in sy gedrag").
7. Detect it in the child's school work("... in sy werk ").
8. Can refer to psychologist ("dan kan mens seker verwys, van die skool se kant af, na 'n sielkundige toe").
9. Educator should talk to the child ("... mens moet dalk ook vir hulle sê").
10. Educator should have a trusting relationship with the child ("... daai persoon moet wees met wie hulle steeds daai vertrouensverhouding kan hê").
11. Need openness from the parents about their situation ("waardeer dit as die ouers bereid is om oop te maak").
12. Parents should stay involved ("ek waardeer dit altyd vreeslik as daai ouer wel betrokke genoeg bly").
13. Parent is focused on own pain and the child is neglected ("een van die ouers of dalk albei is self so soekend na weer stabiliteit en liefde, dat die kinders dan in die proses afgeskeep word").
14. Children have unique and individual experiences("... ander hanteer dit goed ").
15. Child may feel that it is his fault ("hulle moet baie duidelik besef dat hy nie eintlik skuld het van wat gebeur het nie").
16. The educator plays an important role ("daar speel ons as onderwysers tot 'n groot mate 'n rol ").
17. Handle the child as natural as possible ("... om hulle so natuurlik moontlik te probeer hanteer").
18. The school provides security for the child ("skool toe te kan kom, waar ons 'n struktuur het, waar daar vastigheid en 'n patroon is").
19. School is an escape from the sad home ("baie keer is dit vir hierdie kind so 'n ontvlugting om uit hierdie hartseer situasie van hom te kan wegkom om skool toe te kan kom").

20. The educator provides empathy ("ek gee hulle maar 'n drukkie").
21. Peergroup support ("... nodig om daai vastigheid te hê in 'n maatjie wat hulle vertrou").
22. Edlab is source of information ("baie keer na die edlab toe te gaan en te kyk").
23. Child is uncertain ("daai skielike onsekerheid die gevoel van die grond is onder my weg").
24. Child uses divorce as an excuse ("hy gebruik dit baie keer as 'n verskoning dat hy nie huiswerk gedoen het nie").
25. Help child to express himself ("dis belangrik dat hulle vrymoedigheid kan neem om hulle emosies te verwoord").
26. Educator can just support up to a certain extent ("ek is altyd maar versigtig om nie te betrokke te raak nie").

▪ **Stage 3 : Clustering of themes**

Some of the themes identified in stage two share reference points and can be grouped into clusters. Following is a list of clusters that represent groupings of themes:

- Cluster 1: Child's reaction in the school (themes 1, 6, 7, 14, 24)
- Cluster 2: Educator's observation about support (themes 2, 3, 4, 5, 16)
- Cluster 3: Educator's role in support (themes 8, 9, 10, 17, 20, 25, 26)
- Cluster 4: Parent's needs (theme 13)
- Cluster 5: What the school provides (themes 18, 19)
- Cluster 6: Sources of information (theme 22)
- Cluster 7: Parent versus Educator (themes 11, 12)
- Cluster 8: Child's experience (themes 15, 23)
- Cluster 9: Peergroup as support (theme 21)

▪ **Stage 4 : Production of a summary table**

Below is a summary table of the analysis of this participant's interview:

Cluster 1: Child's reaction in the school (themes 1, 6, 7, 14, 24)

- Children hide the divorce ("terughoudend ... praat nie sommer").
- Detect it in the child's behaviour and emotions ("emosioneel ... gedrag").

- Detect it in the child's school work ("werk").
- Children have unique experiences ("ander hanteer dit goed").
- Child uses divorce as an excuse ("gebruik ... as 'n verskoning").

Cluster 2: Educator's observation about support (themes 2, 3, 4, 5, 16)

- Overlook children when they hold back ("sien ... maklik oor").
- Not aware of the situation ("nie maklik beskikbaar nie").
- If you are aware, you can help ("beter verstaan").
- Detect quickly that there is a problem ("vinnig optel").
- Educator plays an important role ("onderwysers tot 'n groot mate 'n rol").

Cluster 3: Educator's role in support (themes 8, 9, 10, 17, 20, 25, 26)

- Refer to psychologist ("verwys ... sielkundige").
- Educator should talk to the child ("vir hulle sê").
- Have a trusting relationship with the child ("vertrouensverhouding").
- Handle the child as natural as possible ("natuurlik moontlik ... hanteer").
- Educator provides empathy ("drukkie").
- Help child to express himself ("emosies te verwoord").
- Support up to a certain extent ("nie te betrokke te raak nie").

Cluster 4: Parent's needs (theme 13)

- Parent is focused on own pain ("self so soekend ... kinders ... afgeskeep").

Cluster 5: What the school provides (themes 18, 19)

- School provides security ("struktuur ... vastigheid ... patroon").
- School is an escape from the sad home ("ontvlugting ... uit hartseer").

Cluster 6: Sources of information (theme 22)

- Edlab is source of information ("edlab").

Cluster 7: Parent versus Educator (themes 11, 12)

- Need openness from the parents ("ouers ... oop te maak").
- Parents should stay involved ("wel betrokke genoeg bly").

Cluster 8: Child's experience (themes 15, 23)

- Child may feel it is his fault ("nie eintlik skuld het").
- Child is uncertain ("skielike onsekerheid").

Cluster 9: Peergroup as support (theme 21)

- Peergroup support ("maatjie wat hulle vertrou").

4.3.3 Participant 3**▪ Stage 1 : Initial encounter with the text**

This participant's experiences are mostly based on being an educator within the Ground Phase of the school. It seems that her experiences speak of sympathy and special attention for children from divorced homes. "Daardie kinders het almal baie spesiale aandag nodig. Hulle is baie meer op jou aangewese". Another concept that she has gained through experience is that the educator must not try to avoid the topic but be open and accommodating. "Ek dink nie mens moet dit vermy nie ... jou ondersteuningsrol is dat jy dit maar net in ag moet neem ... jy as juffrou, moet hom maar akkommodeer". View Appendix E-3 for an extract from the original text. This extract will also illustrate how I analysed the text by coding the different themes.

▪ Stage 2 : Identification of themes

Working through the text line-by-line, I was able to identify the following themes :

1. Children hide the divorce ("n senior kind sal nooit erken, of graag erken").
2. Ground phase children share easily ("kleintjies is baie meer openlik en baie eerlik").
3. Detect it in the child's behaviour, emotions and socialization ("n ou kan dit aan die kind sien ... jy kan sien hierdie kind het 'n behoefte").
4. Detect it in the child's school work ("waar 'n ander kind rustig sal wees en so nou en dan sy hand opsteek, sal so 'n kind jou kort-kort kom vra").
5. Financial difficulty ("baie keer dra die ander ouer nie by nie... ek dink ons sal bietjie meer moet kyk na die situasie van finansies").
6. Educator plays a parental role ("jou rol is maar om daai spasie te probeer vul vir die kind").

7. Educator needs guidelines (“... paar wenke gee oor hoe om hierdie kinders te help”).
8. Child is dependant on educator (“hulle is baie meer op jou aangewese”).
9. Accommodate the child (“moet hom maar akkommodeer”).
10. Be open about the topic (“praat openlik”).
11. Talk to previous educators about the child (“dan kan ‘n graad 1 juffrou baie kere vir jou help en vir jou sê, maar dit is die situasie”).
12. Parents should stay involved (“... kry maar basies met die ouer te doen by wie die kind bly ... jy hoor net gewoonlik van die ander party”).
13. Parents also need support (“het al paniekerige ouers by my gehad”).
14. The educator provides empathy (“dan het hy ‘n ekstra drukkies nodig”).
15. Peergroup helps educator to remember (“baie keer sal die maatjies my attent maak”).
16. Child is uncertain (“jy kan sien hiedie kind het ‘n behoefte en is baie meer onseker”).
17. Child’s primary needs should be addressed (“... op ‘n manier bydraes maak met toebroodjies pouses of ekstra hulp”).
18. Child’s participation lowers (“kinders kan baie keer nie betrokke wees nie”).
19. Divorce is not uncommon anymore (“persentasie hoeveelheid kinders in jou klas wat geskeide ouers het. Dis nie meer net daai enetjie nie”).

▪ **Stage 3 : Clustering of themes**

Some of the themes identified in stage two share reference points and can be grouped into clusters. Following is a list of clusters that represent groupings of themes:

- Cluster 1: Child’s reaction in the school (themes 1, 3, 4, 18)
- Cluster 2: Educator’s observation about support (themes 2, 7, 17, 19)
- Cluster 3: Educator’s role in support (themes 6, 9, 10, 11, 14)
- Cluster 4: Parent’s needs (theme 5, 13)
- Cluster 5: Parent versus Educator (theme 12)
- Cluster 6: Child’s experience (themes 8, 16)
- Cluster 7: Peergroup as support (theme 15)

▪ Stage 4 : Production of a summary table

Below is a summary table of the analysis of this participant's interview:

Cluster 1: Child's reaction in the school (themes 1, 3, 4, 18)

- Children hide the divorce ("n senior kind sal nooit erken, of graag erken").
- Detect it in the child's behaviour ("jy kan sien hierdie kind het 'n behoefte").
- Detect it in the child's school work ("so 'n kind jou kort-kort kom vra").
- Child's participation lowers ("nie betrokke wees nie").

Cluster 2: Educator's observation about support (themes 2, 7, 17, 19)

- Ground phase children share easily ("kleintjies is baie meer openlik").
- Educator needs guidelines ("paar wenke").
- Child's primary needs ("bydraes maak met toebroodjies").
- Divorce is not uncommon ("nie meer net daai enetjie nie").

Cluster 3: Educator's role in support (themes 6, 9, 10, 11, 14)

- Educator plays a parental role ("spasie te probeer vul").
- Accommodate the child ("akkommodeer").
- Be open about the topic ("praat openlik").
- Talk to previous educators ("graad 1 juffrou baie kere vir jou help").
- The educator provides empathy ("drukkie").

Cluster 4: Parent's needs (theme 5, 13)

- Financial difficulty ("situasie van finansies").
- Parents also need support ("paniekerige ouers").

Cluster 5: Parent versus Educator (theme 12)

- Parents should stay involved ("jy hoor net gewoonlik van die ander party").

Cluster 6: Child's experience (themes 8, 16)

- Child is dependant on educator ("aangewese").
- Child is uncertain ("onseker").

Cluster 7: Peergroup as support (theme 15)

- Peergroup helps educator (“maatjies my attent maak”).

4.3.4 Participant 4

- **Stage 1 : Initial encounter with the text**

This participant was able to share personal experience of divorce and the impact thereof on children. However, it seems as if he is experiencing that he's not confronted with supporting children from divorced homes within the school. “Ek ervaar nie dat daar regtig kinder met probleme na my toe kom nie”. It appears that he views this supportive role as being that of interested educators. “Individue wat daarin belangstel gaan dalk meer daarby betrokke kan wees”. In spite of his apparent lack of experience in supporting children from divorced homes at school, he seems to have a fair amount of ideas about the topic. View Appendix E-4 for an extract from the original text. This extract will also illustrate how I analysed the text by coding the themes.

- **Stage 2 : Identification of themes**

Working through the text line-by-line, I was able to identify the following themes :

1. Children hide the divorce (“hulle's bang hulle maats vind uit”).
2. Senior phase children do not share easily (“groter kinders ... praat nie so alles wat in die huis gebeur nie”).
3. Ground phase children share easily (“by die grade ... hulle vertel vir die juffrouens wat by die huis gebeur”).
4. The educator is not aware of the situation (“weet nie altyd watter kinders se ouers is besig met sulke stappe nie”).
5. If not aware, you may see the behaviour as naughtiness (“as jy dit nie weet nie, dan vat jy so kind dalk nog aan en jy doen nog meer skade”).
6. If you are aware, you can help (“as 'n ou weet ... dan dink ek kan jy hom in 'n mate help”).
7. It's traumatic for children (“dis 'n traumatiese ding, hoor!”).
8. Educator cannot detect quickly that there is a problem (“mens tel dit nie sommer op nie”).
9. Detect it in the child's behaviour (“bietjie meer rebels raak en anders optree”).

10. Detect it in the child's school work ("dink hulle ervaar leerprobleme").
11. Inform the relevant educators ("in die personeelkamer gesê word").
12. Let the parents come to school to talk ("as die ouers wat so iets doen, kom praat, kan jy help").
13. Educator needs guidelines ("ek weet nie of almal die vermoë gaan hê ... daar riglyne is om kinders te help").
14. Accommodate the child by being considerate about his situation ("skool kan seker mense meer attent maak ... jousef ... voorberei op wat om te doen of hoe om op te tree").
15. Educator should talk to the child ("kan jy met die kind praat").
16. Need openness from the parents about their situation ("ouers ... kom praat ... anders gaan dit maar moeilik wees").
17. Child may feel that it is his fault ("van hulle voel dalk hulle is die oorsaak").
18. Children with problems don't really come to talk to me ("ek ervaar nie dat daar regtig kinders met probleme na my toe kom nie").
19. Difficult for school to appoint people for this task ("dit gaan dit moeilik maak vir die skool ... spesifiek mense gee om hulle te ondersteun").
20. Child feels uncertain and powerless ("ek dink hulle ervaar 'n gevoel van ... magteloosheid").
21. Divorce is uncommon ("meeste kinders het nog 'n normale huisgesin lewe").

▪ Stage 3 : Clustering of themes

Some of the themes identified in stage two share reference points and can be grouped into clusters. Following is a list of clusters that represent groupings of themes:

- Cluster 1: Child's reaction in the school (themes 1, 9, 10)
- Cluster 2: Educator's observations on support (themes 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 13, 18, 21)
- Cluster 3: Educator's role in support (themes 11, 12, 14, 15)
- Cluster 4: Possible solutions (theme 19)
- Cluster 5: Parent versus Educator (theme 16)
- Cluster 6: Child's experience (themes 7, 17, 20)

▪ Stage 4 : Production of a summary table

Below is a summary table of the analysis of this participant's interview:

Cluster 1: Child's reaction in the school (themes 1, 9, 10)

- Children hide the divorce ("bang hulle maats vind uit").
- Detect it in the child's behaviour ("rebels raak en anders optree").
- Detect it in the child's school work ("leerprobleme").

Cluster 2: Educator's observations (themes 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 13, 18, 21)

- Senior phase children do not share easily ("praat nie so alles").
- Ground phase children share easily ("vertel ... wat by die huis gebeur").
- Educator is not aware of the situation ("weet nie altyd").
- See the behaviour as naughtiness ("vat jy so kind dalk nog aan").
- If you are aware, you can help ("as 'n ou weet ... kan jy hom in 'n mate help").
- Educator cannot detect it quickly ("tel dit nie sommer op nie").
- Educator needs guidelines ("riglyne").
- Children don't really talk to me ("ervaar nie ... kinders ... na my toe kom nie").
- Divorce is uncommon ("meeste ... normale huisgesin lewe").

Cluster 3: Educator's role in support (themes 11, 12, 14, 15)

- Inform the relevant educators ("personeelkamer gesê").
- Let the parents come to school ("ouers ... kom praat").
- Accommodate the child ("mense meer attent maak").
- Educator should talk to the child ("met die kind praat").

Cluster 4: Possible solutions (theme 19)

- Difficult to appoint people for this task ("moeilik ... spesifiek mense gee").

Cluster 5: Parent versus Educator (theme 16)

- Need openness from the parents ("ouers ... kom praat").

Cluster 6: Child's experience (themes 7, 17, 20)

- It's traumatic for children ("traumatiese").
- Child may feel that it is his fault ("voel dalk hulle is die oorsaak").

- Child feels uncertain and powerless ("magteloosheid").

