

# **Soft Skills of excellent teachers in diverse South African schools in the Western Cape**

by  
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*Thesis presented in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Education in the Faculty of Education at Stellenbosch  
University*



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March 2013

## DECLARATION

I, Elizabeth Martha Fleischmann, hereby declare that work contained in thesis 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.

.....

Signed

.....

Date

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A project like this cannot come to a conclusion in isolation (especially for a peoples's person, like me).

I want to say THANK YOU to:

My Father in heaven who really hears me! I pleaded that 2012 would be the year in which all the loose strings would come together, and He facilitated just that!

My husband, Johan, who believed that I could do this, even when I did not!

My daughter, Anneen, who is one of the new generation women – your energy astounds me!

My son, Rinus, who is so loving and patient with his mother, even when things are rough.

My daughter, Madeli, who is now in heaven wearing beautiful clothes – who taught us how to live.

All my friends, here and there, for numerous cappacinos, glasses of wine and tissues!

All my students for your love and patience.

On an academic level:-

My promotor, professor Jan Heystek, for his patience, perseverance and prompt reaction.

Candice Livingstone who was more than a language editor, she became a friend.

The library staff of CPUT Wellington, especially Joanne, for friendly smiles and patient help.

My colleagues at CPUT, for academic input and *soft skills*.

## ABSTRACT

Teachers in the South African educational context are being asked to meet an increasing number of professional demands. Teachers are expected not only to produce academic results and develop professionally, but also to play an affective role in the school.

The paradigm used in this study is neo-liberalism. This allows the researcher to view the teacher as possessing technical or 'hard' skills as well as the less well-defined 'soft' or emotive skills. Here *soft skills* are defined as the interpersonal, human, people or behavioural skills **needed to apply technical skills and knowledge** in the workplace. A qualitative transcendental phenomenological research approach was selected in order to explore whether 'excellent' teachers from three schools in diverse economic settings in the Western Cape employed soft skills when teaching. The results of this study indicate that teachers perceived as 'excellent' exhibit intrapersonal behavioural, interpersonal conceptual and interpersonal affective soft skills.

## OPSOMMING

Binne die huidige Suid-Afrikaanse konteks, word daar toenemend professionele eise aan onderwysers gestel. Daar word nie net van onderwysers verwag om akademiese resultate op te lewer en hulself te verbeter nie, maar ook om 'n emosionele rol in die skool te speel.

Neo-liberalisme skep die paradigma vir die studie. Dit laat die navorser toe om die onderwyser te beskou as iemand wat oor tegniese of 'harde' vaardighede in die werkplek beskik, maar ook oor die minder omskryfde 'sagte' of mensvaardighede. Sagte vaardighede word gedefinieer as die interpersoonlike, menslike of gedragsvaardighede wat nodig is om tegniese vaardighede en kennis toe te pas in die werkplek. 'n Kwalitatiewe transendentale fenomenologiese aanslag is ontwerp om te bepaal of onderwysers, wat gesien word as 'uitstekende' onderwysers, van drie skole in diverse ekonomiese omgewings in die Wes-Kaap, dieselfde sagte vaardighede gebruik wanneer hulle skoolhou. Die resultate van die studie dui aan dat onderwysers wat gesien word as 'uitstekende' onderwysers, intrapersoonlike gedragsvaardighede en interpersoonlike affektiewe sagte vaardighede ten toon stel.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>DECLARATION</b>	<b>I</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b>	<b>I</b>
<b>ABSTRACT</b>	<b>I</b>
<b>OPSOMMING</b>	<b>II</b>
<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS</b>	<b>III</b>
<b>LIST OF FIGURES</b>	<b>VIII</b>
<b>LIST OF TABLES</b>	<b>IX</b>
<b>LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS</b>	<b>X</b>
<b>CHAPTER 1 BACKGROUND, PROBLEM STATEMENT AND OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1. Introduction and statement of the problem	1
1.2. Review of literature	2
1.3. The research questions	5
1.4. The purpose of the research	6
1.5. Research design	6
1.5.1. Empirical research	6
1.6. Ethical aspects	8
1.7. Chapter division	8
<b>CHAPTER 2 REVIEW OF LITERATURE</b>	<b>9</b>
2.1. Introduction	9
2.2. Theoretical background	10
2.2.1. World view	11
2.2.2. Organisation	12
2.2.3. The Person	13
2.3. <i>Soft skills</i>	14
2.3.1. Definition of <i>Soft Skills</i>	15

2.3.2.	Problems with the concept, <i>soft skills</i> .....	16
2.3.2.1.	What is perceived as <i>soft skills</i> might change as time goes on.....	16
2.3.2.2.	<i>Soft skills</i> are hard to quantify .....	16
2.3.3.	Related concepts .....	17
2.3.3.1.	Transferable skills .....	17
2.3.3.2.	Emotional Intelligence .....	17
2.3.3.3.	Social intelligence .....	18
2.3.3.4.	Coping skills.....	18
2.4.	Acquiring <i>soft skills</i> .....	19
2.4.1.	<i>Soft skills</i> can be acquired.....	19
2.4.2.	Acquiring <i>soft skills</i> is not a simple process.....	19
2.5.	<i>Soft skills</i> in the workplace .....	20
2.5.1.	Distinction between technical or <i>hard skills</i> and <i>soft skills</i> in the workplace.....	20
2.5.2.	<i>Soft skills</i> complement technical skills .....	21
2.5.3.	<i>Soft skills</i> are vital for teamwork .....	22
2.5.4.	<i>Soft skills</i> might differ from workplace to workplace.....	22
2.6.	Reasons for investigating <i>soft skills</i> in education.....	22
2.7.	Classification of <i>soft skills</i> .....	23
2.8.	Excellent teachers.....	26
2.8.1.	Analysis of the current situation.....	26
2.8.1.1.	Placing teachers within the theoretical framework .....	26
2.8.1.2.	Teachers in South Africa today .....	28
2.8.1.3.	Teachers worldwide today.....	29
2.8.2.	Importance of teachers.....	29
2.8.2.1.	Regarding the school .....	29
2.8.2.2.	Regarding the learners.....	30
2.8.3.	Excellent teachers from roles to skills.....	30
2.9.	Ways to view teacher excellence .....	32
2.9.1.	Different kinds of knowledge .....	32
2.9.2.	Competence requirements .....	32

2.9.3.	Strategic teaching .....	33
2.9.4.	Norms and standards for Educators in South Africa .....	34
2.10.	Conclusion .....	34
<b>CHAPTER 3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY .....</b>		<b>36</b>
3.1.	Introduction .....	36
3.2.	Phenomenological Research.....	39
3.2.1.	Definition of Phenomenological Research.....	40
3.2.2.	The Transcendental phenomenological Paradigm.....	40
3.3.	The Transcendental Phenomenological design of this research.....	43
3.3.1.	Participants .....	43
3.3.1.1.	Selection of schools .....	43
3.3.1.2.	Selection of learners .....	44
3.3.1.3.	Selection of teachers.....	44
3.3.2.	Intrumentation .....	45
3.3.2.1.	Face-to-face Interviews .....	45
3.3.2.2.	Focus group discussions.....	45
3.3.2.3.	Learner Reflections .....	47
3.3.3.	Validity and Reliability .....	47
3.3.3.1.	Strengths and weaknesses of transcendental phenomenology .....	48
3.3.4.	Interviews.....	49
3.3.4.1.	Interview schedule .....	49
3.3.4.2.	Interview procedure.....	50
3.3.4.3.	Procedure for interview analysis.....	51
3.4.	Ethical aspects.....	52
3.4.1.	Avoidance of harm .....	52
3.4.2.	Voluntary participation.....	52
3.4.3.	Informed consent .....	52
3.4.4.	Confidentiality/Anonymity .....	53
3.4.5.	Compensation.....	53

3.4.6.	Publication of the findings .....	53
3.4.7.	Approval from Ethics committee.....	53
3.5.	Administrative procedures.....	54
3.6.	Conclusion .....	54
<b>CHAPTER 4 ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA .....</b>		<b>55</b>
4.1.	Introduction .....	55
4.2.	Analysis of Transcendental Phenomenological Research .....	55
4.2.1.	Epoche.....	55
4.2.2.	Framing of literature on <i>soft skills</i> .....	56
4.2.3.	Identifying significant statements.....	57
4.2.4.	Phenomenological reduction .....	58
4.2.4.1.	Horizontalisation.....	58
4.2.4.2.	Delineating horizons of meaning .....	60
4.2.4.3.	Textual and structural descriptions .....	63
4.2.4.4.	Invariant qualities or themes.....	67
4.2.5.	The essence of the experience .....	69
4.3.	Conclusion .....	70
<b>CHAPTER 5 SUMMARY, FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....</b>		<b>71</b>
5.1.	Introduction and statement of the problem .....	71
5.2.	<i>Soft skills</i> and excellent teachers .....	72
5.2.1.	Meaning of the concept <i>soft skills</i> .....	72
5.2.2.	Importance of soft skills.....	74
5.2.3.	Excellent teachers and <i>soft skills</i> .....	75
5.2.4.	Three different perspectives .....	77
5.2.5.	<i>Soft skills</i> within the current South African educational context .....	81
5.2.6.	<i>Soft skills</i> in diverse school contexts .....	85
5.3.	Synthesis .....	88
5.3.1.	Discipline in the classroom.....	88

5.3.2. How children learn .....	90
5.3.3. Intrinsic motivation .....	91
5.4. Recommendations for future research .....	93
5.4.1. Recommendations for teacher pre-service training .....	93
5.4.2. Recommendations for teacher in-service training.....	94
5.4.3. Recommendations for further research .....	94
5.5. Concluding thoughts .....	94
<b>REFERENCES .....</b>	<b>96</b>
<b>APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE.....</b>	<b>101</b>
<b>APPENDIX B: SIGNIFICANT STATEMENTS .....</b>	<b>107</b>
<b>APPENDIX C: PERMISSION FROM THE WCED .....</b>	<b>118</b>
<b>APPENDIX D: EXTENDED PERMISSION FROM THE WCED .....</b>	<b>119</b>
<b>APPENDIX E: INFORMED CONSENT - PRINCIPAL.....</b>	<b>120</b>
<b>APPENDIX F: INFORMED CONSENT – LEARNERS UNDER 18 .....</b>	<b>123</b>
<b>APPENDIX G: INFORMED CONSENT – PARENTS OF LEARNERS UNDER 18.....</b>	<b>125</b>
<b>APPENDIX H: INFORMED CONSENT – LEARNERS UNDER 18.....</b>	<b>128</b>
<b>APPENDIX I: INFORMED CONSENT – LEARNERS OVER 18.....</b>	<b>131</b>
<b>APPENDIX J: INFORMED CONSENT – TEACHERS.....</b>	<b>134</b>
<b>APPENDIX K: PERMISSION FROM THE RESEARCH ETHIC COMMITTEE.....</b>	<b>137</b>

## LIST OF FIGURES

<b>FIGURE 2.1:</b> THE TEACHER IN A COMPLEX WORK ENVIRONMENT .....	11
<b>FIGURE 2.2:</b> CLASSIFICATION OF SOFT SKILLS .....	25
<b>FIGURE 2.3:</b> THE TEACHER IN A COMPLEX WORK ENVIRONMENT (2).....	27
<b>FIGURE 2.4:</b> FROM ROLES TO SKILLS .....	31
<b>FIGURE 3.1:</b> DIAGRAM OF RESEARCH METHODOLOGY .....	37
<b>FIGURE 3.2:</b> DIAGRAM OF THE INTERVIEW PROCESS .....	50
<b>FIGURE 3.3:</b> DIAGRAM OF PROCESS OF ANALYSIS .....	51
<b>FIGURE 4.1:</b> MATRIX FOR CLASSIFICATION OF <i>SOFT SKILLS</i> .....	61
<b>FIGURE 4.2:</b> CLASSIFICATION OF SOFT SKILLS OF TEACHERS .....	62

## LIST OF TABLES

<b>TABLE 2.1: COMPETENCE REQUIREMENTS OF TEACHERS .....</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>TABLE 4.1: <i>SOFT SKILLS</i> NAMED IN ALL INTERVIEWS.....</b>	<b>58</b>
<b>TABLE 5.1: RANKING OF <i>SOFT SKILLS</i> ACCORDING TO THEMES: SCHOOL 1 .....</b>	<b>85</b>
<b>TABLE 5.2: RANKING OF <i>SOFT SKILLS</i> ACCORDING TO THEMES: SCHOOL 2 .....</b>	<b>85</b>
<b>TABLE 5.3: RANKING OF <i>SOFT SKILLS</i> ACCORDING TO THEMES: SCHOOL 3 .....</b>	<b>86</b>
<b>TABLE 5.4: MOST IMPORTANT <i>SOFT SKILLS</i>.....</b>	<b>86</b>

## **List of abbreviations**

- HIV/AIDS – Human immunodeficiency virus / Acquired immunodeficiency syndrome
- CAPS – Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement
- DoE – Departement of Education
- ELRC – Education Labour Relations Council
- EQ – Emotional Intelligence
- HRD – Human Resource Development
- HSRC – Human Science Research Council
- NCS – National Curriculum Statement
- VSO – Voluntary Service Overseas

## CHAPTER 1

### BACKGROUND, PROBLEM STATEMENT AND OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH

#### 1.1. Introduction and statement of the problem

Teachers play a pivotal role in education (Association for the Professional Quality of Teachers, 2006; Collinson, 1999:4; Eide, Goldhaber & Brewer, 2004:230; Malm & Löfgren, 2006:62). In underlining this, Malm (2009:78) cites findings from an international report indicating that “the quality of an educational system cannot exceed the quality of its teachers”.

In South Africa today, there are a number of complex challenges. A few of these are poor matric results (Jansen, 2009:19; Monama, 2009:8), a changing curriculum (Masemola, 2010:8) and different socio-economic issues (Jones, 2009:9; Schoeman, 2009:2). These could explain why an estimated 55% of teachers are considering leaving the profession (Crouch & Perry, 2003:496) and there is a looming shortage of teachers (Joseph, 2008:6; Maluleka, 2010:2; Masemola, 2010:8), especially in the mathematical and natural science fields. Given that 20% of the national budget is spent annually in South Africa on education, this should not be the case. In his 2010 budget speech, Pravin Gordhan said “education spending remains our largest item of spending, giving meaning to our commitment that it is our number one priority”. The total budget for education in 2010 was R165 billion (South Africa, 2010).

If what Malm (2009:78) says is true, namely that the quality of the educational system cannot exceed the quality of the teachers, it would be worth focusing on excellent teachers in the South Africa environment to identify the skills that excellent teachers possess. Collinson (1999:4) names three areas of knowledge that an “excellent teacher” must possess namely, professional knowledge; interpersonal knowledge and intrapersonal knowledge. It is logical that an excellent teacher must know the subject matter that has to be taught to learners. In addition, the teacher must further know how learners learn, and how to teach them. Insufficient research has been done on the other skills that distinguish excellent teacher from the other teachers. These would be the interpersonal and intrapersonal skills that Collinson (1999:4) lists. These comprise the non-technical knowledge, defined in this study as soft skills.

Hoy and Tarter (2011:247) define positive psychology as the “study of ordinary human strengths and what goes right in life. Its interest is in discovering what works, what is right, and what is improving”. Its relevance to this research is that the thesis encouraged a positive angle: what works in education. This is in contrast to much of the school research done in the past in which negative concepts like student failure, bullying and teacher burn-out are researched (Hoy & Tarter, 2011:427). In particular, this thesis investigates the possible positive role of soft skills in the school.

As a teacher myself, and someone involved in teacher training, I had begun to reflect on how teachers could improve the education system through particular forms of conduct. However, intuition is not enough to provide a basis for firm conclusions. As Clifford (2008:5) points out, education is a “complex and multidimensional activity that cannot be evaluated productively using simplistic polemics”. Empirical research was required to arrive at a better understanding of the subject matter. This understanding led me to undertake the journey described in this thesis.

The aim of this study was to shed light on the skills an excellent teacher has with a view to developing excellent teachers, who could help to improve the education system. In short, the study aimed to determine how important soft skills are for teachers, and which soft skills are associated with being an “excellent teacher”.

## **1.2. Review of literature**

The main aim of the literature review was to “provide an argument for conducting the study (Houser, 2009:102). First, the literature review focuses on the concept soft skills. Although the concept is frequently used in the business context and even in the medical and computer fields (Fernandez-Sanz, Mesa, Hilera, LaCuesta, Palacios & Cuadrado, 2010:2684), the concept of “soft skills in the workplace” is a relatively new concept in education. This notion is explored, and its possible application to the teaching environment is suggested.

Next the review of literature discusses the concept, ‘excellent teachers’. This concept is seen by some as the key to effective education. Since there are different views on what an excellent teacher is, the complex task of reviewing previous research findings was undertaken to form as balanced a view as possible of the skills an excellent teacher is said to possess. As Zarra (2004:75) notes, the changing nature of education makes it difficult to nail down ‘teacher excellence’.

Both of these concepts, 'soft skills' and 'excellent teachers', will be viewed within the context of the South African educational environment today. The South African educational environment is unique. The educational environment has a definite influence on the definition of an excellent teacher, how effective his/her teaching is and the skills that make him/her so successful.

Even though an in-depth literature review was done, it seems as if only the surface was scratched in certain areas. In order to anchor the study in a theoretical framework, and in order to understand the complex, 'nature of teaching, it is necessary to view the teacher from different perspectives, namely:

- The teacher in a neo-liberalistic world
- The teacher as a human resource
- The teacher as an individual.

In the review of literature the focus shifted between three angles namely, the teacher as an individual, the environment the teacher works in, their workplace, namely the school, and thirdly the situation schools are in – namely that of a neo-liberalistic management system.

Neo-liberalism influences education in a number of ways. One of these influences is that education is seen as a commodity. Dählstrom and Lemma (2008:29-42) say “....neo-liberalism looks at public activities such as education and social welfare, first and foremost as costly commodities that should be put to test in an 'open' market just like any other commodity”. Another influence is the influence of the notion of performativity, which does not focus on the person as such, but measures how the person performs, a hard approach, which places pressure on teachers (Heystek, 2007:491).

The wave of neo-liberalistic influence had a definite influence on education in general. In the school, within this environment, the teacher is one of the resources necessary for success. For schools in developing countries the teacher is a very important resource. These schools might be underequipped with other resources, but they usually have teachers. Therefore it is important for this resource to be managed in such a way that the “key purpose of the organization can be most effectively achieved” (Heystek, Roos & Middlewood, 2005:24).

This “human resource” is also a unique individual. Since the time of the ancient Greeks, a person has been seen as a complex being. The person consists of a mind, sometimes called the human personality. This personality is sometimes divided into three domains namely,

cognition (thinking, knowing and understanding), affect (attitudes, feelings, emotions) and conation (reasons for acting, will). The mind receives information, and processes it, which results in action.

Since any research on the skills that make certain teachers excellent in their workplace is influenced by the assumptions that underlie it, the literature review takes account of the theoretical background of the study, the *soft skills* valued and the definition of an excellent teacher.

It seems that *soft skills* often play a more important role in the workplace than the technical skills a person needs to do his/her job (Ahmad, 2009:2; Bergh, Van Staden, Joubert *et al.*, 2006:14a; Jelphs, 2006:33; Muir & Davis, 2004:96). In more and more work environments, the role of *soft skills* is acknowledged. Some of the areas where research on the role of these *soft skills* has been done are: the training programmes of doctors (Van Staden, Joubert, Pickworth, *et al.*, 2006:35), the business world (Ahmad, 2009:2) and in the computing labour market (Fernandez-Sanz *et al.*, 2010:2680).

The first part of the review of literature is about *soft skills*, including how they may be defined. Muir (2004:96) defines *soft skills* as “attitudes and behaviours displayed in interactions among individuals that can affect the outcome of such encounters”. Given the highly interpersonal nature of teaching, *soft skills* are likely to play an important role in teaching. Since, there is very little research on *soft skills* in the educational environment, this research is limited to the *soft skills* of teachers. Crosbie (2005:47) reasons that these skills can be acquired and grown, but for these to become “skills” they need to be practised continually. As will become evident in Chapter 2, reviewing the literature on *soft skills* was complicated by the large number of these skills and that some of them are very “soft”.

The difference between *soft skills* and hard, technical skills is that technical skills are skills that require technical knowledge and abilities (Ramsomair, 2004:231). These skills are usually defined in a job description. These skills are usually job specific, and so are not be used by an individual when he/she changes to a totally new field/job (Fernandez-Sanz *et al.*, 2010:2681).

Another important part of the review of literature is establishing the distinction between *soft skills* and other related concepts like: ‘transferable skills’, ‘emotional intelligence’, ‘personality’, and ‘coping skills’. Marlow-Ferguson (2002) defines the exercise of a skill as “to use one’s knowledge effectively and readily in execution or performance”. This study set out

to gain a better understanding of the *soft skills* that a teacher needs to be able use to fulfil his/her many roles as a teacher.

After the *soft skills* have been discussed, a classification system for the *soft skills* is suggested. This classification system is based on the understanding of *soft skills* found in work done by Collinson (1999:4) and other work the researcher has done in the fields of temperament and Emotional Intelligence. This classification system is reminiscent of the Johari window (Haynes, 1999:660) in that it is not rigid and might shift from workplace to workplace and from time to time.