4.3.5 Participant 5

▪ Stage 1 : Initial encounter with the text

This participant seems to be frustrated by the lack of time that educators have to support children with problems. "Deesdae gaan dit so gejaagd dat mens nie by die kinders uitkom nie". He is experiencing that children suffer because they are not getting the support they need. "So, die kinders lei skade ... daars nie meer tyd vir ander praatjies as skoolwerk nie". During the interview it was evident how often he referred to earlier years in the education, when things were different and easier. "Voorheen ... deesdae". View Appendix E-5 for an extract from the original text. This extract will also illustrate how I analysed the text by coding the themes.

▪ Stage 2 : Identification of themes

Working through the text line-by-line, I was able to identify the following themes :

1. Children hide the divorce ("party van die kinders steek dit so goed weg").
2. More difficult with Senior phase children ("veral so waar hulle klas wissel, waar hulle nie heeldag by een onderwyser is nie").
3. The educator is not aware of the situation ("jy weet nie ... kinders hou dit deesdae so toe").
4. Not enough time to support ("deesdae gaan dit so gejaagd ... daars baie minder tyd ... om by probleemkinders uit te kom").
5. Previously had periods to support ("voorheen, in die skooltyd het ek periodes beskikbaar gehad ... waar kinders aangemeld het by my").
6. Educator feels frustrated ("mens voel so onmagtig omdat jy nie fisies tyd het ... dit frustreer 'n mens").
7. If you are aware, you can support more ("dan kan 'n mens meer begrip hê").
8. It's traumatic for children and they suffer damage ("die kinders lei skade").
9. Detect it in the child's behaviour ("hulle openbaar dit deur middel van gedragsprobleme").
10. Detect it in the child's school work ("hoekom hulle werk so is ... hulle presteer swakker").

11. Inform the relevant educators ("almal wat vir hulle klas gee, kan ons inlig oor die probleem ... personeel bymekaar roep").
12. Let the parents come to school to ("party ouers doen dit by oueraande ... ouers laat inkom").
13. Financial difficulty ("ouers gehad wat nie die finansies het om hulp te kry").
14. Can refer to psychologist ("na 'n sielkundige as dit ernstige probleme blyk te wees").
15. Educator should talk to the child ("n onderhoud met 'n kind moet voer").
16. Educator should guide child ("kind begin begelei ... om vir hom raad te gee").
17. Educator should have a trusting relationship with the child ("as jy nou 'n goeie verhouding met hulle het").
18. Need openness from the parents ("sal ook graag openheid van die ouers se kan af wil hê").
19. Parent is focused on own pain and the child is neglected ("Party ouers is so vasgevang in hulle eie wêreld").
20. Children have unique experiences ("hang af van kind tot kind").
21. Child may feel that it is his fault ("alhoewel dit gebeur het, dit nie sy skuld is nie").
22. Department of Educational Guidance ("die skool het Departementshoof Opvoedkundige Leiding wat ook help").
23. Registration Educator also plays an important role ("elke voorgonderwyser kan dalk ook betrek word").
24. Lengthen the schoolday ("jy sal die skooldag moet verleng om meer tyd te maak").

▪ **Stage 3 : Clustering of themes**

Some of the themes identified in stage two share reference points and can be grouped into clusters. Following is a list of clusters that represent groupings of themes:

- Cluster 1: Educator not having enough time to support (themes 4, 6)
- Cluster 2: Child's reaction in the school (themes 1, 9, 10)
- Cluster 3: Educator's observation about support (themes 2, 3, 5, 7)
- Cluster 4: Educator's role in support (themes 11, 12, 14, 15, 16, 17)
- Cluster 5: Parent's needs (themes 13, 19)

- Cluster 6: What the school provides (themes 22, 23)
- Cluster 7: Possible solutions (theme 24)
- Cluster 8: Parent versus Educator (theme 18)
- Cluster 9: Child's experience (themes 8, 20, 21)

▪ **Stage 4 : Production of a summary table**

Below is a summary table of the analysis of this participant's interview:

Cluster 1: Educator not having enough time to support (themes 4, 6)

- Not enough time to support ("gejaagd ... baie minder tyd").
- Educator feels frustrated ("onmagtig ... dit frustreer 'n mens").

Cluster 2: Child's reaction in the school (themes 1, 9, 10)

- Children hide the divorce ("steek dit so goed weg").
- Detect it in the child's behaviour ("gedragsprobleme").
- Detect it in the child's school work ("presteer swakker").

Cluster 3: Educator's observation about support (themes 2, 3, 5, 7)

- More difficult with Senior phase ("klas wissel").
- Educator is not aware ("jy weet nie").
- Previously had periods ("voorheen ... periodes beskikbaar gehad").
- If you are aware, you can support more ("meer begrip hê").

Cluster 4: Educator's role in support (themes 11, 12, 14, 15, 16, 17)

- Inform the relevant educators ("personeel bymekaar roep").
- Let the parents come to school ("ouers laat inkom").
- Refer to psychologist ("sielkundige").
- Educator should talk to the child ("onderhoud met 'n kind").
- Educator should guide child ("begelei ... raad te gee").
- Trusting relationship with the child ("goeie verhouding").

Cluster 5: Parent's needs (themes 13, 19)

- Financial difficulty ("nie die finansies").
- Parent is focused on own pain ("vasgevang in hulle eie wêreld").

Cluster 6: What the school provides (themes 22, 23)

- Department Educational Guidance ("Departementshoof Opvoedkundige Leiding").
- Registration Educator plays role ("voorgonderwyser kan betrek word").

Cluster 7: Possible solutions (theme 24)

- Lengthen the schoolday ("skooldag moet verleng").

Cluster 8: Parent versus Educator (theme 18)

- Need openness from the parents ("openheid van die ouers").

Cluster 9: Child's experience (themes 8, 20, 21)

- It's traumatic for children and they suffer damage ("kinders lei skade").
- Children have unique experiences ("kind tot kind").
- Child may feel that it is his fault ("nie sy skuld is nie").

4.3.6 Participant 6**▪ Stage 1 : Initial encounter with the text**

This participant seems to have the experience that children's problems stem from their homes. "As jy na die kern, kern gaan kyk dan kom dit maar van die ouerhuise af". Frustration from this participant was observed in terms of her experience that parents view the educator as being wrong. "Vandag as jy 'n ouer nader oor 'n kind, dan is jy as onderwyser die een wat verkeerd is". View Appendix E-6 for an extract from the original text. This extract will also illustrate how I analysed the text by coding the different themes.

▪ Stage 2 : Identification of themes

Working through the text line-by-line, I was able to identify the following themes :

1. Children hide the divorce ("kind sal nooit eerste daarvoor praat nie").
2. Parent's lives are rushed ("nou se lewe wat gejaagd is en die ouers minder tyd het vir die kinders").
3. Detect it in the child's behaviour ("tel dit op in die kind se gedrag ... aggressiwiteit").

4. Detect it in the child's school work ("sien dit onmiddelik in die kinders se werk").
5. Inform the relevant educators ("bespreek ons met die res van die personeel").
6. Let the parents come to the school ("waar ons sy ouers moet inroep").
7. Can refer to psychologist ("hulle na Karel (sielkundige) toe gegaan").
8. Psychologists give valuable insight ("die skool sielkundige dra baie, baie by").
9. Educator plays a parental role ("jy vervul 'n ma en pa beroep vir daai kind").
10. Educator plays an important role ("ek sal sê, baie!").
11. Educator should have a trusting relationship with the child ("dan moet jy 'n goeie vertrouensverhouding hê").
12. Single-parent struggles and is tired ("kom vanaand huis toe en dan is hy nie nog lus om te vra of het jy huiswerk gedoen nie ... ouers minder tyd het").
13. Children have unique experiences ("kinders verskil ... elke geval is maar individueel").
14. Ground phase children share easily ("veral by die kleintjies, wat jy weet 'n kind sal huil en sê").
15. The school provides discipline for the child ("daarom is dissipline belangrik, dis maar jou anker").
16. Disciplinary Committee plays a role ("dissiplinêre komitee ... toe kom dit uit").
17. Not enough male educators ("verlenging van die ouerhuis ... nou so min mans het").
18. Home Schooling is problematic ("tuisonderrig ... waar gaan 'n rekenaar optel as 'n kind huislike probleme het").
19. The educator provides empathy ("die kind net 'n ou drukkie te gee").

▪ **Stage 3 : Clustering of themes**

Some of the themes identified in stage two share reference points and can be grouped into clusters. Following is a list of clusters that represent groupings of themes:

- Cluster 1: Child's reaction in the school (themes 1, 3, 4)
- Cluster 2: Educator's observation about support (themes 8, 14, 18)
- Cluster 3: Educator's role in support (themes 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 19)
- Cluster 4: Parent's needs (theme 2, 12)
- Cluster 5: What the school provides (themes 15, 16, 17)

- Cluster 6: Child's experience (theme 13)

▪ **Stage 4 : Production of a summary table**

Below is a summary table of the analysis of this participant's interview:

Cluster 1: Child's reaction in the school (themes 1, 3, 4)

- Children hide the divorce ("nooit eerste daaroor praat nie").
- Detect it in the child's behaviour ("gedrag ... aggressiwiteit").
- Detect it in the child's school work ("werk").

Cluster 2: Educator's observation about support (themes 8, 14, 18)

- Psychologists give valuable insight ("skoolsielkundige dra baie ... by").
- Ground phase children share easily ("kleintjies ... sal huil en sê").
- Home Schooling is problematic ("tuisonderrig").

Cluster 3: Educator's role in support (themes 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 19)

- Inform the relevant educators ("bespreek ... met ... personeel").
- Let the parents come to the school ("ouers moet inroep").
- Can refer to psychologist ("na Karel (sielkundige) toe").
- Educator plays a parental role ("vervul 'n ma en pa beroep").
- Educator plays an important role ("ek sal sê, baie!").
- Educator should have a trusting relationship ("vertrouensverhouding").
- Educator provides empathy ("drukkie").

Cluster 4: Parent's needs (theme 2, 12)

- Parent's lives are rushed ("gejaagd ... ouers minder tyd").
- Single-parent struggles and is tired ("nie nog lus ... minder tyd").

Cluster 5: What the school provides (themes 15, 16, 17)

- The school provides discipline ("dissipline").
- Disciplinary Committee plays a role ("dissiplinêre komitee").
- Not enough male educators ("min mans").

Cluster 6: Child's experience (theme 13)

- Children have unique experiences ("kinders verskil ... individueel").

4.3.7 Participant 7

- **Stage 1 : Initial encounter with the text**

This participant's response to the question is certain and strongly formulated. She also explains why it is so strong and states that it flows out of personal experience of divorce. "... Ontsettende dringendheid wat 'n onderwyser se rol is, omdat ek self geskei is". It seems that her experience is also formed by her own children's experience of support at school during the divorce. "Omdat my kinders ... ek het gesien hoe traumaties dit vir hulle was ... en hoe belangrik hul onderwysers se optrede was". View Appendix E-7 for an extract from the original text. This extract will also illustrate how I analysed the text by coding the themes.

- **Stage 2 : Identification of themes**

Working through the text line-by-line, I identified the following themes :

1. More difficult with Senior phase children ("veral in jou senior fase ... verwissel van klas tot klas").
2. If not aware, you may see the behaviour as naughtiness ("kan dit sommer maar sien as stoutigheid en baie maal is dit regtig nie").
3. If not aware, child will suffer ("onderwysers nie weet nie en insig het ... kan so kind regtig baie swaar kry").
4. If you are aware, you can support more ("toe voel sy gerus en sy voel juffrou verstaan en sy sal haar beskerm").
5. It's traumatic for children ("gesien het hoe traumaties dit vir hulle was").
6. Detect it in the child's behaviour ("kry hulle gedragsprobleme ... kan glad nie konsentreer ... aggressie partykeer ... sosialisering ook kan baie afneem").
7. Detect it in the child's school work ("skolastiese vordering wat afneem").
8. Inform the relevant educators ("in die skool stelsel, dat mense vir mekaar sal vertel").
9. Let the parents come to school to ("afspraak maak met die ouers").
10. Can refer to psychologist ("kan verwys ... party maal beter as dit 'n buitestaander is ... maatskaplike werker").

11. Educator plays a parental role ("is die juffrou die plaasvervangende ma").
12. Educator plays an important role ("dis 'n ontsettende belangrike rol").
13. Be open about the topic ("mens openlik met die ou kindertjies praat").
14. Educator should talk to the child ("met die kind moet praat").
15. Educator should guide child ("kind help ... kind leer").
16. Educator should have a trusting relationship with the child ("goeie verhouding met die kind").
17. Need openness from the parents ("ouers moet weet ... dat hulle die onderwysers moet laat weet").
18. Single-parent struggles and is tired ("enkel-ouers probeer self baie maal die mas opkom ... dan's hulle self moeg").
19. Parents should stay involved ("moenie onbetrokke wees nie").
20. Parents use children to get back at each other ("afspelery van die een huis na die ander").
21. Parents also need support ("waar ouers raad wil hê ... van raad kan voorsien").
22. Two parental home should stay consistent ("moet daar konsekwentheid wees in die twee huise").
23. Children show psycho-somatic symptoms ("psigosomatiese simptome wat gekom het").
24. The school provides security for the child ("by die skool 'n veilige hawe het ... toevlug").
25. Male educators support boys ("veral die manspersoneel ... pa-rol vervul").
26. Department of Educational Guidance ("departementshoof opvoedkundige leiding ... met die kind moet praat").
27. Registration Educator also plays an important role ("selfs die voog met die kind moet praat").
28. School is an escape from the 'sad home' ("skool partymaal 'n toevlug word").
29. The educator provides empathy ("liefde gee ... ook 'n drukkie").
30. Peergroup can be cruel ("word daar gespot ... kinders kan ongelooflik wreed wees").
31. Child feels uncertain ("hulle het 'n ontsettende magtelose gevoel").
32. Help child to express himself ("help om te verwoord wat hulle voel ... dat die kind kan leer om te sê 'my mamma en pappa bly nie meer bymekaar").

33. When educator has gone through divorce – understand better (“ek self geskei is ... my kinders self deur so ‘n situasie gegaan het”).
34. Playfield duties are important (“een wat op terreindiens is spesifiek moet ook kyk ... word daar gespot?”).
35. Educator should be supportive of psychologist’s role (“hulpverlenend tot die maatskaplike ingrype optree ... noue kontak met met sielkundiges”).
36. Educator should be patient (“meer geduld ... party maal kan sulke kindertjies baie veeleisend word”).
37. After school care can help child (“kind by die naskool bly en daar huiswerk doen”).

▪ **Stage 3 : Clustering of themes**

Some of the themes identified in stage two share reference points and can be grouped into clusters. Following is a list of clusters that represent groupings of themes:

- Cluster 1: Child’s reaction in the school (themes 6, 7, 23)
- Cluster 2: Educator’s observation about support (themes 1, 2, 3, 4, 33)
- Cluster 3: Educator’s role in support (themes 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 29, 32, 34, 35, 36)
- Cluster 4: Parent’s needs (theme 18, 20, 21, 22)
- Cluster 5: What the school provides (themes 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 37)
- Cluster 6: Parent versus Educator (theme 17, 19)
- Cluster 7: Child’s experience (themes 5, 31)
- Cluster 8: Peergroup as support (theme 30)

▪ **Stage 4 : Production of a summary table**

Below is a summary table of the analysis of this participant’s interview:

Cluster 1: Child’s reaction in the school (themes 6, 7, 23)

- Detect it in the child’s behaviour (“gedragsprobleme ... konsentreer ... aggressie ... sosialisering”).
- Detect it in the child’s school work (“skolastiese vordering”).
- Children show psycho-somatic symptoms (“psigosomatiese simptome”).

Cluster 2: Educator's observation about support (themes 1, 2, 3, 4, 33)

- More difficult with Senior phase ("senior fase ... verwissel").
- If not aware – see behaviour as naughty ("stoutigheid").
- If not aware, child will suffer ("nie weet ... swaar kry").
- If you are aware, you can support more ("juffrou verstaan").
- When educator has gone through divorce ("self geskei").

Cluster 3: Educator's role in support (themes 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 29, 32, 34, 35, 36)

- Inform the relevant educators ("mense vir mekaar sal vertel").
- Let the parents come to school to ("afspraak ... ouers").
- Refer to psychologist or social worker ("kan verwys ... maatskaplike werker").
- Educator plays a parental role ("plaasvervangende ma").
- Educator plays an important role ("ontsettende belangrike rol").
- Be open about the topic ("openlik ... praat").
- Educator should talk to the child ("kind moet praat").
- Educator should guide child ("kind help ... kind leer").
- Have a trusting relationship with the child ("goeie verhouding").
- The educator provides empathy ("liefde ... drukkie").
- Help child to express himself ("verwoord wat hulle voel").
- Playfield duties are important ("terreindiens").
- Be supportive of psychologist's role ("hulpverlenend ... noue kontak").
- Educator should be patient ("meer geduld").

Cluster 4: Parent's needs (theme 18, 20, 21, 22)

- Single-parent struggles and is tired ("mas opkom ... self moeg").
- Parents use children to get back at each other ("afspelery").
- Parents also need support ("ouers raad wil hê").
- Two parental homes ("konsekwentheid ... twee huise").

Cluster 5: What the school provides (themes 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 37)

- The school provides security ("veilige hawe").
- Male educators support boys ("manspersoneel ... pa-rol").

- Department Educational Guidance (“departementshoof opvoedkundige leiding”).
- Registration Educator plays a role (“voog”).
- School is an escape from the 'sad home' (“toevlug”).
- After school care can help child (“naskool bly ... huiswerk doen”).

Cluster 6: Parent versus Educator (theme 17, 19)

- Need openness from the parents (“ouers moet ... onderwysers ... laat weet”).
- Parents should stay involved (“moenie onbetrokke wees nie”).

Cluster 7: Child's experience (themes 5, 31)

- It's traumatic for children (“traumaties”).
- Child feels uncertain (“ontsettende magtelose gevoel”).

Cluster 8: Peergroup as support (theme 30)

- Peergroup can be cruel (“kinders ... wreed wees”).

4.3.8 Participant 8

▪ **Stage 1 : Initial encounter with the text**

This participant's comments speak of empathy and often grounded in own experience of divorce and the impact it has on children. Her view seems to be that the school is, should be, a secure environment for children to be supported in. "Ons moet 'n veilige wêreld skep vir daai kinders". There is observed frustration with this participant in terms of the inadequate support that she suggests one can offer to a senior child in the primary school. "As jy 'n mens is wat met die klein kindertjies werk sien jy hulle die hele dag, maar by die groter kinders sien jy hulle baie minder". View Appendix E-8 for an extract from the original text. This extract will also illustrate how I analysed the text by coding the different themes.

▪ **Stage 2 : Identification of themes**

Working through the text line-by-line, I identified the following themes :

1. Not enough time to support (“in klastyd het jy nie altyd tyd nie”).

2. More difficult with Senior phase ("groter kinders sien jy hulle baie minder en hulle steek die goed meer weg").
3. Support is easier with Ground phase ("met die klein kindjies werk sien jy hulle die hele dag").
4. It's traumatic for children ("uitwerking van skei is groot").
5. Educator plays an important role ("die impak wat 'n onderwyser op hulle het ... is hulle hele wêreld").
6. Educator should have a trusting relationship with the child ("om naby aan die kind te kom dan deel hulle soveel goed met jou").
7. Parents should stay involved ("dit is vir sulke kinders ongelooflik sleg as hulle nie beide ouers vir hul ondersteuning het nie").
8. Male educators support boys ("jammer vir by skole soos ons ... baie vrouens het, dat hulle nie êrens meer mans kan hê vir daai ondersteuning nie").
9. Disciplinary Committee plays a role ("goed dat ons 'n Dissiplinêre Komitee het ... sulke strukture in die skool kan kinders help").
10. School provides security for child ("ons moet 'n veilige wêreld skep vir daai kinders").
11. Centre with counsellors at school ("sentrum by die skool hê waar beraders met sulke kinders kan praat").
12. Demands in class should be adjusted ("ons gee maklik huiswerk en take en stel eise ... plaas alles druk op sulke kinders").
13. Child feels uncertain ("die soeke na standvastigheid").
14. Child may keep up a facade ("kan ook maar 'n show voorhou ... 'n front voorhou").
15. Child is neglected at home ("eerste grootmense wat hulle sien is die onderwysers ... baie van hulle kom verwaarloos daar aan").
16. Child uses divorce as an excuse ("die verskoning van ons kom uit 'n gebroke huis").
17. Child's participation scales down ("kan daai kind nie aan alles deelneem oor naweke nie ... neem hy nie aan sekere goed deel nie").
18. Create opportunities for child to talk ("as daar nou 'n praatjies is oor so iets , dan is dit asof hulle moed het om te praat ... skep te min geleentheid").

19. When educator has gone through divorce – understand ("wens dat almal die kind kon sien uit die oë van , asof jy self geskei is ... self geskei ... meer begrip").

▪ **Stage 3 : Clustering of themes**

Some of the themes identified in stage two share reference points and can be grouped into clusters. Following is a list of clusters that represent groupings of themes:

- Cluster 1: Educator not having enough time to support (theme 1)
- Cluster 2: Child's reaction in the school (themes 14, 16, 17)
- Cluster 3: Educator's observation about support (themes 2, 3, 15, 19)
- Cluster 4: Educator's role in support (themes 5, 6, 18)
- Cluster 5: What the school provides (theme 8, 9, 10, 11, 12)
- Cluster 6: Parent versus Educator (theme 7)
- Cluster 7: Child's experience (themes 4, 13)

▪ **Stage 4 : Production of a summary table**

Below is a summary table of the analysis of this participant's interview:

Cluster 1: Educator not having enough time to support (theme 1)

- Not enough time to support ("klastyd ... nie altyd tyd").

Cluster 2: Child's reaction in the school (themes 14, 16, 17)

- Child keeps up a facade ("front voorhou").
- Child uses divorce as excuse ("verskoning ... gebroke huis").
- Child's participation scales down ("neem hy nie aan sekere goed deel").

Cluster 3: Educator's observation about support (themes 2, 3, 15, 19)

- More difficult with Senior phase ("groter kinders sien ... baie minder").
- Easier with Ground phase ("klein kindjies ... sien ... hele dag").
- Child is neglected at home ("verwaarloos").
- Educator has divorce experience – understand ("self geskei ... meer begrip").

Cluster 4: Educator's role in support (themes 5, 6, 18)

- Educator plays an important role ("onderwyser ... is hulle hele wêreld").
- Have a trusting relationship with the child ("naby aan die kind te kom").
- Create opportunities for child to talk ("praat ... skep te min geleentheid").

Cluster 5: What the school provides (theme 8, 9, 10, 11, 12)

- Male educators support boys ("meer mans kan hê ... ondersteuning").
- Disciplinary Committee plays a role ("Dissiplinêre Komitee ... kinders help").
- School provides security for child ("veilige wêreld skep").
- Centre with counsellors at school ("sentrum ... beraders").
- Adjust demands in class ("huiswerk en take en stel eise ... plaas alles druk").

Cluster 6: Parent versus Educator (theme 7)

- Parents should stay involved ("beide ouers ... ondersteuning").

Cluster 7: Child's experience (themes 4, 13)

- It's traumatic for children ("uitwerking van skei is groot").
- Child feels uncertain ("soeke na standvastigheid").

4.4 FROM INTERVIEWS TO FOCUS GROUPS

In this section I discuss how the individual interviews informed the focus groups. The above-identified themes emerged from the eight semi-structured interviews. I grouped these themes under four areas of experiences:

- Educators' experiences regarding the child
- Educators' experiences regarding themselves as educators
- Educators' experiences regarding the school
- Educators' experiences regarding the parents

Under each of these four areas, I grouped the themes that I thought fitted that area of experience. As far as possible I tried to use the wording of the participants to inform the identified themes. Due to the fact that the interviews and focus groups were held

in Afrikaans, I also kept the themes in this language when I introduced them to the focus groups.

The structure through which I introduced the themes to the focus groups, were by means of a table containing all the identified themes from the eight interviews (Appendix D). I captured all the themes onto one page so that the participants could use the table as a quick reference to what has already been identified in the interviews.

I presented this table (Appendix D) to each focus group participant at the commencement of the session. The participants received a few minutes to inspect the themes before they started their discussion. The two focus groups reacted quite differently to these stimuli. The first group used the table of themes only a few times when moments of silence arose. Mostly, various spontaneous discussions and themes flowed from viewing the stimuli only for a short period of time. The second focus group seemed to use the themes as a strict agenda for their discussion. Generally, they read a theme and then had a short discussion of confirmation on that theme. Then they moved on to reading a next theme, and so the session continued.

My general observation of the participants' reactions to the presented table, was that they seemed amazed, but excited, about the amount and depth of the themes that were identified by them in the interviews. In an informal discussion with the principal on how the study was developing, he also showed interest and excitement regarding the themes from the interviews. He even requested a copy of these themes.

Following is a presentation of the themes that emerged from the two focus group discussions.

4.5 PRESENTATION OF FOCUS GROUPS

4.5.1 Focus Group 1

- **Stage 1 : Initial encounter with the text**

In reading this text from the focus group, it was clear that the participants all share an important commonality in that they all are educators in the Foundation or Intermediate phases. Therefore, they all have the experience of supporting children by seeing these specific children the whole day long. View Appendix F-1 for an extract from the original text. This extract will illustrate how I analysed the text by coding the themes.

- **Stage 2 : Identification of themes**

Working through the text line-by-line, I was able to identify the following themes :

1. In initial phase of divorce its a secret ("in die inisiële fase wanneer die pa nou-net weg is ... geheimhoudingstadium").
2. Not enough time to support ("mens is partykeer so gedruk dan mens nie tyd het om stil te staan nie").
3. More difficult with Senior phase ("hang ook van die tyd af ... veral so by die seniors ... gaan baie verlore wat die kinders baie wissel").
4. The child must know the educator knows ("as daai kind weet die juffrou weet ... dis sommer beter").
5. Inform the relevant educators ("die onderwysers wat met daai kind werk, bymekaar te kry ... gesonde praktyk").
6. Educator is rolemodel ("die rolmodel ... voorbeeld waantoe hy kan gaan").
7. Educator should guide child ("as jy weet daar is nie 'n mamma ... wys net hoe som jy op ... bietjie riglyne gee").
8. Children from divorced homes should get the same as hostel children ("gee vir die koshuiskinders tydskrifte ... miskien aan daai ander kinders ook dink").
9. Single-parent is tired ("totale emosionele dreinerings ... moeilik om tyd te kry vir die kinders ... depressief raak").
10. Tiredness is no excuse ("nie 'n rede om jou kinders nie broodjies voor te maak").
11. Parents also need support ("het sy eintlik ondersteuning nodig ... of leiding").

12. Parents are focused on themselves ("enkel-ouer is so gefokus op homself ... dat die kinders verwaarloos").
13. Grandparents are involved ("deurdat die ouma na die kinders kyk").
14. Two parental homes should stay consistent ("dissipline by die ma en die pa verskil").
15. Child has three sets of rules ("stel skoolreëls en 'n stel huisreëls en die goed kom nie ooreen ... gebroke huis het dan selfs drie stellingreëls").
16. Male educators support boys ("te min manspersoneel het wat die seuns deur so iets kan ondersteun").
17. Annual meeting with single-parents ("jaarliks 'n tipe van 'n inligtingsaand moet hou vir enkel-ouers ... saam kan gesels oor probleme ... kundiges kry").
18. Educators discuss their experiences with parents ("veral as jy 'n onderwyser is en jy kan sê hoe jy die kind beleef .. hulle net bietjie verstaan hoe die onderwysers daarvoor voel").
19. Parents should report trauma ("in 'n omsendbrief vertolk ... ouers moet laat weet").
20. Disciplinary Committee plays a role ("opvang ... herhaaldelik gedragsprobleme het").
21. Child views Disciplinary Committee as threat ("nou deesdae vir die kinders amper soos die boelie ... woede ... een wat hom eintlik in die moeilikheid laat kom ... vermy jou soms").
22. Children from own class still trust you ("buiten dat jy op die DK is, gaan jou eie klas ... met jou 'n vertrouensverhouding hê").
23. Centre with counsellors at school ("by hulle skool opvoedkundige sielkundiges het, om al hierdie voog en gedrags en emosionele probleme te kan opvang").
24. The educator provides empathy ("jy moet simpatie hê met die kind ... sensitief wees").
25. Educator does not need knowledge ("hoef nie baie kennis ... boeke-kennis te hê").
26. Educator should investigate ("in te gaan op die saak ... daar nie iets agter daai gedrag is nie").
27. Educator should keep child's situation in mind ("dat 'n mens reg deur die jaar in jou gesprekke ... altyd weet daar is oukies wat dalk nie daai volledige gesin").

28. Peergroup can support ("die maatjie sal vir hom opstaan ... ek sal baie keer vergeet").
29. Siblings should support each other ("sussie moet vir my kos maak").
30. Division of roles in the home ("pappa is, met 3 dogtertjies ... dogtertjies vervul partymaal 'n mamma-rol").
31. Division of roles may be negative for child ("sussie in die dag baie moeg ... nie haar werk doen nie ... indring met die skool se werk").
32. Too much responsibility on child ("baie maal te veel verantwoordelikhede op my oudste een om my te help").
33. Responsibility can be positive ("daar kan iets goed daar uit kom ... dalk berei die Here jou voor om eendag 'n baie goeie mamma te wees").
34. Child should not fulfil parental role ("dink ek nie 'n kind behoort 'n pa of ma-rol te speel nie").
35. Child feels uncertain ("vrees beleef ... selfvertroue lei skade ... voel soms minderwaardig ... kind hierdie onsekerheid").
36. Child must accept own responsibilities ("maak nie saak of jou pappa en mamma ... jou skoolwerk bly nog jou skoolwerk ... bly nog jou verantwoordelikheid").
37. Child's participation scales down ("by die revue dit nou al 'n paar keer gehad ... kind self onttrek ... verdeeldheid tussen die mamma en die pappa").
38. Child tries to avoid conflict between parents ("hy onttrek toe nou sommer was wat hy hierdie konflik ... hy vermy dit toe nou sommer").
39. Help child to express himself ("kind te help om te verwoord ... hoe sê ek vir my maatjies dit").
40. Stressful to talk about it ("spanningsvol om te moet sê").
41. Child treasures gifts from parents ("hy wil net vir my sê dit is iets spesiaal wat sy ma vir hom gegee het ... sy dit koester ... sentimenteel").
42. Educator should respect child's needs ("mens moet dit respekteer en gevoelig wees daarvoor").
43. Children are confused ("die kinders is baie deurmekaar ... goedtjies is deurmekaar ... kuier by die ma ... haar baadjie by die pa vergeet").
44. Children's behaviour change between homes ("ander gedragpatrone ... dissipline by die ma en die pa verskil").