The importance of the teacher and the skills an excellent teacher should have are discussed next. This is based on the expectations listed in the *Norms and Standards for Educators* in South Africa (South Africa & Department of Education, 1998). The competence to play these roles requires certain **knowledge**. When the teacher has a good grasp of the roles he/she has to play as a teacher, and this knowledge (and understanding) creates competence, it is possible for him/her to practise the **skills** necessary to be an excellent teacher.

Malm (2009:87) argues that the challenges facing future teachers make it necessary for teacher training to be aimed at developing the whole person. In her view, it is important “heighten the awareness of what it means to be a teacher, with both the personal ‘being’ and the professional ‘becoming’ as essential interrelated dimensions of career development”: so the totality of the person of the teacher is addressed. Thus the teacher must be seen in a world, with certain realities, in an organisation, and part of creating something special in the school and as an individual with specific *soft skills*.

### 1.3. The research questions

The main question that guides the study is:

**How important are *soft skills* for excellent teachers in diverse educational contexts?**

This was subdivided into the following sub-questions:

- What is meant by the concept *soft skills*?
- When is a teacher an excellent teacher?
- Which *soft skills* are important for a teacher in the current South African educational context?

- Are the same *soft skills* needed for teachers to be seen as excellent in diverse school contexts?

#### **1.4. The purpose of the research**

This study set out to define *soft skills*, and then to determine how important the *soft skills* are for teachers. The study also set out to find which *soft skills* were deemed to be the ones that play the greatest role in the work of excellent teachers. In order to determine whether the particular school context determines which skills are perceived as seminal for a teacher to be an excellent teacher, the research was done in diverse school contexts in the Western Cape.

#### **1.5. Research design**

For the purposes of this research a qualitative approach was chosen.

##### **1.5.1. Empirical research**

Fraenkel (2008:430) points out that qualitative research methodology is often used when the focus is on the quality of activities. This made it an appropriate choice for research on the role played by use of *soft skills* by excellent teachers. Furthermore, this is a phenomenological study (Delpont, Fouché & Schurink, 2011:304) in that the phenomenon of the *soft skills* of excellent teachers is studied.

Another reason why qualitative research was chosen is the flexible nature of qualitative research, which allows scope for natural growth as the process proceeds (Houser, 2009:62). Since this is a study of a human, social phenomenon, it seemed appropriate to leave space for many different reactions, and for the research interviews to develop naturally.

#### **Participants**

The participants in this study comprised principals, learners and teachers from three schools. Three of the six secondary state schools in the Wellington / Mbekweni area in the Western Cape were purposefully selected. The main criteria for these choices of diverse environments were socio-economic situation as reflected by the percentage of learners in the school that were part of the School Feeding Scheme of the WCED, and the school fees that a learner had to pay per month to attend the school. A maximum variation sample was

therefore used; different schools were involved in the process which provides space for a possible diversity of perspectives.

### **Research Process**

The following research process was followed:

1. Interview with principal identifying:
  - a. Four excellent matric teachers
  - b. The skills of excellent teachers
  - c. The *soft skills* of excellent teachers.
2. Learners were selected by the grade 12 convenor at each school. They were chosen so there would be a diverse group in terms of academic performance, disciplinary performance and involvement with extra-mural activities. These learners were asked to write a piece regarding what they perceived as the skills of excellent teachers. After that a focus group was conducted during which the learners identified:
  - a. Their three best teachers
  - b. The skills of excellent teachers
  - c. The *soft skills* of excellent teachers.
3. Interviews were conducted with the selected teachers (two out of the group of four identified by the principal and learners).

Semi-structured interviews were used. These consisted of a set of questions, with sufficient freedom allowed to get clarity on certain issues during the interview. The data gleaned during these interviews were later “compared and contrasted” in order to gain better insight into the *soft skills* of excellent teachers (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2008:455).

### **Question Schedule**

All participants were asked to identify skills which they perceived as important for an excellent teacher. After this part of the discussion had been completed, the concept of *soft skills* was defined. The focus of the rest of the discussion was about the *soft skills* of excellent teachers.

In this way a rich set of data was gathered, and triangulation was possible between the three different perspectives in one school but also from three schools within diverse contexts. This

left space for freedom and natural development of the research (Henning, Van Rensburg & Smit, 2004:3).

### **Analysis of data**

The transcendental phenomenological method were used, combining the work of Moustakas, Moerer-Urdahl & Creswell and Groenewald (Groenewald, 2004:1-26; Moerer-Urdahl & Creswell, 2004:1-28; Moustakas, 1994:180-182). The following steps are used in this method:

- Epoche (setting aside prejudgements of the researcher)
- Review of literature
- Bracketing and delineating units of meaning by looking at significant statements
- Phenomenological reduction
- Description of the essence of the experience.

A computer program, namely the 'Analyser program' (Bytheway, 2012), was the tool used.

### **1.6. Ethical aspects**

Relevant ethical requirements of research were strictly adhered to during the development and conduct of the project. The participants were respected in every possible way so that their rights and expectations were not infringed upon (Strydom, 2011:114). Permission was gained from the WCED, district officers and school principals and Ethics Committee from Stellenbosch University before the research commenced. Each interviewee was informed beforehand of the procedures and it was made clear that participation was voluntary. All participants agreed to take part in the process and in the case of learners under the age of 18, parents' permission was obtained. The research was done in such a time frame that no teaching time was lost.

### **1.7. Chapter division**

Chapter 1	Introduction
Chapter 2	<i>Soft skills</i> and Excellent teachers
Chapter 3	Research Design
Chapter 4	Analysis of results
Chapter 5	Conclusion

## CHAPTER 2

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

#### 2.1. Introduction

The purpose of the review of the literature was to clarify concepts, reconstruct knowledge about the topic and identify possible areas for further research. There are three main elements in the literature review namely the description of the **theoretical framework** underpinning the study, **conceptualisation** of the concept ***soft skills***, and finally a discussion exploring the qualities of an **excellent teacher in the current South African educational context**.

The aim of this chapter is to answer the first research question namely “What is meant by the concept, *soft skills*” and the second research question namely “Which qualities help the teacher to become an excellent teacher?” By the end of this chapter it should be evident how the concept, *soft skills*, is related to the excellent teacher.

## 2.2. Theoretical background

The main question that guides this study is:

“Which *soft skills* are important for a teacher in the current South African educational context?”

The answer to this question cannot be a simple one, as education, and more specifically teaching, is a complex and multifaceted human activity. In this thesis, education is viewed through the lens of the teacher. The focus falls on the phenomenon of the soft skills of teachers. This is seen through the eyes of different role players: principals, learners and the teachers themselves (Association for the professional quality of teachers, 2006; Beishuizen, Van Putten, Bouwmeester & Asscher, 2001:186; Clifford, 2008:5). By studying the soft skills of teachers in this way, different sides of this phenomenon were revealed.

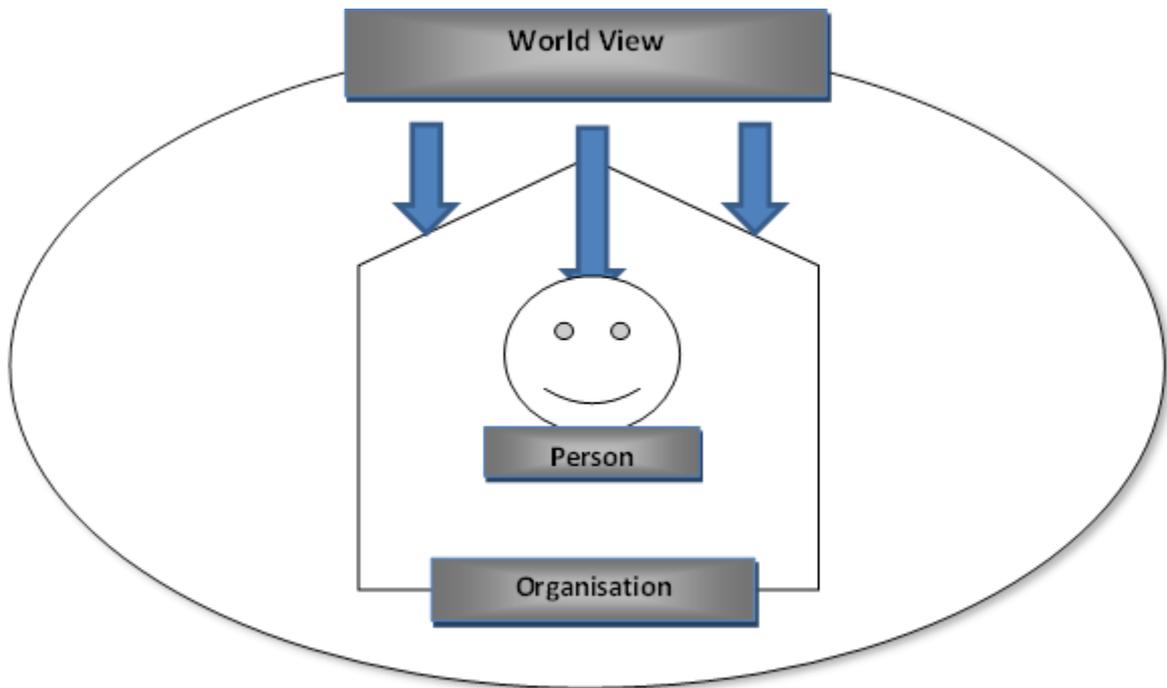
When this complex human activity is investigated from the angle of the teacher, many facets of the requirements of *The Norms and Standards for Educators* in South Africa (1998) are elaborated upon. These *Norms and Standards* envisage seven roles for teachers, ranging from being a learning mediator, interpreter and designer of learning programmes and materials to being a leader, administrator and manager. In addition, the teacher is required to be a scholar, researcher and lifelong learner as well as to be a citizen and a pastor in the community. The roles of assessor and learning area/subject/discipline/phase specialist are the standards which have been set. Although further reference to these roles will be made later in the thesis, the roles will not be studied in detail. The point being made is that being a teacher could be quite a complex role.

This complexity is further elaborated by Malm (2006:45) who argues that the teacher should be sensitive to the various needs of different learners, and be able to accommodate challenges in the South African context, such as poverty, unemployment, diversity and the threat of HIV/ AIDS. The task of the teacher in South Africa today is, to say the least, daunting.

Thus, in an attempt to answer this research question, the complex environment of the individual teacher will be viewed from three different perspectives namely: the three perspectives which provide a theoretical background for the study:

- The teacher as an individual **in a neo-liberalistic world**
- The teacher **as a production factor** in the organisation (the school)
- The teacher **as an individual** in this world.