45. Parents use behavioural change as weapon ("ma gebruik dit dan nou as verskoning ... hy was by sy pa gewees ... beskuldig mekaar").
46. Parents spoil children ("kind te bederf met finansiële goed in pleks van liefde").
47. Parents miss adult company ("grootste gemis ... iemand om vanaand mee te praat ... volwasse gesprek ... daai ondersteuning").
48. Stay-parent ("dan is dit huiswerk, roetine en skool").
49. Away-parent ("waar dit tv-speletjies en lekker is").
50. Child views new person as threat ("kind sien die nuwe persoon as 'n reuse bedreiging").
51. Feel better when you talk ("makliker as jy net eers oor iets gepraat het wat jou gehinder het").
52. Writing as expression ("iets makliker op papier neersit as wat jy praat").
53. Eating habits and health are influenced ("pappa kook dalk nie en hulle neem wegneemetes ... eet niks wat gesond is ... tandvleise bloei").
54. When educator has gone through divorce – prejudice ("jy nou bevooroordeel kan wees teenoor 'n ouer ... self net glo die ma is reg").
55. The story has two sides ("onthou daar's twee kante ... daai perspektief vir 'n ouer kan gee").
56. Involvement of step-parent ("is dit in belang van die kind ... stiefma genoeg omgee vir die kind om te kom").
57. Educator should be patient ("was ek bietjie kortaf met die mamma ... dalk net eers 'n oor was vir hierdie mamma ... haar vertrou gekry het").
58. Home visits are eye-openers ("een van die grootste eye-openers ... besef en verstaan hoekom hierdie kind").
59. Home visits are risky ("stel jousef so bloot ... alleen ... nie getuies").
60. Homosexual relationships after divorce ("ontsettende invloed ... op die kind se geslagsontwikkeling ... roidentifisering ... geslagsidentifisering").
61. Support the parent ("dalk net eers 'n oor was vir hierdie mamma").
62. Give the parent perspective ("moet daai perspektief vir 'n ouer ook kan gee").

▪ **Stage 3 : Clustering of themes**

Some of the themes identified in stage two share reference points and can be grouped into clusters. Following is a list of clusters that represent groupings of themes:

- Cluster 1: Educator not having enough time to support (theme 2)
- Cluster 2: Child's reaction in the school (themes 36, 37, 38, 41, 44)
- Cluster 3: Educator's observation about support (themes 1, 3, 4, 25, 40, 51, 52, 54, 58, 59)
- Cluster 4: Educator's observation about child (themes 31, 32, 33, 34, 53, 60)
- Cluster 5: Educator's role in support (themes 5, 6, 7, 16, 24, 26, 27, 39, 42, 57, 61, 62)
- Cluster 6: Parent's needs (theme 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 30, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49)
- Cluster 7: What the school provides (theme 8, 17, 20, 23)
- Cluster 8: Step-family (theme 56)
- Cluster 9: Parent versus Educator (theme 14, 15, 18, 19, 55)
- Cluster 10: Child's experience (themes 21, 22, 35, 43, 50)
- Cluster 11: Peer & Sibling support (themes 28, 29)

▪ **Stage 4 : Production of a summary table**

Below is a summary table of the analysis of this focus group's discussion:

Cluster 1: Educator not having enough time to support (theme 2)

- Not enough time ("nie tyd het").

Cluster 2: Child's reaction in the school (themes 36, 37, 38, 41, 44)

- Child must accept responsibilities ("verantwoordelikheid").
- Child's participation scales down ("kind self onttrek").
- Child avoids conflict between parents ("vermy dit").
- Child treasures gifts from parents ("iets spesiaal ... koester").
- Children's behaviour change between homes ("ander gedragspatrone").

Cluster 3: Educator's observation about support (themes 1, 3, 4, 25, 40, 51, 52, 54, 58, 59)

- Initial phase of divorce ("inisiële fase ... geheimhoudingstadium").
- Difficult with Senior phase ("seniors ... baie wissel").
- Child must know the educator knows ("kind weet die juffrou weet ... beter").
- Educator does not need knowledge ("nie ... boeke-kennis te hê").
- Stressful to talk about it ("spanningsvol").

- Feel better when you talk ("oor iets gepraat").
- Writing as expression ("makliker op papier").
- When educator has gone through divorce – prejudice ("bevooroordeel").
- Home visits are eye-openers ("eye-openers").
- Home visits are risky ("stel jousef so bloot").

Cluster 4: Educator's observation about child (themes 31, 32, 33, 34, 53, 60)

- Division of roles may be negative ("indring met die skool se werk").
- Too much responsibility on child ("te veel verantwoordelikhede").
- Responsibility can be positive ("iets goed daar uit kom").
- Child should not fulfil parental role ("nie ... pa of ma-rol te speel nie").
- Eating habits and health are influenced ("eet niks wat gesond is").
- Homosexual relationships ("geslagsontwikkeling ... geslagsidentifisering").

Cluster 5: Educator's role in support (themes 5, 6, 7, 16, 24, 26, 27, 39, 42, 57, 61, 62)

- Inform the relevant educators ("onderwysers ... bymekaar te kry").
- Educator is rolemodel ("rolmodel").
- Educator should guide child ("riglyne gee").
- Male educators support boys ("manspersoneel ... ondersteun").
- The educator provides empathy ("simpatie ... sensitief").
- Educator should investigate ("in te gaan op die saak").
- Keep child's situation in mind ("altyd weet ... nie daai volledige gesin").
- Help child to express ("help om te verwoord").
- Respect child's needs ("respekteer en gevoelig").
- Educator should be patient ("eers 'n oor ... haar vertrouwe gekry").
- Support the parent ("oor was vir hierdie mamma").
- Give the parent perspective ("perspektief vir 'n ouer ... gee").

Cluster 6: Parent's needs (themes 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 30, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49)

- Single-parent is tired ("emosionele dreinerings ... depressief").
- Tiredness is no excuse ("nie 'n rede ... nie broodjies").
- Parents also need support ("ondersteuning").
- Parents are focused on themselves ("gefokus op homself").

- Grandparents are involved ("ouma na die kinders kyk").
- Division of roles in the home ("dogtertjies vervul ... mamma-rol").
- Parents use behavioural change as weapon ("verskoning ... by sy pa gewees").
- Parents spoil children ("bederf").
- Parents miss adult company ("volwasse gesprek ... ondersteuning").
- Stay-parent i ("huiswerk, roetine en skool").
- Away-parent ("tv-speletjies en lekker is").

Cluster 7: What the school provides (themes 8, 17, 20, 23)

- Get the same as hostel children ("koshuiskinders ... daai ander kinders ook").
- Annual meeting with single-parents ("inligtingsaand ... enkel-ouers").
- Disciplinary Committee plays a role ("opvang ... gedragsprobleme").
- Centre with counsellors at school ("by hulle skool opvoedkundige sielkundiges").

Cluster 8: Step-family (theme 56)

- Involvement of step-parent ("stiefma genoeg omgee").

Cluster 9: Parent versus Educator (themes 14, 15, 18, 19, 55)

- Parental homes should stay consistent ("dissipline ... verskil").
- Three sets of rules ("drie stelle reëls").
- Discuss experiences with parents ("sê hoe jy die kind beleef").
- Parents should report trauma ("ouers moet laat weet").
- Story has two sides ("daar's twee kante").

Cluster 10: Child's experience (themes 21, 22, 35, 43, 50)

- Disciplinary Committee as threat ("in die moeilikheid laat kom ... vermy jou").
- Own class still trust you ("eie klas ... vertrouensverhouding").
- Child feels uncertain ("minderwaardig ... onsekerheid").
- Children are confused ("deurmekaar ... goedtjies is deurmekaar").
- Child views new person as threat ("nuwe persoon ... bedreiging").

Cluster 11: Peer & Sibling support (themes 28, 29)

- Peergroup can support ("maatjie sal vir hom opstaan").
- Siblings should support each other ("sussie moet vir my kos maak").

4.5.2 Focus Group 2

▪ **Stage 1 : Initial encounter with the text**

In reading this text from the second focus group it became clear that all the participants educate learners from the senior phase. It seems that they experience difficulty and frustration in their supportive role to learners from divorced homes, mostly because of a lack of time. View Appendix F-2 for an extract from the original text. This extract will also illustrate how I analysed the text by coding the different themes.

▪ **Stage 2 : Identification of themes**

Working through the text line-by-line, I was able to identify the following themes :

1. Not enough time to support ("ons het net nie tyd vir dit nie").
2. Educator is kept out of class ("vandag omtrent glad nie in my klas nie ... goed moet ondersoek word").
3. Diversity in class ("krisis ... kind wat 'n gesonde huisgesin het in dieselfde klas as 'n kind wat amper 'n rebel is ... soet kind raak so keelvol").
4. Educator is tired, frustrated ("frustreer 'n onderwyser as jy nie tyd het of emosionele krag ... jy voel net uitgeput").
5. Educator cannot help ("groot frustrasie ... weet daars probleme en jy moet dit hanteer, maar jy kan nie").
6. Frustration goes home ("kom jy by die huis ... so uitgeput ... ek's ongeduldig").
7. Pressure at school ("alles oor druk wat van die skool af kom").
8. Discipline is difficult ("nie meer vinnig die lat gryp ... kort-kort ... verduidelik ... smEEK").
9. Children loose respect ("kinders uit geskeide huise verloor hulle respek vir alle ouers en daarom ook vir gesag").
10. Children do as they please ("kinders maak en breek ... begin maak net soos hulle wil ... sê reguit 'kan tog niks aan ons doen nie' ").

11. Parents do not discipline ("ouers ... nie lus as hulle by die huis kom ... konfrontasie aan te gaan nie").
12. Parent is tired ("ook nie die krag en lus daarvoor nie").
13. Parents are powerless ("dit kap die ouers se hande ook af").
14. More difficult with Senior phase ("nie 'n kind in jou klas vir die hele ... net 'n half uur ... werk af te handel").
15. Support is easier with Ground phase ("jy sien daai kinders elke dag").
16. It's traumatic for children ("dit is vir die kind traumaties ... kan dit nie self verwerk nie").
17. Do not detect all children ("baie kinders in ons skool wat ons nie optel nie").
18. Detect it in the child's behaviour ("gedragsafwykings ... deel van sy reaksie").
19. Naughtiness is attention seeking ("wat ons ervaar as stout ... eintlik aandag soek").
20. Stress makes children naughty ("dis spanning wat maak dat hy so stout is").
21. Detect it in the child's school work ("eerste in sy skoolwerk opgetel ... 10% gedaal").
22. Blame it on the school ("10% gedaal ... die vinger na die skool toe gewys").
23. Inform the relevant educators ("volgende week met die personeel bespreek").
24. Can refer to psychologist ("verwys hulle na 'n sielkundige").
25. Educator should guide child ("sê ons altyd maar leer 'n lewenslesie daaruit").
26. Governing Body employ more educators ("sodat hierdie ouens net daai werk kan doen of meer tyd daarvoor het ... drie ouens op die DK moet hê, moet jy drie ouens meer aanstel").
27. Centre with counsellors at school ("eintlik 'n voltydse berader by 'n skool nodig").
28. Centre with counsellors - problematic ("dit as 'n aanklagkantoor gebruik").
29. Educator is not trained ("ek glo nie ons is opgelei om so iets te hanteer nie").
30. Class size influences support ("nie in 'n klassituasie waar jy sit met 40 kinders").
31. Educator should investigate ("waaroor hulle die onderhoud nou voer ... positiwiteit daarvan uitkom").
32. Peergroup can support ("maats waar sy aandag en vertroosting wil kry").
33. Peergroup reports danger ("gelukkig hou ons kinders kop ... kom rapporteer").
34. Division of roles in the home ("sy is soos die ma in die huis").

35. Child learns out of experience ("maak dit hulle net 'n beter mens ... beter insig in die lewe gee").
36. Child feels rejected ("beleef haar pa is nie lief vir hulle nie - verwerping ja").
37. Child is stressed ("spanning wat die kind beleef").
38. Remarriage is emotional for the child ("pa gaan weer trou, die kinders ervaar dit heeltemal emosioneel").
39. Parents use child to get back at each other ("speel bal tussen die ouers").
40. Child plays the parents ("groter kinders ... gebruik die ouer meer as 'n speelbal ... buit ... situasie partykeer uit").
41. Parents are the problem ("grootste probleem is die ouers").
42. Parents do not support educators ("ouers het voorheen die onderwyser se part gevat ... kind by die huis gesê ... aanvaar as die waarheid ... ouers staan nie agter ons nie").
43. Human Rights are misused ("gryp daai wette aan en dis waarmee hy jou slaan").
44. Educator is powerless ("onderwyser se hande is afgekap").
45. Stay-parent ("daai ouer moet die dissipline en gesag handhaaf ... skoolwerk").
46. Away-parent ("moet net lekker wees ... niks druk").

▪ **Stage 3 : Clustering of themes**

Some of the themes identified in stage two share reference points and can be grouped into clusters. Following is a list of clusters that represent groupings of themes:

- Cluster 1: Educator is frustrated (themes 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 44)
- Cluster 2: Child's reaction (themes 10, 34, 40)
- Cluster 3: Educator's observation about support (themes 3, 8, 14, 15, 17, 18, 21, 29, 30)
- Cluster 4: Educator's observation about child (themes 9, 19, 20, 35)
- Cluster 5: Educator's role in support (themes 23, 24, 25, 31)
- Cluster 6: Parent's needs (themes 12, 13, 39, 45, 46)
- Cluster 7: Possible solutions (themes 26, 27, 28)
- Cluster 8: Step-family (theme 38)
- Cluster 9: Parent versus Educator (themes 11, 22, 41, 42, 43)
- Cluster 10: Child's experience (themes 16, 36, 37)

- Cluster 11: Peergroup support (themes 32, 33)

▪ **Stage 4 : Production of a summary table**

Below is a summary table of the analysis of this focus group's discussion:

Cluster 1: Educator is frustrated (themes 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 44)

- Not enough time to support ("net nie tyd").
- Educator is kept out of class ("omtrent glad nie in my klas nie").
- Educator is tired, frustrated ("frustreer ... emosionele krag ... voel net uitgeput").
- Educator cannot help ("jy kan nie").
- Frustration goes home ("uitgeput ... ongeduldig").
- Pressure at school ("druk ... skool").
- Educator is powerless ("hande is afgekap").

Cluster 2: Child's reaction (themes 10, 34, 40)

- Children do as they please ("maak en breek").
- Division of roles in the home ("soos die ma").
- Child plays the parents ("groter kinders ... gebruik ouer ... as 'n speelbal").

Cluster 3: Educator's observation about support (themes 3, 8, 14, 15, 17, 18, 21, 29, 30)

- Diversity in class ("in dieselfde klas").
- Discipline is difficult ("verduidelik ... smEEK").
- More difficult with Senior phase ("net 'n half uur").
- Support is easier with Ground phase ("elke dag").
- Do not detect all children ("nie optel").
- Detect it in the child's behaviour ("gedragsafwykings").
- Detect it in the child's school work ("skoolwerk ... 10% gedaal").
- Educator is not trained ("nie ... opgelei").
- Class size influences support ("sit met 40 kinders").

Cluster 4: Educator's observation about child (themes 9, 19, 20, 35)

- Children loose respect ("verloor ... respek vir alle ouers ... vir gesag").
- Naughtiness is attention seeking ("stout ... eintlik aandag soek").
- Stress makes children naughty ("spanning wat maak dat hy so stout is").
- Child learns out of experience ("beter mens ... beter insig").

Cluster 5: Educator's role in support (themes 23, 24, 25, 31)

- Inform the relevant educators ("personeel bespreek").
- Refer to psychologist ("verwys").
- Educator should guide child ("leer 'n lewenslessie").
- Educator should investigate ("onderhoud").