**Figure 2.1: The teacher in a complex work environment**



The teacher is influenced by the realities of external forces (**Neo-liberalistic world**) influencing the organisation (**the school**) (Heystek, Nieman, Van Rooyen, Mosoge & Bipath, 2008:10). These influences play a role in the optimal functioning of the individual **teacher** (Ball, 2003:15).

### 2.2.1. World view

When conducting this study of the *soft skills* which teachers might need in order to be excellent, it is important to look at trends influencing the world and directing the activities of people today. At the same time this will help to place Education in South Africa within a broader framework. This broader framework in both school education and higher education has, since as early as the 1980s, been shaped by neo-liberal policies (Heystek *et al.*, 2008:8).

The implications of these neo-liberal policies are evident in the way schools are managed and perceived. These policies are based on the view that education is a technical set of

procedures, easily managed and measured in order to be able to quantify efficiency. The policies also view education in general, “as costly commodities that should be put to test in an ‘open’ market just like any other commodity” (Dahlstrom & Lemma, 2008:29-42). When education is viewed in this way, the “commodities” (the learners) are tested to see whether the money invested in their education has been well-spent. There is increasing pressure on the teacher to create the notion that the learners in today’s classroom receive the best education possible.

This situation reduces education and its outcomes to the level of a commodity, so that society views education in that way. The school is viewed through the lens of concepts like managerialism (Heystek *et al.*, 2008:8) and performativity (Ball, 2003:216). When the focus is on the teacher in the workplace, the school is viewed from a management perspective. This places teachers in a dualistic situation; although they are said to be ‘free’, the pressures on teachers to perform are very strong, and teachers’ efforts are measured using a very rigid yard stick.

### **2.2.2. Organisation**

Heystek *et al.* (2005:25) argue that “Human Resources and not physical resources, truly distinguish good schools from average schools”. If the school is seen as being in one of the areas where good education is produced and good teachers are one of the most important determinants of good schools, then Human Resource Development (HRD) and management become increasingly important factors to be taken into account in the school.

Even though the main aim of the organisation – the school – is more that of service delivery organisations, the basic principles of HRD are even more applicable. Further, there is an “intrinsic link” between skills of the employee and the needs of the labour market (Andrews & Higson, 2008:420). The growth of an individual employee, therefore, is seen as part of growth for the organization. Improvement of the skills of an employee will definitely benefit the organization. The employee is seen as part of the production process, a factor of production. education, it means teachers should possess and develop skills, so that optimal functioning within the school is possible.

This human resource plays a pivotal role in whether education is effective or not (Malm, 2009:78). This is true of education worldwide, but specifically in developing countries where very few educational resources are available (Voluntary Service Overseas, 2002:12). *Effective* learning and teaching cannot take place without good teachers.

The development of teachers' skills for optimal functioning will benefit the school, but not in the sense of profit in the business world. This optimal function will be defined later in this chapter when "excellent teachers" are discussed (§2.8.1). The teacher, as an important role-player in education, can be seen as an essential resource in the creation of an environment that is conducive to 'good education'.

### 2.2.3. The Person

Because the focus is on the teacher as an individual, the optimal performance of the teacher as an individual is important. The ancient Greeks identified three aspects of the human being namely **mind, body and spirit**, and for an individual to truly perform well, all three aspects have to function in a harmonic way. For a teacher to be an excellent teacher he/she must be healthy in mind, body and spirit (Hutchison, 2000:5).

The **mind**, as described by the Greeks (sometimes called the human personality) is divided into three domains namely, cognition (thinking, knowing and understanding), affect (attitudes, feelings, emotions) and conation (reasons for acting, will).

Teachers need to have sound **minds** in order to be excellent teachers. They need **cognitive** capacities and skills to teach their subjects, but that alone is not enough. How they feel (the **affect**) plays a huge role in how they function, as will be seen later in this thesis (Hargreaves, 1998:837). To understand the reasons for their own actions and that of the learners, **conation** is necessary.

The second aspect which is defined by the Greeks is the **body** and is seen as biological or genetic influences, bodily functioning and overt response (or behaviour). The **mind** and **body**, therefore function in a reflective manner – one giving feedback to the other, which in its turn gives feedback again.

The third aspect is the **spirit**, which influences the way the feedback is interpreted, and how actions are chosen.

In the context of education, it is important to look at the teacher as an individual with a mind, body and spirit, so when we try to understand the vital role of a teacher within the education process, all these aspects must be taken into account. This is not only true when thinking of the teacher, but also when thinking about the learner in question. In a neo-liberalistic world

the mistake is often made to look only at the cognitive aspects of the teacher – or at most the cognitive and body skills. This study aims to investigate another perspective, namely the *soft skills* of teachers, where affect and conation play a role. These *soft skills* will be defined later in this chapter (§2.4.1).

### **2.3. Soft skills**

*Soft skills* is a concept which is increasingly found in the literature on employability and effectiveness of people in numerous areas of work. Examples of this are found in the medical field (Van Staden, Joubert, Pickworth, 2006:14), in the business context (Rainsbury, Hodges, Burchell & Lay, 2002:8), in the hospitality industry (Weber, Finley, Crawford & Rivera, 2009:354), in the field of accounting (De Villiers, 2010:2), in the field of computers (Fernandez-Sanz *et al.*, 2010:2680) and in management (Muir & Davis, 2004:95-101). Thus, regardless of the industry concerned, these researchers all point out that, in addition to the technical skills (“hard skills”) needed for being successful in the work place, there is increasing need for an individual to possess the so-called *soft skills*.

The importance of these skills has become evident in all of these fields. The core ingredient is that *soft skills* involve people working with people. For example: at the University of Pretoria, the process of redesigning the curriculum in the medical field made it evident that doctors need more *soft skills* to work effectively with patients and other colleagues. A course in *soft skills* was included in the new curriculum (Krüger, Schurink, Bergh, 2006:13) In the field of accounting, more and more of the skills needed by accountants, have the client in mind, and therefore research is being conducted into *soft skills* for accountants (De Villiers, 2010:5) Another example is that of managers. These managers get a job done by managing people, therefore their *soft skills* are important Crosbie (2005:46) and Ahmad (2009:2) stresses that these so-called *soft skills* are needed “ ... which serves horizontally across all industries and vertically across all jobs at all levels in an industry” (Ahmad, 2009:2). Consequently, because education is a highly interpersonal activity, it is possible and even probable that *soft skills* will play a role in Education.

The fact that the *soft skills* contribute to individual excellence within the workplace makes it important to investigate the concept in education. Even though the topic of this thesis focuses on teachers, the review of the literature found very little, if any specific comment on the “*soft skills* of teachers”. In certain sources references are made though, to skills that a teacher needs for success, skills which are not cognitive or didactic (Beishuizen, Van Putten, Bouwmeester & Asscher, 2001:186; Collinson, 1999:4; Fernandez-Sanz *et al.*, 2010:2681;

Zarra, 2004:74). Thus, even though the topic of the thesis is the so-called *soft skills* of teachers, references will be made mainly to non-teaching fields when conceptualising *soft skills*.

In the following paragraphs *soft skills* will be conceptualised and a working definition will be proposed. Following on from the definition, a possible classification will be proposed. Then, some remarks will be made about the nature of *soft skills*.

### 2.3.1. Definition of *Soft Skills*

*Soft skills* are the **people** skills needed to execute a **task**. These skills **complement** the technical skills necessary to effectively complete any task (Bancino & Zevalkink, 2007:20; Crosbie, 2005:45; Ramsomair, 2004:234; Van Staden *et al.*, 2006:34).

This definition has three main sections, the first being the fact that *soft skills* involve **people skills** (De Villiers, 2010:2), the second that *soft skills* play a **complementary role** (Bancino & Zevalkink, 2007:20), and the third, that these so-called soft skills make execution of a task **more effective**:

- Firstly, according to Marlow-Ferguson (Marlow-Ferguson, 2002), a **skill** becomes evident when an individual uses his/her knowledge in such a way that it is evident in the execution of a task. *Soft skills* manifest themselves when knowledge becomes evident in the skills used. *Soft skills* are skills which become evident, mainly when interacting with **people or during self-management, in other words** when individuals use their knowledge in such a way that it becomes evident in their dealings with people.
- Secondly, *soft skills* play a **complementary role**. The main role played by *soft skills* is to complement and enhance the technical skills needed to complete a task. Andrews (in Andrews & Higson, 2008:415) calls the skills (hard and soft) a “synergetic compilation of what might be termed ‘ideal’ generic skills and competencies required”. It is possible to execute a task without *soft skills*, but it might be hard to apply technical skills effectively if there is an absence of *soft skills*.
- Thirdly, *soft skills* make the execution of a task **more effective**. According to Joubert *et al.* (2006:3), “*soft skills*” imply “doing the right thing at the right time, and doing it nicely”. What this implies, is that even though two people could execute the same task, the person who has good soft skills will execute the task more effectively. De

Villiers (2010:2) goes so far as to say *soft skills* are necessary to execute a task effectively.

Now that the concept, *soft skills*, has been defined, certain questions immediately arise. These questions will be discussed under the headings “*problems with the concept soft skills*” and “*related topics*”.

### **2.3.2. Problems with the concept, *soft skills***

#### **2.3.2.1. What is perceived as *soft skills* might change as time goes on**

Ramsoomair (2004:233) expresses this by saying that “*soft skills* aren’t soft at all”. He means that hard skills are perceived to be non-changing facts, which stay the same over time. *Soft skills* are perceived to be changing and are often not fixed. This is emphasised by Crosbie (2005:45-51) who cites Cousins a pioneer in the field of psychoneuroimmunology (the science concerned with the relationship between the brain and immune system) when he comments on the relationship his medical students see between courses which are perceived to be ‘hard’ and those perceived to be ‘soft’.

Hard skills might be perceived to be the facts that stay the same through time. Examples of ‘hard courses’ are biochemistry and physics, whereas the ethics of medicine and patient – doctor relationships are perceived to be ‘soft’. But, with the ever-changing knowledge base, a decade or two later the knowledge regarding biochemistry might have changed therefore this knowledge base turns out to be ‘soft’, but the facts regarding patient-doctor relationships are the same. Does this make patient-doctor relationships a ‘hard skill’?

The point is that the perception of *soft skills* might change as the world changes.

#### **2.3.2.2. *Soft skills* are hard to quantify**

The second reason is that *soft skills* are difficult to measure (Muir & Davis, 2004:99). The following example of the negative effect of the absence of *soft skills* should explain what this means in the medical field. If a patient runs a temperature, it is easy to use a thermometer to measure his/her temperature. Then medication can be given. The same cannot be said of a person who is unable to get along with other people. We know when the relationships are not healthy, we might even see conflict arising, but it is difficult to quantify just how unhealthy the relationship might be. This is an example of how difficult it is to quantify *soft skills*.