Cluster 6: Parent's needs (themes 12, 13, 39, 45, 46)

- Parent is tired ("nie die krag en lus").
- Parents are powerless ("kap die ouers se hande ook af").
- Parents use child to get back at each other ("speel bal").
- Stay-parent ("disipline en gesag handhaaf ... skoolwerk").
- Away-parent ("net lekker ... niks druk").

Cluster 7: Possible solutions (themes 26, 27, 28)

- Governing Body ("drie ouers meer aanstel").
- Centre with counsellors at school ("voltydse berader").
- Centre with counsellors - problematic ("aanklagkantoor").

Cluster 8: Step-family (theme 38)

- Remarraige is emotional ("weer trou ... emosioneel").

Cluster 9: Parent versus Educator (themes 11, 22, 41, 42, 43)

- Parents do not discipline ("ouers ... nie lus ... konfrontasie").
- Blame it on the school ("vinger na die skool toe gewys").
- Parents are the problem ("grootste probleem is die ouers").
- Parents do not support educators ("ouers staan nie agter ons nie").
- Human Rights are misused ("gryp daai wette aan ... jou slaan").

Cluster 10: Child's experience (themes 16, 36, 37)

- It's traumatic for children ("traumaties").
- Child feels rejected ("verwerping").
- Child is stressed ("spanning").

Cluster 11: Peergroup support (themes 32, 33)

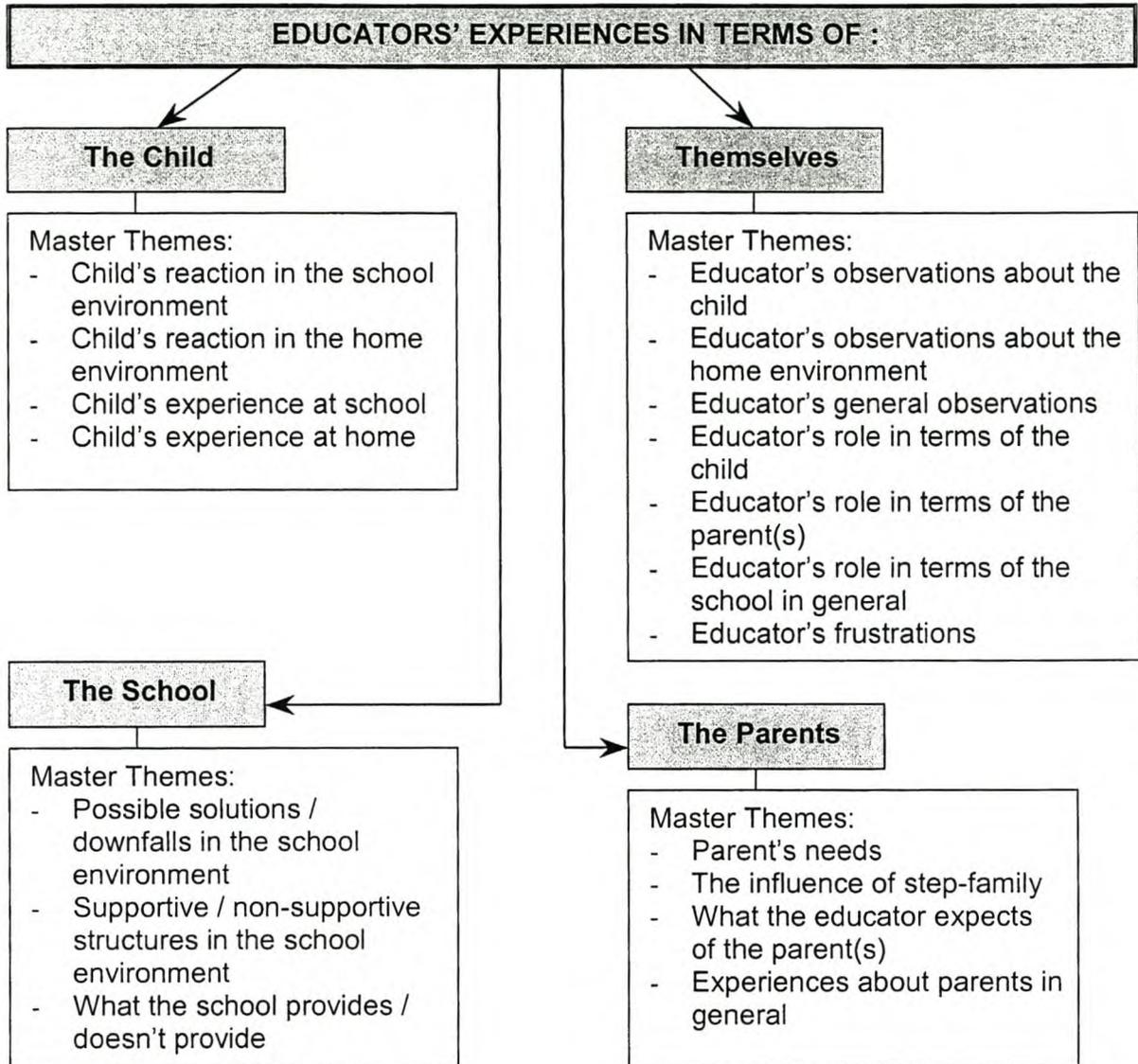
- Peergroup can support ("maats ... aandag en vertroosting").
- Peergroup reports danger ("kom rapporteer").

4.6 INTEGRATION OF INTERVIEWS AND FOCUS GROUPS

In this section I present the master themes, with their sub-themes, in a table format. All the themes identified through the texts (interviews and focus groups) are presented case-by-case so that it can easily be determined when a certain theme was raised. Therefore, it can also be seen which themes were confirmed in, and which emerged from, the focus groups.

Following is a layout of the thematic structure of the four areas of experience, with their underlying master themes:

Figure 4.1 Thematic structure of experiences



The above layout serves as a summary to indicate four areas (with their master themes) in which I grouped the identified themes. In the literature review (chapter two) I mentioned that the role of the school could be divided into four areas. Whilst interpreting the produced data it became apparent that these four areas were also present in the themes that the educators presented. Therefore, I decided to separate the identified themes also in terms of the four areas mentioned in chapter two.

The master themes are collective descriptions of the core content of the themes mentioned under each master theme. The purpose of this was to simplify the presentation of the data and therefore, make it more understandable. I decided to rather group the themes together under master themes, than to randomly present each of the 161 identified themes. For this reason, I decided not to provide a figure that presented all the produced themes as this seemed superfluous.

Here follows a brief explanation of the four areas, with their constituent master themes:

- *The Child*

In this area the educators' experiences, regarding the children whom they deal with, were grouped into four major themes. The produced data revealed that children from divorced families react to their circumstances in various ways. Educators have experienced that these reactions not only presented themselves at school, but also at home. The educators' experiences revealed that children have certain experiences regarding their circumstances and that these precipitate at school and at home.

- *The Educators Themselves*

The educators' shared experiences were also focused on themselves. The first three master themes were based on the educators' observations regarding the children and their home environments, as well as general observations. Three master themes were devoted to the educators' experiences regarding their specific roles in terms of the child, his parents and the school. Lastly, certain frustrations also surfaced during the interviews and focus groups and I found it necessary to present these as well.

- *The School*

Three master themes stood out in the texts as I studied them. These entail possible solutions or downfalls; and supportive or non-supportive structures, within the school environment. These aspects seemed to be influential in the educators' experiences of their role in supporting children from divorced homes.

Lastly, certain themes were identified that highlighted the support that the school provided in the case of divorce.

- *The Parents*

In the area pertaining the parents of children from divorced families, four master themes emerged. The first being parental needs as the educators perceived it to be. The influence of the step-family was not very prominent, but I felt it necessary to separate this aspect from the other themes. Lastly, the educators seemed to have certain expectations of the parents, but also certain general experiences regarding them.

The above four areas can be viewed as areas of experience. In the following section, all the identified themes are presented in terms of these four areas. The presentation is structured in the way that figure 4.1 suggests. Within the four areas of experience, there are eighteen master themes that describe a common thread of the themes subordinate to these master themes. The 161 subordinate themes are presented in full in tables 4.1 to 4.4, as follows. A discussion of the themes, as they are portrayed in the following tables, is presented in chapter five.

* Note: P = Participant; F = Focus Group

Table 4.1 Educators' experiences in terms of the child

Master Theme 1 : Child's reaction in the school environment	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8	F1	F2
▪ Detect it in the child's emotions and behaviour	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
▪ Detect it in the child's school work	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
▪ Children hide the divorce		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				
▪ Child keeps up a facade								✓		
▪ Child uses divorce as an excuse		✓						✓		
▪ Child's participation scales down			✓					✓	✓	
▪ Child shows psychosomatic symptoms							✓			
▪ Child must accept responsibilities									✓	
▪ Children do as they please										✓
▪ Children seek peer group support										✓

Mater Theme 2 : Child's reaction in the home environment	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8	F1	F2
▪ Siblings support each other	✓								✓	
▪ Child avoids conflict between parents									✓	
▪ Child treasures gifts from parents									✓	
▪ Children's behaviour change between homes									✓	
▪ Older children play their parents and manipulate them										✓
▪ Children take on a parental role										✓

Master Theme 3 : Child's experience at school	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8	F1	F2
▪ The child is uncertain & powerless	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	
▪ Divorce is traumatic for children				✓	✓		✓	✓		✓
▪ Child's circumstances change (e.g. they change schools)	✓									
▪ The child may feel the divorce is his fault		✓		✓	✓					
▪ Peer group supports them		✓							✓	
▪ Child is dependant on the educator			✓							
▪ Children have unique experiences	✓	✓			✓	✓				
▪ Child views the Disciplinary Committee members as threatening									✓	
▪ Children are confused									✓	
▪ The educator's own class trusts him/her									✓	
▪ The child experiences stress										✓

Master Theme 4 : Child's experience at home	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8	F1	F2
▪ Child's circumstances change (e.g. they move)	✓									
▪ Children are confused - they forget their things at the other parent									✓	
▪ Child views the new person as a threat									✓	
▪ The child feels rejected										✓

Table 4.2 Educators' experiences in terms of themselves

Master Theme 5 : Educator's observations of the child	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8	F1	F2
▪ Easier to support children from the Foundation and Intermediate phases	✓							✓		✓
▪ Foundation phase children share information easily			✓	✓		✓				
▪ More difficult to support children from the Senior phase	✓				✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
▪ Senior phase children do not share information easily				✓						
▪ Easily overlook children when they hold back		✓								
▪ Do not detect all children with problems										✓
▪ Peer group reminds the educator about the child's situation			✓							
▪ Peer group reports danger (e.g. suicidal friend)										✓
▪ Peer group can be cruel to these children							✓			
▪ Child's primary needs should be addressed	✓		✓							
▪ Child is neglected at home								✓		
▪ Child finds it stressful to talk about his situation									✓	
▪ The child must know that the educator knows about his situation									✓	
▪ Children loose respect for authority during divorce										✓
▪ Naughty behaviour is attention seeking										✓
▪ Stress makes children naughty										✓

Master Theme 6 : Educator's observations of the home environment	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8	F1	F2
▪ Too much responsibility is placed on the child									✓	
▪ Responsibility can also be positive for the child									✓	
▪ Division of roles at home may be negative for the child									✓	
▪ The child should not fulfil a parental role									✓	
▪ Eating habits and health are influenced									✓	
▪ Homosexual relationships influence children									✓	

Master Theme 7 : Educator's general observations	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8	F1	F2
▪ Educator is not aware of the situation		✓		✓	✓					
▪ If you are aware of the situation, you can help	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓			
▪ If not aware, the educator might view the child's behaviour as naughtiness				✓			✓			
▪ If not aware, the child will suffer damage							✓			
▪ Can detect quickly that there is a problem	✓	✓								
▪ Cannot detect quickly that there is a problem				✓						
▪ Can just support up to a certain extent	✓	✓								
▪ Divorce is not very common in Lephalale	✓			✓						
▪ Divorce is not uncommon in Lephalale			✓							
▪ Educators need guidelines on how to support these children			✓	✓						
▪ Educators feel they aren't trained for this supportive role										✓
▪ Educators do not need knowledge, just empathy									✓	
▪ Be open about the topic			✓				✓			
▪ Children do not really talk to me about their problems				✓						
▪ Previously periods were scheduled for supporting children					✓					
▪ Psychologists give valuable insight						✓				
▪ Home schooling is problematic – no one to detect distress						✓				
▪ When the educator has gone through a divorce they understand better							✓	✓	✓	
▪ Be supportive of the psychologist's role							✓			
▪ In the initial phase of divorce, it is kept a secret									✓	
▪ One feels better when you have talked about it									✓	
▪ Writing may be a way to express feelings, instead of talking									✓	
▪ Diversity in the classroom in terms of problems										✓
▪ The class size influences the support										✓
▪ Discipline in the school is difficult										✓

Master Theme 8 : Educator's role in terms of the child	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8	F1	F2
▪ Guide the child and give advice	✓				✓		✓		✓	✓
▪ Provide the child with empathy	✓									
▪ Refer the child to a psychologist or social worker		✓			✓	✓	✓			✓
▪ Talk to the child		✓		✓	✓		✓			
▪ Have a trusting relationship with the child		✓			✓	✓	✓	✓		
▪ Handle the child as naturally as possible		✓								
▪ The educator provides empathy		✓	✓			✓	✓		✓	
▪ Help the child to express himself		✓					✓		✓	
▪ The educator plays a parental role for the child			✓			✓	✓			
▪ Accommodate the child and keep his situation in mind			✓	✓					✓	
▪ The educator should be patient							✓		✓	
▪ Create opportunity for the child to talk								✓		
▪ Respect the child's needs									✓	
▪ The educator is a role model to the child									✓	
▪ Show the children that they can learn out of the experience										✓

Master Theme 9 : Educator's role in terms of the parent(s)	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8	F1	F2
▪ Let the parents come to the school				✓	✓	✓	✓			
▪ Support the parent									✓	
▪ Give the parent perspective									✓	

Master Theme 10 : Educator's role in terms of the school in general	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8	F1	F2
▪ Inform the relevant educators of the child's situation	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
▪ Educator plays an important role	✓	✓				✓	✓	✓		
▪ Talk to the child's previous educators			✓							
▪ Play field duties are important							✓			
▪ The educator should investigate the problem									✓	✓

Master Theme 11 : Educator's frustrations	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8	F1	F2
▪ There is not enough time to support these children					✓			✓	✓	✓
▪ The educator feels frustrated and tired					✓					✓
▪ The educator is kept out of class to handle certain situations										✓
▪ Educators feel they can't help these children										✓
▪ The frustration they feel goes home										✓
▪ Educators experience pressure at school										✓
▪ Educators feel powerless										✓

Table 4.3 Educators' experiences in terms of the school

Master Theme 12 : Possible solutions / downfalls in the school environment	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8	F1	F2
▪ Home visits are eye-openers	✓								✓	
▪ Home visits are risky and exposes the educator									✓	
▪ Adjust the demands in the classroom	✓							✓		
▪ Difficult for the school to appoint people just for the task of support				✓						
▪ Lengthen the school day to have more time to support					✓					
▪ Centre with counsellors at school to support the children								✓	✓	✓
▪ Centre with counsellors can be problematic if used as complaints office										✓
▪ Annual meeting with single-parents									✓	
▪ The Governing Body should appoint more educators										✓

Master Theme 13 : Supportive / non-supportive structures in the school environment	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8	F1	F2
▪ Registration form serves as a source of information	✓									
▪ Edlab serves as a source of information		✓								
▪ Different provinces have different ways of reporting on children	✓									
▪ Head of Department : Educational Guidance					✓		✓			
▪ Registration educator plays a role					✓		✓			
▪ The Disciplinary Committee plays a role						✓		✓	✓	
▪ After school care can help the child with homework							✓			

Master Theme 14 : What the school provides / doesn't provide	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8	F1	F2
▪ The school provides security for the child	✓	✓					✓	✓		
▪ The school provides discipline for the child						✓				
▪ The school is an escape from the 'sad home' situation		✓								
▪ Not enough male educators						✓				
▪ Male educators support boys							✓	✓	✓	
▪ Give the same extra support to these children, as residence children get									✓	

Table 4.4 Educators' experiences in terms of the parents

Master Theme 15 : Parent's needs	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8	F1	F2
▪ Financial difficulty	✓		✓		✓					
▪ Single-parent struggles and is tired	✓					✓	✓		✓	✓
▪ Parents are focused on themselves and neglect their children		✓			✓				✓	
▪ Parents also need support			✓				✓		✓	
▪ Parents' lives are rushed						✓				
▪ Grandparents are also involved in some cases									✓	
▪ Division of roles in the home									✓	
▪ Parents miss adult company									✓	
▪ Parents feel powerless										✓

Master Theme 16 : The influence of step-family	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8	F1	F2
▪ Step-parents bring extra problems	✓									
▪ Involvement of the step-parent can be to the child's benefit									✓	
▪ Re-marriage is an emotional issue to the children										✓

Master Theme 17 : What the educator expects of the parent(s)	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8	F1	F2
▪ Need openness from the parents about their situation		✓		✓	✓		✓			
▪ The parents should stay involved		✓	✓				✓	✓		
▪ Tiredness is not an excuse to neglect your children									✓	
▪ Two parental homes should stay consistent									✓	
▪ Educators want to share their experiences with the parents									✓	
▪ Parents should report any trauma that the child went through									✓	
▪ The story has two sides									✓	

Master Theme 18 : Experiences about parents in general	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8	F1	F2
▪ Parents use children to get back at each other	✓						✓			✓
▪ Standards are different in the two parental homes	✓						✓			
▪ Parents use behavioural change in their children as a weapon									✓	
▪ Parent spoils the children									✓	
▪ The stay-parent enforces the routine, discipline and school work									✓	✓
▪ The away-parent does all the nice things and no pressure									✓	✓
▪ There are three sets of rules that the child has to adhere to									✓	
▪ Parents do not discipline their children										✓
▪ Parents blame the school when the child's performance lowers										✓
▪ The parents are the core problem										✓
▪ Parents do not support the educators										✓
▪ Human Rights are misused and the educators feel hit by it										✓

4.7 REFLECTION AND CONCLUSION

This chapter firstly portrayed the identified themes from the eight individual interviews. The themes that were mentioned in the second stage of analysis were presented randomly with no obvious link between the themes. In the third and fourth stages of analysis, the themes were grouped into clusters and then presented under master themes. Each master theme comprised of different themes that share a common idea or experience.

I discussed the process that informed the flow from individual interviews to focus groups. Thereafter, the themes from the two focus groups were presented. The same analysis method, as for the individual interviews, was utilized to group and present the themes under specific master themes.

Finally, an integration of all the identified themes was presented in table format, where the source(s) and frequency of a theme could clearly be viewed. Eighteen master themes were used to group the themes.

In reflection to this chapter, I can honestly say that I was pleasantly surprised at the amount of themes that emerged in the interviews and focus groups. I never could have anticipated such a broad response from the educators. I have also gained insight into the challenging task of educators in South Africa, and specifically, their important but challenging role in supporting children from divorced families.

This chapter served the purpose of displaying the themes that emerged from the individual interviews and focus groups. In the following chapter I briefly discuss these findings as well as the implications thereof.

CHAPTER 5

IMPLICATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter construes a discussion of the findings as they were presented in chapter four. This discussion is structured in terms of the four areas of experience, namely:

- Educators' experiences in terms of the child
- Educators' experiences in terms of themselves
- Educators' experiences in terms of the school
- Educators' experiences in terms of the parents

Secondly, I draw the findings through to the proposed research question and aims. Here, I will display the possible role that educators could play in supporting children from divorced families. This is done from the interpretive paradigm, where the educators' experiences are viewed as phenomena as they occur in the school setting (Terre Blanche *et al.*, 1999:127).

Thirdly, this chapter focuses on the implication of this study, as it effects the educators who participated in the research. Thereafter, the limitations of the present study are discussed, followed by recommendations for future research.

Lastly, a few concluding remarks are made where I also present a final reflection on the process of research as I experienced it.

5.2 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

According to Willig (2001:60) the discussion of the Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) considers the themes identified in the analysis in relation to existing literature in the field.

In the subsequent discussion I follow the same structure as to what I have used in chapter two, in discussing the role of the school. I also used this structure in chapter four, in presenting the findings. Therefore, four areas of experience namely, *children*, *educators*, the *school*, and *parents* are demarcated.

5.2.1 Educators' experiences in terms of the child

Bogolub (1995:42) mentions that the manifestations of the child's experiences may include both externalizing problems (e.g. aggression) and internalizing problems (e.g. inability to concentrate on schoolwork). Quite a number of educators mentioned that they can detect it in the child's emotions, behaviour and schoolwork, that there possibly are problems at home.

Most of the participants have shared that generally children come across as uncertain, when their parents divorce. The child may also feel that the divorce is his fault. These findings can be related to the statements of Bustanoby (1981:34) and Miller (1996:107) where they mention that the child may feel very uncertain of himself and may even think that the divorce is his fault. Some educators stated in a focus group session that children also experience stress and this is supported by Dreman (1999:152) where he states that divorce experiences are generally accompanied by stress for children, since they have to cope with situational changes. One educator shared the experience that children may also exhibit psychosomatic symptoms due to this stress. Prinsloo *et al.* (1996:214) confirms that psychosomatic illnesses may occur where children complain of headaches, stomachaches, and so forth.

Another aspect that some educators have experienced is that the child's participation scales down due to divorce circumstances, for example, there is only one parent to transport children to and from activities. According to Locke *et al.* (1995:161) school activities should be scheduled to accommodate different family structures.

In terms of the home environment, some participants have experienced that siblings support each other during the divorce transition. Bogolub (1995:44) states that siblings can validate each other's reality testing regarding a new or puzzling home situation and so children can maintain confidence in the ability to understand the world around them.

Children may also view the new person in a parent's life as a threat, as some educators explained during a focus group session. According to Kalter (1990:19) children may experience competitive feelings toward the dating partner or stepparent and may feel uneasy, irritable and frightened.

Peer group support was also mentioned by a few educators, as part of the child's experiences at school. According to Shaw (1992:198) peer support provides an opportunity for divorced children to share their experiences and learn specific skills related to interpersonal problem solving, communication, and the expression of anger.

5.2.2 Educators' experiences in terms of themselves

Some of the participants have experienced that they usually are not aware of the divorce situation. They also mentioned that they would be able to support the child more effectively, if they did know about the circumstances. These findings relate to the statement of Locke *et al.* (1995:158) that educators are often the last to know that a child's parents are divorcing. The authors continue by stating that many educators can be immediately sensitive to a child's distress once they are aware of the situation. Wallerstein *et al.* (1980:266) agrees that educators should be informed of the major changes in children's lives in order to maximize efforts of support.

Educators have experienced that they play an important role in supporting these children. Some even mentioned that they, as educators, have to sometimes fulfil a parental role for that child. The importance of educators' role is supported by Ligon *et al.* (1970:76) that educators are of inestimable help to children who bring

their problems to them. As a supporting remark Sammons *et al.* (2000:64) state that educators are frequently called upon to fill the parenting gap that some parents leave due to their focus on their own experiences.

In one of the focus groups it was mentioned that it is important for the child to know that the educator knows about their family situation. In support of this finding Miller (1996:109) mentions that the educator should let the child know that they are aware of the situation. Educators have also felt that it is essential to create opportunities for the child to talk about their experiences. Some participants also mentioned that educators should be open about the topic, and not try to avoid it. Miller's (1996:109) statement, that educators should introduce activities about feelings to help them talk about it, support this finding. The author continues to state that educators should discuss words related to family life like, mother, father, stepfamilies, and single-parent families, to build their vocabulary by talking about all kinds of families.

Another experience that some educators shared, was that their personal encounters with divorce strengthened their understanding of the child from a divorced family. Wallerstein *et al.* (1980:266) mention that in their study a significant number of educators were divorced parents themselves, and this aspect gave them an increased sensitivity towards the children in their class whose parents were divorcing.

Approximately half of the educators have found it difficult to support children from the Senior phase, because they hourly change from class to class and they do not share information as freely as the Foundation phase children. Wallerstein *et al.* (1980:266) state that older children do not have one central figure at school to whom they can convey important information, because they are moving from educator to educator each hour of the school day. The authors have also found that younger children openly and naively share intimate detail of their lives (Wallerstein *et al.*, 1980:266).

Specifically one focus group discussion circulated around the experience that, too much responsibility is placed on the child during divorce. According to

Ellwood *et al.* (1991:158) the stressor of being thrust into roles the child does not have the required skills for, may impact negatively on him. Carlson (1992:37) states that the single-parent family is vulnerable to task overload and strain. The author continues to state that a task overload can occur when children assume responsibilities typically shared by the absent parent. On this point, educators mentioned that children should not fulfil a parental role in their homes.

Educators have experienced that there are certain things they could do to improve their supporting role. These could include being empathetic toward the child; talking to previous educators to find out more about the child; and referring the child to a professional.

Bray *et al.* (1992:73) state that educators are in a good position to be empathetic to children's problems and needs. Ligon *et al.* (1970:90) mention that other educators might provide valuable information, and so educators could support one another to be supportive of the children they work with. Locke *et al.* (1995:159) state that educators should refer the child to the school counselor for deeper emotional support.

However, educators feel they are not trained enough to fulfil such a supporting role. The research of Wallerstein *et al.* (1980:265) supports the notion that educators' psychological training and knowledge is limited, despite their genuine interest in children.

5.2.3 Educators' experiences in terms of the school

One of the important aspects that educators mentioned about the school, is that it provides structure for the children. According to Wallerstein *et al.* (1980:277) the school is useful in supporting children from divorce families because it can provide structure in a child's life at a time when the major structure of his life, the family, is crumbling. Hetherington *et al.* (1978, cited in Dreman, 1999:163) confirms that children of divorce adjust better in school settings in which there is

a structured but supportive environment, with structure being particularly important for children's adjustment.

Some educators have shared the experience of the necessity to adjust the demands in the classroom, because some children cannot cope with such demands during divorce. Miller *et al.* (1999:287) urge educators to be tolerant of variability in the academic performance of children experiencing divorce. Ligon *et al.* (1970:77) state that when educators know about the child's situation they should adapt class assignments so that the child can keep up with his work.

Within the school environment there are certain sources of information, that can supply the educators with insight into the child's situation. Educators' experiences show that these sources are valuable, for example, the registration form and 'Edlab' form. Ligon *et al.* (1970:77) state that children's cumulative records may provide information, but it does not measure up to the kinds of information one can get from personal knowledge of the child.

Another source of information, that a few educators identified, are home visits. In a survey administered by Epstein and Becker (1982, cited in Grolnick *et al.*, 1992:288), many educators stressed the positive effect of a home visit by the educator at the beginning of the school year. The educators in this study have also experienced that there could be a negative side to home visits. They stated that it can be risky and that the educator is exposed to various elements, when they visit a family at their home.

Out of some of the educators' experiences it was clear that they felt that a centre with counsellors can be an answer to support these children more effectively. However, one educator seemed sceptical of whether it is feasible. Locke *et al.* (1995:159) emphasise that educators should refer the child to the school counsellor. Therefore, for the educators from this study it would be ideal to have school counsellors, but it is not the reality currently.

5.2.4 Educators' experiences in terms of the parents

Some educators have experienced that parents sometimes use their children to get back at the other parent. According to Kalter (1990:12) children are frequently drafted by their parents to participate in conflict as allies or go-betweens. Parents are sometimes so focused on themselves that the children are neglected in the process, as some educators mentioned. Wallerstein *et al.* (1980:36) state that parental care is often diminished because the radical changes in their lives tend to focus their attention on their own experiences. Bogolub (1995:102) states that the child can experience the loss of the noncustodial and/or custodial parent in terms of emotional availability. The unavailability of a parent may force the child then to take on more responsibility in the household. According to some of the educators, roles are then divided in the home environment to make up for the unavailable parent.

A number of educators experienced that single-parents are often tired and they struggle to cope, during the divorce transition stage. Lewis (2000:64) agrees that divorcing parents are often emotionally distracted, fatigued, and not functioning well as parents. This could also be due to financial changes in their lives.

A few educators mentioned that financial difficulty is often part of the divorce circumstances. Cherlin (1992, cited in Bogolub, 1995:94) mentions that the custodial parent may experience drastically reduced income and drastically increased child-care responsibilities. In one of the focus groups, educators mentioned that grandparents are sometimes involved to alleviate the parents' difficulties. Bogolub (1995:44) states that extended family members may carry out crucial work in parenting domains such as affection, guidance, and housework, partially compensating for the void left by preoccupied parents.

Educators have experienced that parents also need support during divorce. According to Miller (1996:111) parents need support, respect and acceptance, and not to be criticised. In spite of parents' need for support, educators expect that they should stay involved in their children's activities at school. Miller (1996:111) urges educators to communicate with both parents as far as possible.

Another expectation that educators have of parents is that they should report any trauma that the child has experienced and be open about the situation. Miller (1996:111) suggests that educators should get the message across to parents that the educators should be informed of any major changes at home.

5.3 SUPPORTIVE ROLE OF EDUCATORS

In this section I propose certain roles that educators can play in supporting children from divorced homes, with the aim of answering the research question. As mentioned, I conduct this presentation from the framework of the interpretive research paradigm.

The goal of an interpretive paradigm is the understanding of a social phenomenon (Schwandt, 1998:223). This study aimed to understand the social phenomenon of educators' experiences, by launching an investigation within the natural setting of the school. The participatory educators highlighted quite a number of themes that they shared as their experiences regarding the phenomenon under investigation. Through my interpretive role as researcher, I have reduced these themes to aspects pertaining to the research question. Following are figurative presentations of the roles of educators in supporting children from divorced families (Figures 5.1 to 5.4).

Figure 5.1

Educators' role in terms of the child

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - guide the child and give him advice - talk to the child and create opportunities for the child to talk - help him to express himself - be open about the topic - provide the child with empathy - have a trusting relationship with the child - refer the child to a psychologist or social worker - be supportive of the psychologist's role - be patient with the child - accommodate the child by keeping his situation in mind | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Handle the child as natural as possible - be a rolemodel to the child - respect the child's needs - show the child how to learn out of the experience - tell the child that you know about their circumstances - be aware of the child's reactions e.g. hiding the divorce; psycho-somatic symptoms - be aware of the child's experiences e.g. uncertainty; stress; confusion - be aware of the child's situation in order to support effectively - just support up to a certain extent |
|---|---|

Figure 5.2

Educators' role in terms of themselves

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - inform the relevant educators of the child's situation - talk to the child's previous educators - observe the child during your play field duties investigate if their appears to be a problem with the child at school | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the male educators should specifically support the boys as they experience divorce - provide the same extra support to children of divorced families as you do with children who stay in the residence |
|---|---|

Figure 5.3

Educators' role in terms of the school

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - adjust the demands in the classroom if it appears that these children are not coping - lengthen the school day to have more time for support - establish a centre with counsellors at the school - make sure that this centre does not become a complaints office, but that it is used for the purpose of support - provide after school care and help the child with his homework | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the Governing Body should appoint more educators to lighten the workload of educators, therefore, being able to support these children more effectively - make use of sources of information e.g. registration forms; edlab - the Head of Department: Educational Guidance should be employed to support these children - set up a structured and disciplined environment at school to provide security |
|--|--|

Figure 5.4

Educators' role in terms of the parents

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - let the parent(s) come to the school - support the parent(s) - give the parent(s) perspective over their situation - also involve the step-parent(s) - remember that the child might now have two parental homes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - home visits could be helpful to conduct - conduct annual meetings with single-parents - share your experiences of the child with the parent(s) |
|--|--|

5.4 IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

The first possible implication that I think this study has, is on the eight educators who participated in the project. The process of thought and emotions that they went through to share their experiences, may have sensitized them for further experiences in this field. There seemed to be a broadening of experiences from the first meeting with each participant (individual interviews), to the next contact (focus groups).