Even though this thesis does not focus on the training of *soft skills*, it is worth mentioning that part of the reason why “*soft skills*” are neglected in training might be that they are so hard to measure (Rainsbury et al., 2002:9). This fact makes people think that they are not important. This of course is not true. Good *soft skills* are really very important, especially in people-related jobs.

### **2.3.3. Related concepts**

In order to understand the concept “*soft skills*” and clearly define these skills it is necessary to explain related concepts. In this thesis, I have chosen to look at skills that manifest visibly in an excellent teacher. This excludes concepts like personality and temperament, which are concepts of intrinsic potential, but do not necessarily manifest visibly. *Soft skills* therefore refer to capacities that become evident in the behaviour of excellent teachers. In this study of the *soft skills* of excellent teachers, I have chosen to focus mainly on the skills of the person and not on the emotional roots or behaviour of people.

Other related concepts will be briefly defined next.

#### **2.3.3.1. Transferable skills**

The Assocham Research Bureau (Ahmad, 2009:2) names *soft skills* as “transferable skills”, “employability skills” or “generic skills”. This indicates that these are skills needed in all jobs, and even if a person transfers to a totally new job, these are skills which they take with them and will need in the new working environment. These skills are an intrinsic part of individuals so are taken with them when they move to another job. This concept applies to advice given to graduates or other job seekers, in order to guide the choices that they make.

Some of these transferable skills are also named as technical skills like computer skills, which of course do not fit in with the definition given for *soft skills* (Ahmad, 2009:2).

#### **2.3.3.2. Emotional Intelligence**

Emotional Intelligence (EQ) focuses on the feelings experienced by human beings and how these feelings are managed. These emotions or feelings can be observed in the way individuals act, which might show links to the *soft skills*. EQ is a part of *soft skills*.

Zeidner *et al.* (2002:220) cite Salovey and Mayer when they describe emotional intelligence as the “the ability to monitor one’s own and others’ emotions, to discriminate among them, and to use the information to guide one’s thinking and actions”.

Offerman (2004:223) reasons that since emotional intelligence results in computational competencies that are associated with “superior interactive behaviours” in a group, there is a skills-link between EQ and behaviour.

### **2.3.3.3. Social intelligence**

Zeidner *et al.* (2002:221) cite Ford and Tisak who identified three attributes of social intelligence namely:

- Decoding of social cues
- Effectiveness of one’s social performance
- Social measure with a skill component.

When looking at Social Intelligence, the focus is on how a person fits into society, and not on their skills *per se*. In other words, it is concerned with the potential of a person to fit into society. Fitting in socially does require particular *soft skills*, but this aspect will not be dealt with in this study.

### **2.3.3.4. Coping skills**

The concept, coping strategies, is usually evidenced in relation to stress. Job performance could be affected by stress by putting coping strategies into action. These coping skills are employed as ways of coping with stress. These coping strategies are commonly divided into two categories namely problem-focused coping and emotion-focused coping (Jarvis, 2005:85).

It seems that these strategies can also be adaptive or maladaptive, being good strategies to use for personal health, like communicating one’s frustrations with management, or strategies that in the long run have a negative effect on the personal health of the employee, like accepting injustice (Jarvis, 2005: 84).

Coping strategies differ from *soft skills* in that these are strategies mainly related to stress, whereas *soft skills* as seen in this study make teachers more effective i.e. better their performance. Of course the two concepts have areas where they overlap, for example: advance planning is a coping strategy, but it is also a soft skill needed by a teacher.

#### **2.4. Acquiring soft skills**

The definition of *soft skills* states that soft skills will enhance performance of individuals. The question is: what if you do not possess these soft skills?

##### **2.4.1. Soft skills can be acquired**

The good news is that these *soft skills* can be acquired. Millions are spent each year in the US in skills training in the business world (Weber *et al.*, 2009:354). This implies that there is a perception that these skills can indeed be learnt so it is indeed worthwhile spending money on skills training.

This is true, not only of the business world, but an increased emphasis on *soft skills* training is suggested at tertiary level, and mainly as part of curricula of Business schools (Andrews & Higson, 2008:411-422) in order to prepare students for their working life. This is done as an addition to the technical part of the training (Bancino & Zevalkink, 2007:21) for students' jobs. As previously stated this has already been included in certain courses in the hospitality industry, that of medical doctors, lawyers and accountants and computer programmers (§2.3).

Ideas about how this training could be done include a certain buy-in from students, and the fact that the training should not only be theoretical, but also part of a practical, hands-on experiential training (Bancino & Zevalkink, 2007:21; Rainsbury *et al.*, 2002:14). Even though this is worth noting, it does not fall within the scope of the dissertation.

##### **2.4.2. Acquiring soft skills is not a simple process**

Two reasons why *soft skills* are more difficult to acquire than technical skills are the fact that in many fields there is resistance to learning these skills as these are deemed less important than technical skills. The value of having good *soft skills* is rarely regarded as important by accountants, but the clients whom they serve will probably not agree with this view (Rainsbury, 2002:9).

Secondly, acquiring *soft skills* is difficult, because there is an intrinsic element of skill development, which is usually a longer process than merely cognitive learning. Because these *soft skills* lie on a skills level, and not only on a cognitive level, they are only successfully developed when knowledge and behaviour of individuals have changed. The knowledge of these *soft skills* alone does not mean that a person has good *soft skills* (Bowman, 2006:33; Ramsomair, 2004:232; Van Staden *et al.*, 2006:35).

The emphasis is on changing behaviour, which is a more complex process (Crosbie, 2005:46).

## **2.5. Soft skills in the workplace**

A growing awareness of the importance of *soft skills* in the workplace is related to fundamental changes in the workplace itself. The workplace is increasingly becoming (1) an interpersonal environment, (2) micro global societies, and (3) societies where the human capital is the competitive advantage.

The world has become a village through open, direct communication and ease of movement. Local workplace communities tend to reflect this globalisation on a micro scale. Being an effective employee no longer only demands the technical skills a specific job requires. In addition employees need to communicate and work effectively with co-workers of diverse languages, cultures and values. The *soft skills* required to work in such a diverse team is a prerequisite for being profitable and competitive (Bancino & Zevalkink, 2007:21). How people get along with each other is increasingly important in the workplace, even though the focus of the workplace has become the global society and profits.

Four reasons why *soft skills* are important in the workplace will now be discussed because *soft skills* **complement** the technical skills. The second reason is the fact that *soft skills* are **vital for teamwork**, which becomes more and more important today. Furthermore, the fact that there is a vague **distinction** between technical skills and soft skills that a job requires, and lastly that the specific soft skills needed might **differ** from workplace to workplace.

### **2.5.1. Distinction between technical or *hard skills* and *soft skills* in the workplace**

Muir (2004:95) emphasises that these so-called *soft skills* are different from the technical skills an individual needs to do his/her job. When applying for a job, the job description

usually identifies the cognitive or physical abilities necessary to be successful for the specific post. These might be called the *hard skills* and are “primarily cognitive in nature and are influenced by an individual’s intelligence quotient source” Weber *et al.* (2009:354). While it is true that *hard skills* are the minimum basic competences for performing well in a specific job, an employee needs *soft skills* to really be successful (Crosbie, 2005:47; Rainsbury *et al.*, 2002:10).

The *hard skills* are usually job specific, and will not be used by an individual when he/she changes to a totally new field/job.

### **2.5.2. *Soft skills* complement technical skills**

Part of the definition of *soft skills* underlines the fact that *soft skills* play a complementary role for an individual, and this can be observed in the workplace. Weber *et al.* (2009:354) indicate that “*Soft skills* are defined as the interpersonal, human, people or behavioural skills **needed to apply technical skills and knowledge** in the workplace”. Of course it is true that being successful in a work environment requires that certain technical skills are necessary. But because the individual is such a complex combination of mind, body and soul, it is impossible to separate these technical skills from the other skills needed from the individual. The *soft skills* enhance the effectiveness of the “harder” more technical skills, and is thus seen to be “complementary to the hard skills for successful workplace performance” (Bancino & Zevalkink, 2007:20; Rainsbury, 2002:9).

The Assocham Research Bureau conducted research on students attending graduate and post graduate courses across 12 universities and focused on the skills students perceived as being necessary to “develop along with their higher education and to gain good jobs” (Ahmad, 2009:2). As many as 98% of these students said that their *soft skills* need to be enhanced in order to achieve success.

Muir cites a conversation with Annalee Luhman, Learning and Leadership Manager at the Port of Seattle in Washington in which he asked her whether she thought *soft skills* are a necessary ingredient of organizational development. Her response was that these skills are ‘at the very heart of creating capability in employees and leaders’ (Muir & Davis, 2004:96).

### 2.5.3. **Soft skills are vital for teamwork**

As emphasised in the definition, *soft skills* are skills which place an emphasis on the people side of any task. Muir (in Muir & Davis, 2004:95-101) defines the 'interpersonal' dimension of life at work as "attitudes and behaviours displayed in interactions among individuals that **affect the outcomes of such encounters**".

Many tasks at work require working with other people. To be able to work well with other people *soft skills* are necessary. Employees are expected to communicate well, work in groups, interact with the public, manage their time, handle conflict, cope well under pressure, solve problems creatively, multitask and do a long list of other things (Muir & Davis, 2004:95-101).

### 2.5.4. **Soft skills might differ from workplace to workplace**

There might even be differences in opinion of which skills in the workplace could be classified as *soft skills* and which are *hard skills* (Crosbie, 2005:45-51). When reviewing the literature on the topic of *soft skills*, it is apparent that the *soft skills* required for different jobs, might differ, even though all these skills are related to interacting with people (Andrews & Higson, 2008:15; Rainsbury *et al.*, 2002:10; Weber *et al.*, 2009:355; Wellington, 2005:629).

In this thesis the *soft skills* relevant within the teaching profession will be identified. The focus is on the many relationships teachers have in the workplace. These relationships in education are with all the different role-players namely the relationships with learners, colleagues, parents, management department officials and others.

## 2.6. **Reasons for investigating soft skills in education**

All the reasons given for the importance of the role of *soft skills* in the workplace are relevant to education:

- *Soft skills* complement the hard skills in the workplace
- *Soft skills* are vital for teamwork
- *Soft skills* might differ from the technical or hard skills required for a job
- Different *soft skills* might be important in different workplaces.

To firmly ground these reasons in education, examples will be given of why these *soft skills* are important in education. Firstly, one of the technical skills that a teacher needs is to be able to facilitate a good lesson, so that learners can learn. *Soft skills* complement the technical skills needed by a teacher: such as preparing and teaching such a lesson. The teacher must have insight into the learners' lives (a *soft skill*), and a good relationship with the learners in order for them to teach effectively.

Secondly, teachers, apart from communicating with many role-players, also have to work in teams with other teachers, management and often parents, in order to ensure the best possible education for the learners. *Soft skills* for teamwork are vital, because education is not an individual process.

Thirdly, it is difficult to say whether creating a motivating climate in the classroom is a *hard/technical* or a *soft skill*. The ability to create a motivating environment relates directly to whether or not learners succeed. Although creating a motivating climate, might be seen as a technical skill, being motivated him/herself, and creating a motivating climate as a result is definitely also a soft skill. This is an illustration of why it is sometimes difficult to make a clear distinction between technical and *soft skills*. Being a teacher definitely entails more than just the cognitive skills associated with being in command of his or her subject.

Because of the unique nature of education, the different *soft skills* necessary to be an excellent teacher might (and probably will) differ from those of a doctor, or an accountant. This study hopes to investigate the specific *soft skills* which contribute to being an excellent teacher. In the next paragraph a possible classification of these *soft skills* for teachers will be discussed.

## **2.7. Classification of soft skills**

By examining literature on the topic, I was able to identify many *soft skills* that are important in the workplace.

Since most authors merely list the different *soft skills*, without trying to classify or order them (Andrews & Higson, 2008:413; Rainsbury, 2002:9; Weber *et al.*, 2009:355; Wellington, 2005:630), the following classification might be useful. The system is not rigid, and is based on the understanding of *soft skills* in work done by Collinson (1999:4) and other work I reviewed in the fields of temperament and Emotional intelligence. This classification system

is similar to the Johari window (Haynes, 1999:660) in that it is not rigid and might shift from workplace to workplace and from time to time.

The classification aims to order the different *soft skills* into a matrix. The first axis in the matrix (interpersonal – intrapersonal) comments on **the person** with whom the presence of the soft skill becomes evident. The second axis classifies the *soft skills* as **affective** (relating to moods, feelings, and attitudes (oxford)) to **behavioural** (what the person is doing).

It is important to note that this is not a perfect classification. This is the reason for the dotted line on the inside of the matrix. For the purposes of this study this classification was used to denote the specific *soft skills* evident in excellent teachers.

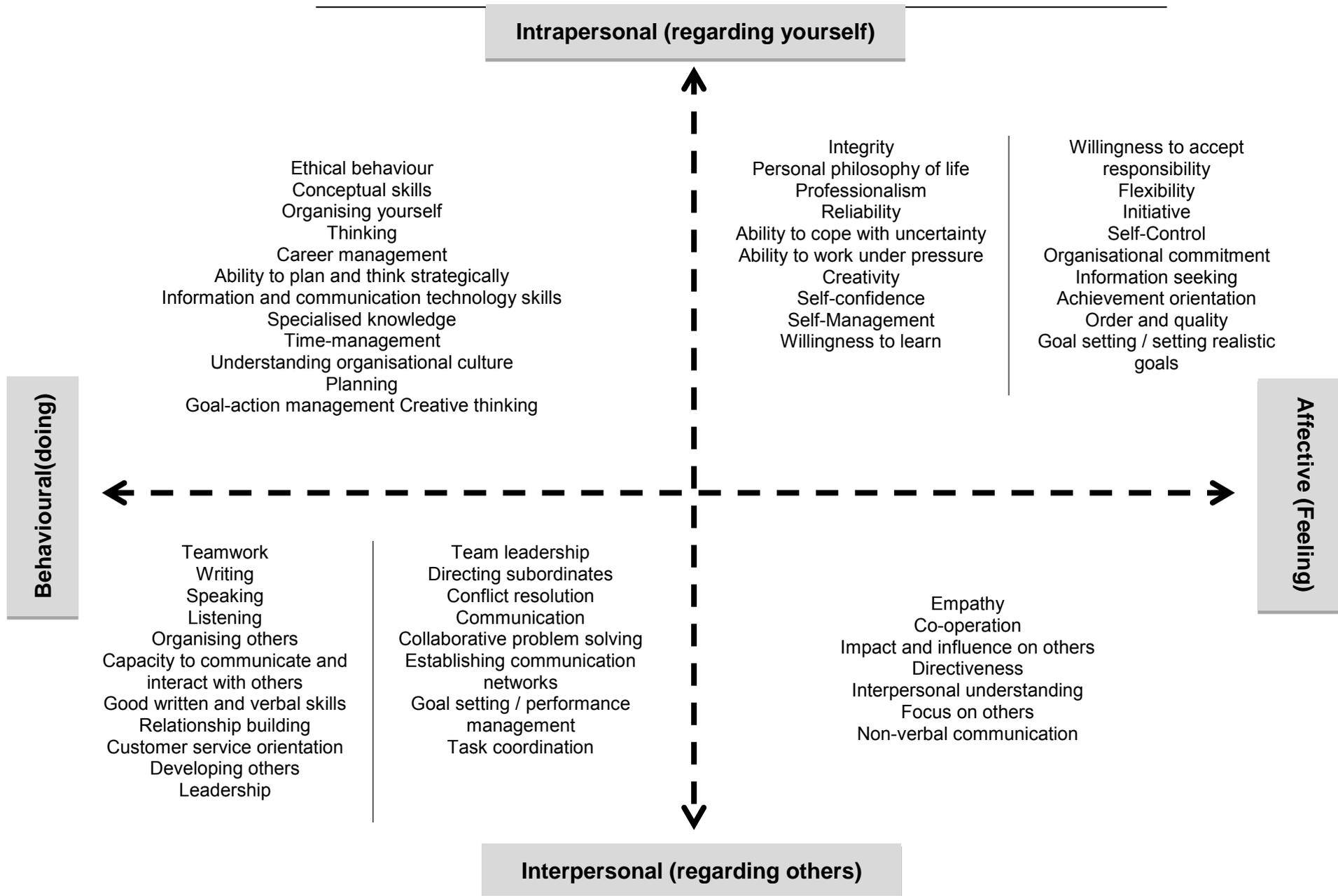
These axes will be explained in more detail in the following paragraphs.

According to the Marlow-Ferguson (2002), intrapersonal skills are the skills that are situated in the mind of an individual. The interpersonal-intrapersonal axis thus classifies *soft skills* according to whether this specific soft skill is evident in the teacher's him/herself (intrapersonal skills), for instance self-confidence. The other end of this axis is the interpersonal skills which become evident when teachers work with other people. They are the skills that relate to relationships or communication between people (Marlow-Ferguson, 2002). For the purpose of this classification, a continuum is created where a distinction is made between the skills used in dealing with other people (interpersonal) from the skills used in self-management (intrapersonal).

A teacher has many different interpersonal relationships with people in their workplace. These relationships include relationships with learners, other teachers, school management, parents and members of the community who are involved with the school.

The other axis in the matrix is that of behavioural-affective skills. This continuum indicates whether the action is visible (the body according to the Greeks), or happens in the mind or spirit of the teacher. This matrix provides a theoretical framework to illustrate that the individual is seen as more than just a cognitive being.

Figure 2.1: Classification of soft skills



## **2.8. Excellent teachers**

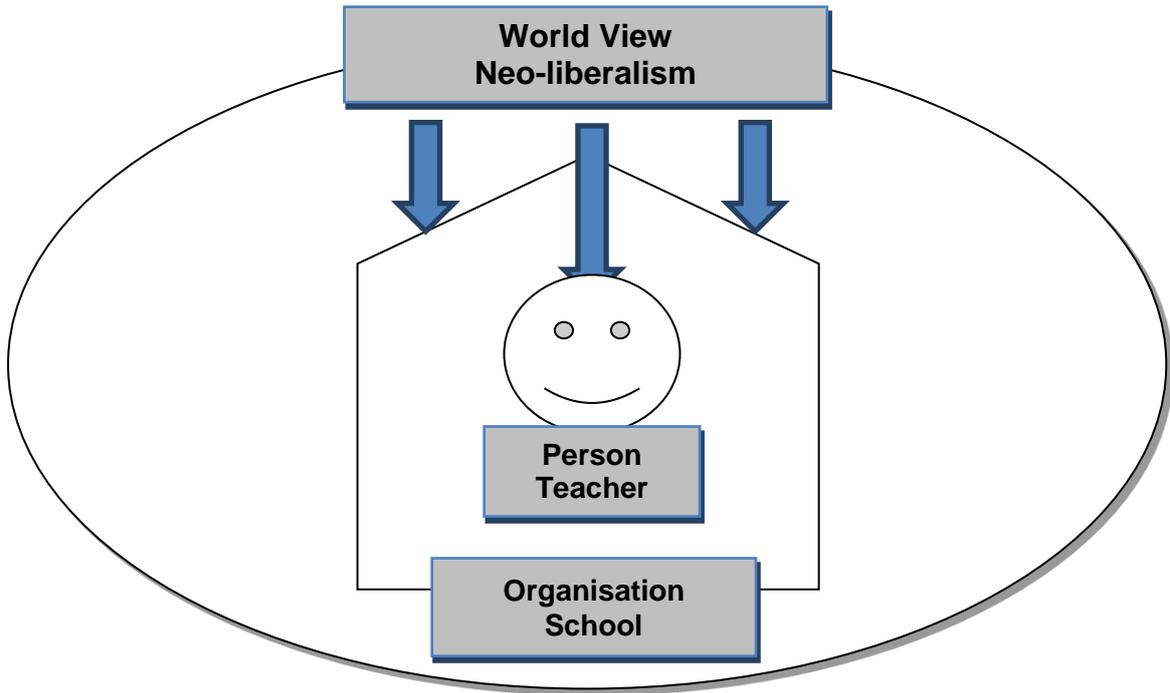
### **2.8.1. Analysis of the current situation**

It is difficult to define the concept “excellent teachers”. The Society for the Professional Quality of Teachers in the Netherlands introduces its definition of excellent teachers by pointing out that “quality education”, changes as time goes on, and that the quality of a teacher in education “makes” or “mars” the education provided. They point out that the definition of a good teacher can actually not be given in one sentence (Association for the Professional Quality of teachers, 2006). Another point that makes it difficult to define excellent teachers is the fact that there are different views on what makes a teacher ‘excellent’.

It is obvious from the extensive literature study, that there is broad agreement internationally on the “qualities” which excellent teachers must possess (Association for the Professional Quality of Teachers, 2006; Beishuizen *et al.*, 2001:187; Eide, Goldhaber & Brewer, 2004:235; Voluntary Service Overseas, 2002:12). The theoretical framework identified earlier in this chapter will be used to place teachers. Teachers in South Africa and in other countries will then be discussed. Finally, the importance of teachers will be argued.