This could have a direct implication on the particular primary school at large. The participatory educators' new insights may influence the other staff members of the school.

The educators' deeper understanding of what their role can be in supporting children from divorced families, can possibly lessen their uncertainty in dealing with such children. In discussing these aspects with me, but also as they discussed it with each other in the focus groups, the educators reached certain new ideas of how to support these children.

5.5 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Three limitations of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) are discussed in Willig (2001:63-67) that could also apply to this study. These limitations are as follows:

- The limiting role of language

The participants made use of verbal language to express their experiences. Willig (2001:63) argues that language does not necessarily provide participants with the tools to capture those experiences. Having direct access to the educators' experiences therefore, seems impossible. Willig (2001:63) states that the language the participants choose to describe their experiences construct a particular version of those experiences, and meaning is added by the specific words that are used. This author refers to a general problem regarding the meaning that participants convey.

A further aspect of language limitations is that this research report is written in English, while the data was produced in Afrikaans. This could have affected the findings, as I had to translate the data. Meaning could have been lost during the process.

- The suitability of using the phenomenological methods

Willig (2001:64) explains that phenomenological methods are used to explore a particular experience as the participant views it. Again, the question arises of how reliable the expressions of these experiences are. The applicability of the method is restricted to participants who are able to articulate their experiences sufficiently. My general experience was that the participants were able to express themselves effectively. But that is a subjective opinion. It is possible that the methods used in this study did not complement some of the participants' preferred ways of expression.

- Description or Explanation

The focus of this study was on the description of the educators' experiences. Willig (2001:64) states that phenomenological research describes and document experiences, but it fails to explain it. The author continues by stating that true understanding of experiences is when one becomes aware of the conditions that gave rise to these experiences in the first place.

A fourth limitation of this study is the generalizability of the findings. Wood (1992:2825) states that with most qualitative research the findings cannot be generalized to all study participants or to the study population. Therefore, the findings from this study can only be used in future research at the same school. However, the process of research might be useful in other studies.

Another possible limitation is the length of data analysis. In the circular reading and re-reading of texts more and more themes were highlighted. I worked to where I found a saturation level. However, it is still possible that some themes were not identified. The ideal would have been to have more than one researcher, so that themes could be identified and verified by more than one individual.

In hindsight, I would have liked to hear the educators' reflections on the themes and master themes. Therefore, a second level of verification seems appropriate. These reflections from the educators could be valuable information, adding to the study's findings.

5.6 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

As I mentioned in the problem statement in chapter one, research in South Africa has mainly focused on children and parents' experiences of divorce and how to support them. Educators and the school system have not had the same amount of exposure. With regards to this study, the following recommendations are made for further research:

- A follow-up study of educators' implementation of newly gained insight into their supporting role of children from divorced families
- The influence of being sensitized to the topic of divorce, on the way educators fulfil a supportive role in the case of divorce
- Educators' experiences of their role in supporting children of divorce in rural communities and other cultural environments
- Correlation study of educators' training and their effectiveness in supporting children on an emotional level
- A study to determine how the educators' experiences empower them to support children from divorced families more effectively in South Africa
- A study to explore educators' training programs that will empower them to support children from divorced families effectively

5.7 REFLECTION AND CONCLUSION

This chapter served the purpose of discussing the findings that were presented in chapter four. The discussion linked highlighted themes with existing literature, proving that the eight participatory educators shared experiences that has been noticed before.

Secondly, the implications of the study were discussed, as they could have influenced the educators who participated, as well as their school environment. Lastly, the limitations of this study were presented, together with recommendations for future research.

In concluding this chapter and study I reflect on a journey of coming closer to understanding the experiences that educators might have as they support children from divorced families. For a moment I was able to view divorce from the perspective of an educator, and not just from the eyes of a child.

I believe that the findings of this phenomenological study add credence to the limited research on educators as a supportive system for children from divorced families.

*"Divorce, single-parent families, re-marriage, etc.,
may not be what we believe is best for children,
but it is reality. What is important, is how we
handle it" (Butler, 1988).*

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APPENDIX A

MEd (Psig) NAVORSINGSPROJEK

TITEL:

'Onderwysers se ervarings van hul rol in die ondersteuning van kinders uit geskeide gesinne'

Geagte Onderwyser

Ek is huidiglik besig met navorsing, as gedeeltelike vervulling van my MEd (Psig) graad. In kontak met Mnr. Dreyer, het ek die doelwitte van my navorsingsprojek met hom bespreek en gevra of ek van julle skool mag gebruik maak. Hy het aan my die nodige toestemming verleen.

My navorsingprojek behels 2 fases. In die eerste fase benodig ek 8 onderwysers vir individuele onderhoude. Die onderhoude behoort nie langer as 45 min te duur nie. Verder is die onderhoude semi-gestruktureerd en in 'n lekker gesels-trant.

Die tweede fase van die projek is om twee fokusgroepe te hou. Die 8 deelnemende onderwysers word in 2 groepe verdeel. Een fokusgroep-sessie sal gehou word met elk van die groepe. 'n Fokusgroep-sessie sal ongeveer 1 tot 1½ uur duur. Hier sal ek saam met die 4 betrokke onderwysers gesels oor dieselfde tema as in die individuele onderhoude.

U deelname aan die navorsing sal streng vertroulik gehou word en anonimiteit word gewaarborg. U het ten alle tye die reg om van die navorsing te onttrek ter enige tyd. Ek sal dit hoog op prys stel indien u gewillig sal wees om deel te neem aan hierdie navorsingsprojek. Beskou asseblief die volgende bladsy, Indien u belangstel.

By voorbaat dank

Karen Vermeulen

Beplande tye vir die individuele onderhoude :

Ek woon in Pretoria en sal vanaf 31 Julie tot 3 Augustus 2003 in Ellisras wees. As dit moontlik is sal ek graag die individuele onderhoude in hierdie tyd wil afhandel.

Beplande tye vir die fokusgroep-sessies :

'n Geskikte tyd sal met die respondente gerêel word, sodat dit al die betrokkenes pas. Die doelwit is dat dit ongeveer 2 weke na die individuele onderhoude plaasvind, bv. 14, 15 & 16 Augustus 2003.

Vul asb u besonderhede hier in, indien u beoog om deel te neem :

Naam	Kontak Nommer	Voorgestelde tyd vir u onderhoud				Voorgestelde datum en tyd vir u fokusgroep
		Do, 31 Jul (na 14:00)	Vr, 1 Aug (enige)	Sa, 2 Aug (enige)	So, 3 Aug (as nie anders kan)	

Baie dankie vir u bereidwilligheid om deel te neem. Ek sal u so spoedig moontlik kontak.

Groete

Karen Vermeulen (sel: 082 871 8461)

Verklaring deur deelnemer:

Hiermee verklaar ek _____ dat ek die bogenoemde inligting rakende die navorsing gelees het en verstaan.

Ek is bereid om deel te neem aan die navorsingsprojek, soos genoem in die voorafgaande brief.

Handtekening

Datum

APPENDIX B

Onderwysers se ervarings van hul rol in die ondersteuning van kinders van geskeide gesinne

Anonieme Biografiese Vraelys

(merk die toepaslike blokkie met 'n 3)

1. Met watter ouderdomsgroep leerders werk u by u skool ?

Grondslag	Intermediêr	Senior
-----------	-------------	--------

2. Hoe lank is u al in die onderwys ?

<5 jr	5-15 jr	>15 jr
-------	---------	--------

3. Hoe lank is u al by hierdie skool ?

<5 jr	5-15 jr	>15 jr
-------	---------	--------

4. In watter ouderdomsgroep val u ?

<30 jr	30-45 jr	>45 jr
--------	----------	--------

5. Wat is u huwelikstatus ?

Ongetroud	Getroud	Geskei	Ander
-----------	---------	--------	-------

6. Is u al voorheen geskei ?

Ja	Nee
----	-----

7. Het u kinders van u eie ?

Ja	Nee
----	-----

8. Het u stiefkinders ?

Ja	Nee
----	-----

9. Was u kinders skoolgaande tydens u egskeiding ?

n.v.t	Ja	Nee
-------	----	-----

10. Voel u die skool het u kind(ers) voldoende ondersteun tydens die egskeiding?

n.v.t	Ja	Nee
-------	----	-----

Baie dankie vir u samewerking, dit word opreg waardeer !

Karen Vermeulen

Karen Vermeulen**APPENDIX C**

From: "Laerskool ;" <@xsinet.co.za>
To: <karen.vermeulen@up.ac.za>
Sent: 12 February 2003 09:25
Subject: antwoord navorsingsprojek

Geagte Karen

Ek het jou aansoek t.o.v jou navorsingsprojek ontvang en sien geen probleem daarmee dat jy hierdie personeel betrek daarby nie.

U is welkom om weer verder met my in verbinding te tree.

Groete

Mnr.
Laerskool

APPENDIX D

Onderwysers se ervarings van hul rol in die ondersteuning van kinders uit gebroke huise

Die Kind

Die kind se reaksies :

- Kinders steek dit weg; praat nie 1ste daaroor
- Dit wissel van kind tot kind
- Junior deel maklik; praat maklik oor wat by die huis gebeur
- Sibbe moet mekaar ondersteun
- Kind gebruik gebroke huis as verskoning
- Kind se deelname neem af
- Maats in klas hou o/w attent op kind se situasie
- Sigo-somatiese simptome
- Sien dit in kind se gedrag: emosioneel en sosiaal
- Sien dit in kind se skoolwerk, huiswerk, konsentrasie

Die kind se ervarings :

- Dis traumaties vir kinders
- Kind voel onseker, magteloos, soek standvastigheid
- Omstandighede verander (bv. skool, verhuis, finansies)
- Voel dalk dis sy skuld
- Skool is vir kind ontvlugting uit hartseer situasie
- Portuur speel 'n rol in die kind se genesing en aanvaarding
- Kind is op die o/w aangewese en het spesiale aandag nodig

Die Onderwyser

Die onderwyser se rol :

- Verwys na sielkundige / maatskaplike werker
- Gee raad aan kind, begeleiding
- Laat ouers inkom om te gesels
- Gesels met kind (selfs na skool)
- Hê goeie vertrouensverhouding met die kind
- O/w speel belangrike rol
- O/w is 'n verlenging van die ouerhuis; vervul ma/pa rol
- Bied dissipline, struktuur, roetine
- Bied liefde, simpatie, drukkie
- Pas eise in klas aan
- Vervul kind se primêre behoeftes
- Huisbesoek soos vroeër jare
- Skep geleentheid om te praat
- Sê vir kind dis nie sy skuld
- Hanteer kind so natuurlik moontlik
- Akkommodeer kind, wees attent
- Wees openlik; praat in klas oor gesinne
- Praat met vorige onderwyser
- Terreindiens : kyk uit vir kind se aanpassing
- Help kind om te verwoord (voel & situasie)
- Hulpverlening aan sielkundiges en MW
- Meer geduld – kind raak soms veeleisend

Die onderwyser se ervaring :

- O/w is nie bewus van die situasie
- Te min tyd in klas om te ondersteun
- Veral moeilik by Seniors - wissel
- As jy weet kan jy voorkomend optree, meer begrip hê
- Sielkundiges gee waardevolle insette
- Kleintjies praat/deel maklik oor huis
- Tuisonderrig: kind leer nie empatie, konflik hanteer
- Makliker by Junior & Interm. fase, sien kind die hele dag
- O/w kan net tot op 'n punt betrokke raak
- Egskeiding nie so hoë % in Ellisras
- Kind gebruik gebroke huis as verskoning
- Self geskei - beter begrip
- O/w kan dit vinnig optel
- O/w kan dit nie vinnig optel nie
- Kinders met probleme kom nie praat nie
- O/w benodig riglyne van hoe om te help
- Portuur speel rol tot genesing
- Sien kind wat terughou maklik oor
- % kinders in klas kom uit gebroke huise
- Nie weet: sien gedrag as stoutigheid

Die Skool

- Dept. Opvoedkundige Leiding & Voogonderwyser kan rol speel
- Lig nodige personeel in van kinders se situasies; praat in personeelkamer
- O/w speel 'n belangrike rol in die ondersteuning van die kinders
- Dissiplinêre Komitee kan kind opvang
- Te min manspersoneel; veral nodig vir seuns
- Skool bied vastigheid, sekuriteit, veilige hawe, roetine
- Voogkaarte is 'n bron van inligting oor kind se situasie
- Eise in die klas moet aangepas word: meer begrip hê vir die kind
- Huisbesoek was vroeër jare waardevol; gebeur nie nou meer nie
- Inligting vanaf verskillende provinsies verskil - benodig eenvormigheid
- Sentrum vir beraders by die skool om kinders te ondersteun
- Moeilik vir skool om spesifieke persone aan te stel vir ondersteuning
- Skool is vir kind 'n ontvlugting uit 'n hartseer situasie by die huis

Die Ouers

- Nie altyd finansies vir sielkundige diens of naskoolsentrum nie
- Moet openlik met skool wees oor enige trauma wat kind beleef
- Enkel ouer is moeg en vind dit soms moeilik om tyd te kry vir kinders se HW
- Stief-familie bring dalk ekstra probleme vir kind en aanpassing
- Twee ouerhuise verskil dalk in standarde
- Ouers speel kinders af teen mekaar
- Ouers moet steeds betrokke bly (verkieklik albei)
- Ouers fokus so op eie ervaring dat kinders dalk verwaarloos in die proses
- Ouers het soms ook self ondersteuning nodig

APPENDIX E

Note: The comments written in bold, between the [] show the coding of themes as it was executed during the data analysis

APPENDIX E-1 : Participant 1

Interviewer	Wat is juffrou se ervaring i.t.v. die ondersteuning van kinders wat uit geskeide huise kom?
Interviewee	<p>Uhhh... Karen, weet jy, dit is eintlik, as ek dink, uhm... dit hang net af hoe die ouers dit hanteer. Of jy dit vinnig optel [can pick it up quickly]. Op die voogkaarte kan mens dan nou agterkom [source of information] dat die kinders uit geskeide huise kom. Somtyds is van daai kinders se ouers weer getroud, dan het hulle nou 'n stiefpa of 'n stiefma, wat nou weer ander probleme veroorsaak [step-parents bring extra problems], partykeer. Maar, ek vind dat 'n ma wat bv. 'n enkelma is, uhm... nie by alles kan uitkom [single-parent struggles] as sy bv. uitgaan en geld verdien om haar kinders te onderhou en onderhoud wat nie altyd gereeld betaal nie [financial difficulty] en dan het die ma 'n probleem in die sin dat sy in die middag by die huis is as die kind sy huiswerk moet doen nie en nie in die aand, miskien die tyd het om dit te kontroleer of 'n kind te help nie. Sy's moeg [single-parent is tired] en baie keer is daar nie 'n bediende in die huis nie en dan moet die huis skoongemaak word. So, dit is werklik 'n probleem vir 'n ouer en dan het hulle ook nie bv. ekstra geld om die kind in 'n naskoolsentrum te sit om die kind se huiswerk te kontroleer nie. So, daar is beslis 'n leemte en sommige hanteer dit miskien beter as ander. Die onderwyser moet bewus daarvan wees dat die kind uit 'n gebroke huis uit kom [if you are aware, you can help], omdat die eise wat 'n mens stel, daai kind baie keer nie by sal kan uitkom nie. So, jy sal altyd bewus daarvan moet wees [demands in class] en simpatie [provide the child with empathy] met die kind moet hê.</p>