#### **2.8.1.1. Placing teachers within the theoretical framework**

The following conceptual representation was used earlier in the chapter to show the conceptual framework. This will now be elaborated on focusing on the teacher.

**Figure 2.3: The teacher in a complex work environment (2)**

The changes brought about by the neo-liberalistic worldview resulted in a situation in schools where teachers are seen, not as individuals, but simply through a lens of performativity. This implies that policy makers need to make sure that results of schooling are adequate, and that the yardstick used in neo-liberalistic is measurable results. Therefore, systems and policies are put in place to monitor the performance of teachers.

This is drastically different from a situation 50 years ago where the teacher was autonomous. Expectations of teachers have changed. Ololube (2007:1) states that the formulation of policies is instrumental in the development of an effective educational system. Policies alone, however, do not ensure an effective education system. Teachers, in schools, have the responsibility of putting the policies into practice in innovative ways that ensure effective learning in a diverse teaching and learning environment.

These policies influence what might be defined as excellent teachers. Excellent teachers, according to policy makers, are teachers who deliver results. In terms of teachers of matric learners – excellent teachers are those teachers who deliver good matric results (Heystek *et al.*, 2008:10).

The lens of measurable results, is not the only lens through which the teacher may be viewed. As stated in the theoretical framework underpinning the study, a teacher is an individual with a mind, body and spirit, therefore for these teachers to function optimally, all the aspects of being an individual must function in harmony. Malm (2009:87) states though, that there is a “heightened sense” in education that the teacher needs to be seen both through the lens of personal “being” and professional “becoming”. Measurable results alone should not be seen as the only criteria. However, as Collinson (1999:4) points out “knowledge and theories to explain the complex nature of teacher excellence remain limited”.

From an organisational angle, it is to the advantage of the school that teachers are managed in a professional, humane way, for this should ensure personal and professional effectivity. Heystek (2005:25) argues that in human resource development of teachers it is important to also look at the “softer” approach to management. That would mean that teachers are not only seen as instruments who have to perform, but as beings who bring about growth in the learners. Sadly, this often does not happen, and this has led to a situation in South Africa where research conducted by the ELRC has indicated that 55% of educators have considered leaving the profession due to a number of reasons (Education Labour Relations Council Medical Research Council, & Mobile Task team on the impact of HIV/ Aids on Education of the University of KwaZulu-Natal, 2005:5) The concern of the HSRC is supported by the ELRC report of the result of a survey conducted among 21 358 teachers in 1 714 schools randomly selected in South Africa.

#### **2.8.1.2. Teachers in South Africa today**

Crouch and Perry (2003:496) highlight their concerns about the shortage of teachers. They confirm the finding that the number of teachers considering leaving the profession is as high as 55%. There is a (looming) shortage of teachers. Quality teachers are thinking of leaving the profession for different reasons. Apart from this, schooling in South Africa does not seem to deliver the results that are necessary in a developing country.

One of the reasons is the drastic changes that education has undergone over the past 10 years, which increased the pressure on teachers. The drastic changes in the curriculum since 1995, National Curriculum Statement and CAPS in 2012 make demands on teachers for which they do not feel equipped. In addition, the lack of discipline in schools and the HIV/AIDS pandemic also contribute to a stressful environment (Human Sciences Research Council & Medical Research Council, 2005).

It is also evident that many teachers find it hard to cope with these demands. This situation is not unique to South Africa.

### **2.8.1.3. Teachers worldwide today**

Abroad, Rhodes, Nevill and Allan (2004:1) focus on the supply and retention of teachers in the United Kingdom and state that in 1996–1997, the number of students in initial teacher training courses was 15% under the target set by the government. This tendency increased to 24% in the 1998–1999 period. Not only is the recruitment of new teachers problematic, but also the retention of qualified teachers. Potential teachers are concerned about pay, work load, media image and other factors related to teaching. Similar situations are reported in Zambia, Papua New Guinea and Malawi (Voluntary service Overseas, 2002:2).

The potential shortage of teachers seems to be a problem, not only in South Africa, but also in other parts of the world. According to the Voluntary Service Overseas (2002:15), this high attrition rate of teachers and the constant staff turnover could have a negative impact on the motivation of teachers.

True job satisfaction is derived from the satisfaction of higher order needs like social relations, esteem and actualization and not necessarily the lower order needs.

### **2.8.2. Importance of teachers**

Now that the potential shortage of teachers in South Africa and worldwide has been discussed briefly, the question arises: why are teachers so important for education.

#### **2.8.2.1. Regarding the school**

One important factor which could improve an education system and therefore student success is the quality of its teachers. Malm (2009:78) cites findings from an international report indicating that “the quality of an educational system cannot exceed the quality of its teachers.” If this is true, enhancing the quality of teachers, should enhance the quality of the school.

From a neo-liberalistic management angle, schools need good results to stay competitive in the market. The best way to attain good results is to make sure that the school has good teachers.

### **2.8.2.2. Regarding the learners**

The teacher is one of the most important people in learners' cognitive, personal and emotional growth and development into adulthood. Since learners, who often have find it difficult to identify with their parents, spend many hours with their teachers, the teachers are the adults that accompany them in their growth and development (Fernandez-Sanz et al., 2010:2680). As Eide, Goldhaber & Brewer (2004:235) note: "A growing body of empirical evidence shows teacher quality to be the most important schooling factor predicting student's learning gains".

Sigmund Freud once remarked that "it is hard to decide whether what affects us more and was of greater importance to us was our concern with the sciences that we were taught or with the personalities of our teachers" (Jarvis, 2005:147). This underlines the fact that the "being" of teachers, might even be more important than their academic knowledge or skills.

It is thus clear that having a good teacher is really very important to a child.

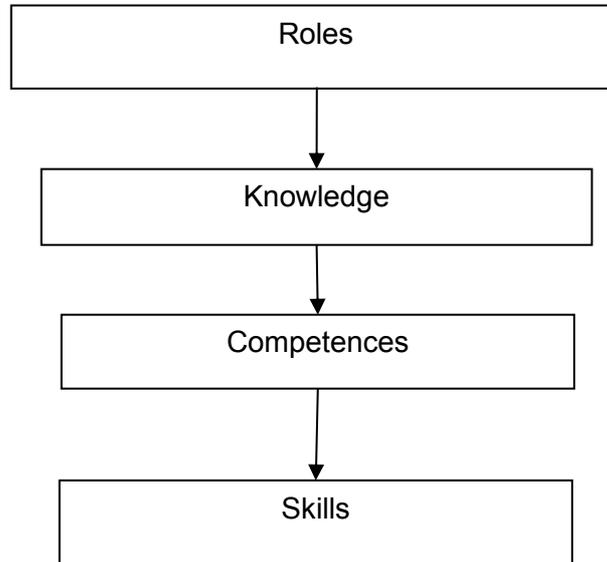
### **2.8.3. Excellent teachers from roles to skills**

So what is meant by an "excellent teacher"? The literature review has made it clear that an answer to this question makes it necessary to distinguish between the roles, competences and skills of teachers. This helped to clarify the scope of this study.

The second research question is "Which qualities contribute to a teacher being an excellent teacher?" In the previous section, the situation in which teachers find themselves today, and the important role they play were outlined. This raises the question of what makes it possible to be an excellent teacher in such a situation?

To understand this better it might be helpful to use the following diagram:

**Figure 2.2: From roles to skills**



Teachers need to play certain **roles** while doing their job. A “role” indicates the pattern of behaviour expected from an individual and is “determined by an individual’s status in the society” (Marlow-Ferguson, 2002). The roles of teachers defined in *The Norms and Standards for Educators* in South Africa (South Africa & Department of Education, 1998) indicate what is expected from an individual in the teaching profession in South Africa today.

This requires certain **knowledge** from the teacher. This knowledge creates the **competences** to fulfil these roles. “Competence” is the ability to apply to practical situations the essential principles and techniques of a particular subject-matter field (Marlow-Ferguson, 2002). These competencies must be refined to become skills. Marlow-Ferguson (2002) explains that a skill is “to use one’s knowledge effectively and readily in execution or performance”. The teacher must therefore be able to see the relationship between what is asked from him / her in the classroom (the roles they have to play), and relate this to their training and experience.

When the teacher successfully accepts the roles he/she has to play as a teacher, and the knowledge creates competence, it is possible to practise the **skills** necessary to be an excellent teacher.

## 2.9. Ways to view teacher excellence

As said before, there are many views on what constitutes the concept of excellent teachers. In the following paragraphs a few of these will be outlined in order to present some of the different ways of looking at excellent teachers from the perspective of *soft skills*. Eide, Goldhaber and Brewer (2004:235) define teacher quality as “a teacher’s ability to produce growth in student achievement”. This is the starting point of the discussion.

### 2.9.1. Different kinds of knowledge

Collinson (1999:4) names three different kinds of knowledge that a teacher needs. The first is named **Professional knowledge** (knowledge of subject matter, curriculum and pedagogy), the second, **Interpersonal knowledge** (relationships with students, the educational community and the local community), and the third, **Intrapersonal knowledge** (teachers’ ethics and dispositions). From this it is clear that more than one kind of knowledge is necessary for a teacher.

These last two “types of knowledge”, namely interpersonal knowledge and intrapersonal knowledge are the knowledge components (knowledge that might not be visible to others) of the skills that are termed *soft skills* in this thesis. As indicated in 2.8.3, knowledge might lead to competences, which might lead to skills, which are visible when teachers have them. This is in accordance to the definition of *soft skills*: the **people skills** needed to execute a **task effectively**, and skills which **complement** the more technical skills. For the purposes of this thesis, this is definition of *soft skills* will be used.

Collinson (1999:2) continues to summarise the characteristic feature of a group of excellent teachers as “they seem to grasp the balance between intellectual and emotional intelligence and the importance of both in the many roles required of teachers”. This underlines the complexity of the demands on teachers who want to be excellent teachers.

### 2.9.2. Competence requirements

The second view is derived from the **Association for the Professional Quality of Teachers** in the Netherlands. After an extensive process involving teachers at all levels of schooling in the Netherlands, certain competence requirements were identified. Teacher members acknowledge their responsibility, and indicate what action should be taken to achieve these.

Even when viewing these competence requirements on a surface level, it is clear, that the competences involve both technical and *soft skills*.

These competences are listed in Table 2. The columns indicate which groups of people the competence involves, and the rows indicate the specific competency. Four of these competences clearly have a very strong “people” base, namely Interpersonal competence (with students), and collaboration with colleagues, the working environment and with him or herself. When these are studied more closely phrases like “interpersonally competent”, “communication”, “encourages students autonomy”, “competent in collaboration with his/her colleagues”, and “communicates and cooperates effectively” emphasise the “people” base of these competences (Association for the Professional Quality of Teachers, 2006).