APPENDIX E-2 : Participant 2

Interviewer	Basies, is die een vraag wat ek wil vra : Wat is juffrou se ervaring i.t.v. juffrou se rol in die ondersteuning van kinders wat uit geskeide huise uit kom?
Interviewee	<p>Ja, weet jy, wat mens tog vinnig optel [pick it up quickly] is daai skielike onsekerheid [child is uncertain] die gevoel van die grond is onder my weg. So, dis vir my ongelooflik belangrik daar daai persoon moet wees met wie hulle steeds daai vertrouensverhouding [have trusting relationship with child] kan hê. En daar speel ons as onderwysers tot 'n groot mate 'n rol [educator plays an important role]. Maar, ek het gelukkig nie met soveel kindertjies in die klas situasie al self te doen gekry wat, kom ek sê, slegte skei situasie, te doen gehad nie. Gelukkig is daar altyd die geval gewees van, een van die ouers wat 'nog baie betrokke is. So, ek dink dis baie sleg vir daai kindjie wie se ouers geskei is en die ma of pa raak so gefokus ten opsigte van die situasie [parent is focused on self] dat hulle die kinders in die proses afskeep [parents neglect children]. Maar, wat ek wel ondervind het is dat hulle maar baie afhanklik is van liefde en aandag en net 'n oor wat sal luister [talk to the child] of selfs 'n skouer om op te huil. Want ek dink dis soms vir hulle makliker om met 'n buite persoon te praat oor hierdie goed. Nie almal nie, ne. Maar, daar is van hulle wat al na my toe gekom het en sê, 'ek verlang na die een of daai een'. Dan troos jy maar en jy probeer bystaan [provide the child with empathy]. Ek is altyd maar versigtig om nie te betrokke te raak nie [support up to an extent]. Jy kan jouself dalk in so 'n situasie kry, dit ontwikkel so dat jy te betrokke raak en dat dit dan moeilik is.</p>

APPENDIX E-3 : Participant 3

Interviewer	Wat is juffrou se ervaring van juffrou se rol in die ondersteuning van kinders wat uit geskeide huise uit kom?
Interviewee	<p>Jong, daardie kinders het almal baie spesiale aandag nodig. Hulle is baie meer op jou aangewese [child is dependant on educator], sal ek se. As jy net enigsins die onderwerp aanraak sal hulle dadelik se, 'maar juffrou, maar juffrou...'. So jy moet die hele tyd attent daarop wees [keep child's situation in mind] dat maak nie saak wat jy doen in jou klas situasie nie, dat jy wel daai kind in ag neem [accommodate the child]. Ek het nogal gevind, as mens sommer van vooraf se [be open about the topic] ... ek se baie keer 'ons weet nou Monique se pappa is in Pretoria, maar gelukkig is haar mamma hierso' en dan verduidelik ek die situasie verder en dan voel die kind geakkommodeer [accommodate the child]. Dan sal hulle openlik se 'juffrou, my pa kom die naweek kuier. So ek dink nie mens moet dit vermy nie [be open about the topic], mens moet die situasie maar... So ek voel jou ondersteuningstelsel is dat jy dit maar net in ag neem moet neem. Dis maar eintlik al wat jy kan doen.</p>

APPENDIX E-4 : Participant 4

Interviewer	Kan jy dalk vir my verduidelik wat is jou ervaring i.t.v. jou rol in die ondersteuning van kinders wat uit geskeide / gebroke huise kom?
Interviewee	<p>Ek het, ek ervaar nie dat daar regtig kinders met probleme na my toe kom nie [children don't talk to me about their problems]. Ek sit nou in dieselfde geval, uhmm... ek het 'n stiefdogter wat saam met ons bly en 'n stiefseun wat besluit het hy gaan by sy pa bly so 2,3 jaar terug. Uhmm... sy ervaar my, aanvaar my totaal as haar pa. Sy praat van my as pa, behalwe voor haar pa, dan mag sy dit nie noem nie. Maar, ek het nie kinders by die skool wat na my toe kom en praat oor egskeiding of dinge met ouers, of stiefouers nie. So, ek het nie 'n definitiewe, hoe kan ek nou sê... ja, ek het nie 'n definitiewe ondersteuning wat ek aan kinders gee met egskeiding nie.</p>

APPENDIX E-5 : Participant 5

Interviewer	Ek wil graag by meneer weet, wat is meneer se ervaring oor meneer se rol in die ondersteuning van kinders wat uit geskeide huise uit kom?
Interviewee	Mens wil so graag hulle help... as jy weet van hulle [not aware of the situation]. Party van die kinders steek dit so goed weg, jy kom die nie agter nie [children hide the divorce], behalwe as jy nou 'n goeie verhouding met hulle het [trusting relationship with child]. Maar, deesdae gaan dit so gejaagd dat 'n mens nie by die kinders uitkom nie [not enough time to support]. Ons het soveel skoolwerk wat gedoen moet word. Daar's baie minder tyd, as in die verlede, om by probleemkinders uit te kom... en hulle by jou uitkom. So, die kinders lei skade [children suffer] ... ek moet dit sê... ja, dis definitief 'n feit... daar's nie meer tyd vir ander praatjies as skoolwerk nie [not enough time to support].

APPENDIX E-6 : Participant 6

Interviewer	Juffrou, wat is juffrou se ervaring i.t.v. die rol wat die onderwyser speel in die ondersteuning van kinders uit geskeide huise?
Interviewee	<p>Weet jy Karen... ek sal sê, baie! [educator plays an important role] Maar, dan moet jy 'n goeie vertrouensverhouding hê [trusting relationship with child]. Die eerste ding wat jy agterkom is in die kind se werk [pick it up in school work]... as daar begin huislike probleme is, en wat ons nou die geval gehad het van 'n kind wat van verlede jaar ander kinders, wat kleiner is as sy portuur, jy weet... soortvan aanrand, jy weet, hy gryp hulle aan hulle kele en hang hulle op [pick it up in behaviour]. Ons het al herhaalde kere met hom gepraat, dan sê hy maar net hy's jammer. Toe't dit nou met ons dissiplinêre komitee [Disciplinary Committee plays a role] loop en dit kom teen die einde waar ons sy ouers moet inroep [let the parents come to school] toe smee en soebat hy ons, toe sê hy sy pa gaan hom dood maak. Toe ons nou met die kind begin praat, toe kom dit uit, maar dit is hoe hy by die huis behandel word en dit is hoe hy dit ervaar en dit is al hoe hy weet, as iemand hom pla, hoe hy met die persoon moet werk. Nou voel ek dis so uit geskeide huise ook. En dan, jy sien dit onmiddelik in kinders se werk [pick it up in school work], in hul aggressiwiteit [pick it up in behaviour]... 'n kind sal nooit eerste daarvoor praat nie [children hide the divorce] en as jy dan 'n ouer inroep en daarvoor praat dan onmiddelik dan sê die ouer, 'maar jy weet, dit is omstandighede, hulle is besig om te skei'. Kinders wat jy jare nie probleme mee gekry het nie, gee nou ewe skielik probleme. En dan as jy met daardie kinders, jy weet, maar begin praat... maar, nou sê ek ook kinders verskil. Jy weet, met een kind kan jy daarvoor praat, hy sal oop gaan nou jou toe hy sal jou vertel... ander kinders sluit heeltemal toe hulle wil glad nie daarvoor praat nie [children have unique experiences]. Omdat jy as onderwyser in die skool ook maar 'n verlenging is van die ouerhuis [educator plays a parental role]... is jy ook as onderwyser, en omdat ons nou so min mans het [not enough male educators], as die vrouens maar 'n verlenging en is jy maar, wat my betref, weer maar vir 5 ure van die dag, 'n alleenouer by die skool.</p>

APPENDIX E-7 : Participant 7

Interviewer	As juffrou aan juffrou se ondervinding kan dink, wat se rol speel die onderwyser in die ondersteuning van kinders uit geskeide huise?
Interviewee	<p>Dis 'n ontsettende belangrike rol! [educator plays an important role] Dis 'n vreeslike groot rol wat die onderwyser kan speel. Ek dink eerstens het ek daai ontsettende... uhm... dringendheid wat 'n onderwyser se rol is, omdat ek self geskei is [gone through divorce, better understanding]. Omdat my kinders self deur so 'n situasie gegaan het. En ek gesien het hoe traumaties dit vir hulle was [divorce is traumatic for children]... en ook beleef het die angs wat hulle gehad het en die vrese wat hulle ook gehad het.... en, en hoe belangrik hulle onderwysers se optrede was. Dit was vir my... regtig baie belangrik gewees. Met my dogter... in die eerste plek was dit belangrik dat die juffrou moes weet [if you are aware, you can help]... ons het nie vir juffrou gesê nie... en omdat die juffrou nie geweet het nie, kon sy haar nie ondersteun nie. Dit was vir my baie erg en dit was baie traumaties vir my dogter. En... totdat ons saam gegaan het... en daar was regtig siekte simptome, sigosomatiese simptome wat gekom het [child shows psycho-somatic symptoms]... uhm, waar sy maagpyn ontwikkel het en dan bel hulle my dan moet ek haar gaan haal... tot ons met die juffrou gepraat het, en toe sy voel die juffrou sê 'dis reg, jy kan met my kom praat, as jy wil huil sê vir my, jy kan maar uitgaan'. Toe was dit sommer baie beter, toe voel sy gerus en sy voel die juffrou verstaan en sy sal haar beskerm en raad gee [guide the child]. Sy sal haar ondersteun en sy kon vir haar 'n briefie skryf en dit in 'n boks gooi [help the child to express]... en dit was vir my so dat hulle my kinders so opgevang het... dieselfde met my seun... Hy was in Standaard 3 (Graad 5), en... dat hy in die klas, in die Engelse klas, sommer begin huil het. En, waar die juffrou my gebel het een middag en gesê 'het 'sy wonder wat is fout?'. En... wat ons toe vir haar ook moes sê wat die probleem is... dat hulle pappa weg is. En uhm... ek dink, as daai onderwysers nie weet nie en insig het in die kind se vrese, en die kind se angs, nie dan dink ek kan so kind regtig baie swaar kry. En, dit was sommer beter. En nadat die onderwysers geweet het, het hulle vir Paul so opgevang, veral die manspersoneel [male educators support boys]... dit was vir my so kosbaar hoe hulle hom ondersteun het en hoe hulle hom bietjie aangemoedig het. En amper 'n pa-rol vervul het [educator plays a parental role], vir die kind in die skool situasie en hoe hy met hulle geïdentifiseer het, en ek dink selfs nou nog, dink hy terug aan baie van daai onderwysers wat vir hom baie kosbaar was.</p>

APPENDIX E-8 : Participant 8

Interviewer	Wat is juffrou se ervaring i.t.v. die rol van die onderwyser as ondersteuning vir kinders van geskeide huise?
Interviewee	<p>Uit my eie ervaring kan ek sê... die impak wat die soeke na standvastigheid [child is uncertain] en die altyd die verskoning van ons kom uit 'n gebroke huis [child uses divorce as excuse] en kan ek dit 100 maal sê 'moenie dit gebruik as 'n verskoning om jou lewe op te voeter nie, jy's verantwoordelik net vir jou eie lewe'...</p> <p>Kyk, as ek nou net vat hoeveel ure is 'n kind nie by jou as onderwyser nie. Jy weet, as dit moontlik sou kon wees sou ons vir hulle 'n ete ook kon gee want hulle loop 13:45 in die middag. So, dis amper basies van 'n oggendete tot 'n middagete, dis 5,6 ure. En baie van hulle sien nie hulle ouers nie. Want, hulle pa werk vroeg, as hulle nou in 'n situasie is waar daar 'n pa-figuur is, hetsy 'n stiefpa en ma slaap... baie kinders se ma's slaap as die kinders skool toe gaan. So die eerste grootmense wat hulle sien is die onderwysers by die skool [educator plays an important role]. En, baie van hulle kom verwaarloos daar aan [children are neglected]. So, ek dink, die impak wat 'n onderwyser op hulle het, ne, is hulle hele wêreld want dis soms al plekke waar hulle hoor, 'mooi so, goed so', dis al plek waar hy nog steeds ook raas kry en negatiewe invloed kry. En as 'n mens dit ooit suksesvol behaal om naby aan 'n kind te kom dan deel hulle soveel goed met jou [trusting relationship with child].</p>

APPENDIX F

Note: The comments written in bold, between the [] show the coding of themes as it was executed during the data analysis

APPENDIX F-1 : Focus Group 1

Participant 3	Weet jy, wat vir my nou so interessant is, waaraan ek nie gedink het nie, is dat ons te min manspersoneel [not enough male educators] het wat die seuns [male educators support boys] deur so iets kan ondersteun...
Participant 7	Dis is baie geldige punt daai, Kowie. Ek wil graag by haar aansluit... weet jy, Kowie, met my egskeiding was dit vir my... een van die belangrikste goed was dat daar 'n manspersoneellid was om my seun op te vang [male educators support boys]
Participant 3	Ja, want rêrig, want ek sou nou nooit daaraan gedink het nie. Want ek dink altyd maar die kleintjies praat sommer maar met die juffrou, maar by die seniors kan ek nogal dink dat 'n man ongelooflik kosbaar is.
Participant 7	Dis waar.. en selfs nie net die praat nie, die rolmodel [educator is a rolemodel]. Jy weet, die kind het hierdie iemand, hierdie voorbeeld waantoe hy kan gaan. Dis vir my 'n baie goeie punt wat jy daar maak.
(stilte)	
Participant 7	Wat ek graag sou wou byvoeg by 'sibbe moet mekaar ondersteun' [siblings support each other]... daars blykbaar in die senior fase, uhm, wat ek beleef het... daar was 'n ou seuntjie in my klas, dan kom hy skool toe en sê 'juffrou maar ek het nie kos nie' dan sê ek vir hom maar het jy vir mamma gesê sy moet vir jou kossies insit dan sê hy 'mamma slaap en sussie moet vir my kos maak' en dan het sussie net nie lus gevoel nie. Jy weet, so dit is, dink ek, 'n wesenlike probleem partymaal... of die mamma gaan te vroeg werk toe en dis haar rolverdeling... [devison of roles at home]

APPENDIX F-2 : Focus Group 2

Participant 4	Ons het nou vandag weer die geval gehad...
Participant 6	... eerste in sy skoolwerk opgetel [detect it in school work] en toe word die blaam na die skool toe gegooi [parents blame the school] en toe ons nou met die kind daaroor praat, toe is dit 'n huislike situasie, dis ook 'n gebroke huisgesin... die pa gaan weer trou, die kinders ervaar dit heeltemal emosioneel...
Participant 8	Gedragsafwykings... as mens nou kyk dat gedragsafwykings is deel van sy reaksie [detect it in behaviour] ... soos bv. sulke tipiese stout goed ne! 'n Kind het tot die uiterste toe gegaan want hy het geglo as hy stout genoeg is sal hulle hom uit die skool haal en terugstuur na sy ma toe. So dit is 'n geweldige gedragsafwyking,.
Participant 5	... wat ons ervaar as stout, maar dan is dit eintlik aandag soek! [naughty behaviour is attention seeking]
Participant 8	Aandag soek, ja!