It is clear that many of these fall within the scope of the definition of *soft skills*.

**Table 2.1: Competence required of teachers**

	With students	With colleagues	In the working environment (parents, guardians, other welfare institutions etc)	With him / herself
Interpersonal	1	5 (collaboration with)	6 (collaboration with)	7 (collaboration with)
Pedagogical	2			
Subject matter and teaching methods	3			
Organizational	4			

(Association for the Professional Quality of Teachers, 2006)

### 2.9.3. Strategic teaching

Brozo (2007:47) identify five principles to guide strategic teaching. They are:

- Build new understanding by connecting prior knowledge and experience with academic learning.
- Motivate and sustain effort in learning.
- Develop skills to promote long term recall of information and ideas and encourage independent learning.
- Foster critical interpretations and metacognition.
- Use assessment as a tool for learning and future growth.

It is clear that some of these are soft skills; a teacher will not be able motivate the learners to learn by using cognitive skills alone.

#### **2.9.4. Norms and standards for Educators in South Africa**

*The Norms and Standards for Educators* in South Africa (1998:53) defines the roles a teacher is required to fulfil. If we assume that excellent teachers fulfil these roles, a teacher must be a:

- Learning mediator
- Interpreter and designer of learning programmes and materials
- Leader, administrator and manager
- Scholar, researcher and lifelong learner
- Citizen and pastor in his/her community
- Assessor
- Learning area/subject/discipline/phase specialist.

These roles vary greatly in their focus, and the concomitant demands they make. The **cognitive nature** of teaching is stressed in a role such as “interpreter and designer of learning programmes and materials”; but, on the other hand, the **people side** of the job of a teacher is reflected in the “community, citizenship and pastoral role”.

#### **2.10. Conclusion**

The stance of this thesis is that a person is mind and body and spirit, therefore, for optimal functioning, all aspects of a person must be taken into account. The implication for teaching is that learners have to be seen not only as people with a mind, but also as people with a body and a spirit. Teachers thus need to use the so-called *soft skills* to facilitate learning in a school environment.

In addition to the seven roles teachers are called upon to play, Malm (2006:64) argues that the teacher should be sensitive to the different needs of different learners, and be able to take account of needs in the South African context such as poverty, unemployment, diversity and the threat of HIV/ AIDS. To say the least, this makes the task of the teacher in South Africa today daunting.

This study of *soft skills* emphasises that **individual teachers need both technical hard skills and soft skills to succeed**. The individuals that succeed in the workplace do so using both the technical skills needed for the job they are doing, and the so-called *soft skills* (Wellington, 2005:628). As Ramsomair (2004:231) notes, staff members who are strong in the technical areas of their work, but “deficient in communications and people skills” will compromise the effectiveness of the business”. Similarly, Weber *et al.* (2009:355), refer to work done by Stevens and Campion to conclude that the skill of “working with others” correlates highly with performance effectiveness.

There can be no doubt that **soft skills are part of the individual**. To teach effectively, teachers have to build a set of *soft skills*, which help them to succeed in this difficult environment. The individual teacher carries these skills with him/her to whatever workplace or personal space he/she operates in.

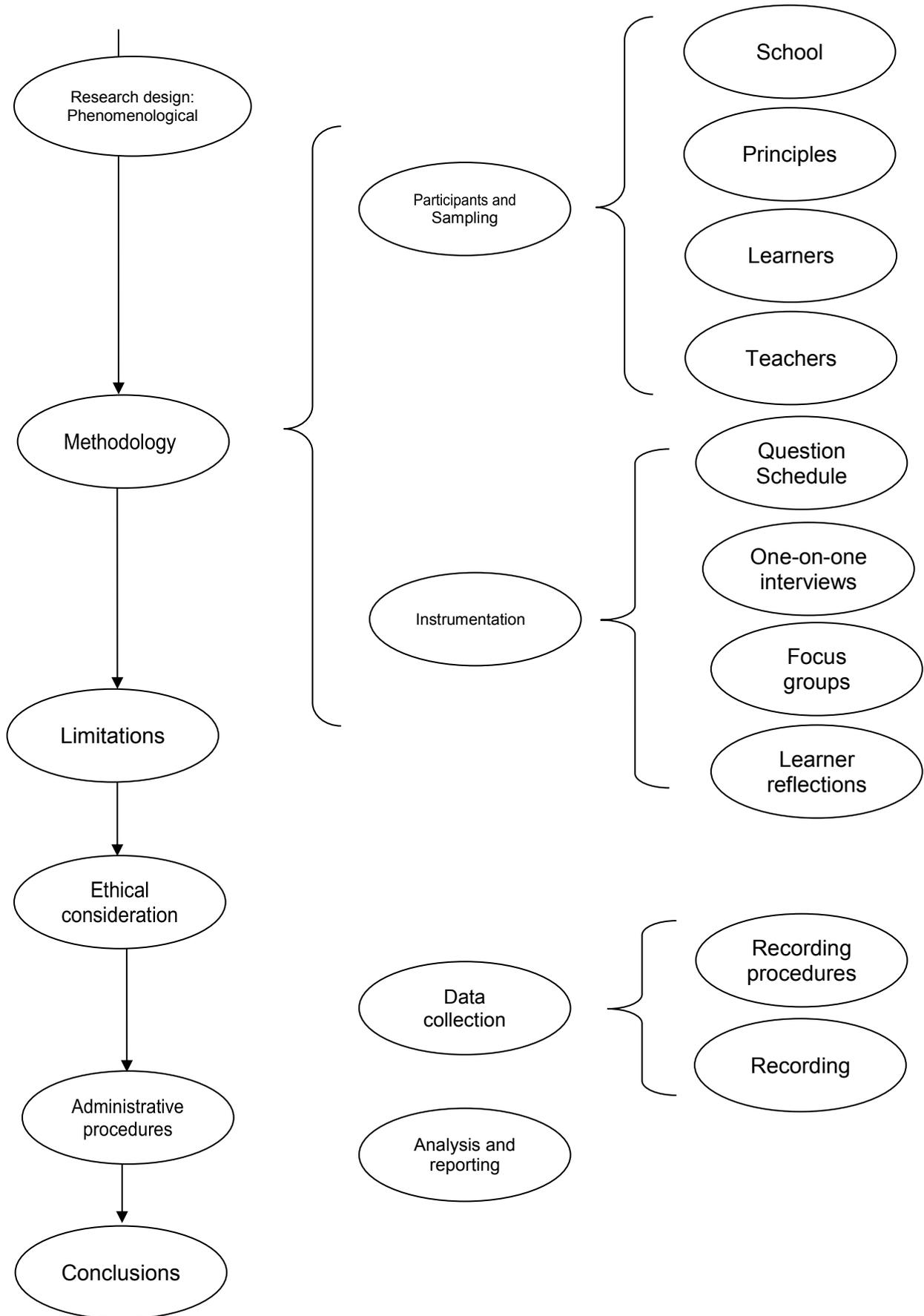
## CHAPTER 3

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1. Introduction

The main challenge of this study is the fact that *soft skills* are so hard to quantify. Even though few people would argue that these *soft skills* do not exist, or are not important, the concept is hard to clearly define (Ramsoomair, 2004:231)(§2.4.2). In Chapter 2, the literature on different fields of people-related jobs (Bancino & Zevalkink, 2007:25; Bergh, Van Staden, Joubert, et al, 2006:14a; Crosbie, 2005:45; Van Staden, Joubert, Pickworth, et al, 2006:34) shows clearly that *soft skills* exist and that they play an important role in effective teaching.

Figure 3.1: Diagram of research methodology



Adapted from Creswell and Creswell (2009:6)

As part of the planning process certain choices had to be made regarding the methodology for the research. The following are the important choices:

- Research approach
- Research techniques
- Sampling.

What each of these choices constitutes and how they were made will be discussed in the following chapter. The underlying aim was to work in a people-friendly manner as related to the topic, *soft skills*.

It was important to plan the research in such a way that the results would be reliable and valid. It was also important for the research be ethically sound. All the phases in the research process will now be detailed.

The first important choice was between a qualitative approach and a quantitative approach. This choice informed the rest of the process of the planning of the research. King and Horrocks (2010:15) stresses that in quantitative research ‘facts’ are “supported by measurement and observations seems enough to demonstrate that the work has epistemological integrity”. This makes quantitative research methods seem attractive. However, this kind of accurate measurement is in research of this kind. There are two important sets of reasons. The first has to do with the nature of the field of social sciences in which this research is being done, and the second reason has to do with the topic under investigation, namely *soft skills*.

In the social sciences, it is often difficult to measure precisely. Questions are asked of individuals, and the answers to these questions rely on the perceptions of the interviewee. Different interviewees might assign different values when they mean the same thing. To reach an exact answer might be counter-productive. Even the compilation of a questionnaire, which allows only certain responses, is problematic for two reasons. On the one hand, it asks the respondent to choose between set answers, and, on the other, it introduces a degree of ambiguity since different people might mean different things when they appear to be giving the same answer. The nature of social science makes it difficult to use exact measurements (Gherardi & Turner, 2002:87).

The second reason why accurate measurement of *soft skills* is difficult is the very nature of the concept *soft skills*. Gherardi and Turner (2002:81) make the useful observation that

“social science links quantitative styles of enquiry and data collection with a ‘hard’ view of the world, and qualitative approaches with a ‘soft’ view. It would be inappropriate to do research on a ‘soft’ concept using ‘hard’ approaches and methods.

It seemed best to use a qualitative approach for this study, because it allows researchers to “uncover subjective and diverse meanings” (Schurink, Kruger, Bergh, et al, 2006:14). And even though this approach might seem ‘dangerous’, the mere topic ‘*soft skills*’ calls for an approach which acknowledges the different ways of understanding the world, and the different skills that might enhance the effectiveness of teachers. Deep understanding of the forces at work in the classroom where effective learning takes place can only be achieved when different role players are free to give their own views of what makes an excellent teacher.

Creswell (2009:175) lists the characteristics of the qualitative methodology that was used in this study as follows:

- Data is collected in the natural setting (in this study – the school).
- The researcher is a key element of the research (gathers the data herself).
- There are multiple sources of data (three groups of role players were identified as sources).
- Inductive patterns and categories for analysis are chosen once the data have been collected, and are informed by the data.
- The participants’ meanings are assigned to the concepts (the skills an excellent teacher possesses).
- The design of the process might change as the process emerges.
- The researcher interprets the remarks made by the participants. This is part of gaining an understanding of the concept.
- A holistic picture is formed.

### **3.2. Phenomenological Research**

Little academic work has been done on this issue of *soft skills* of teachers – so this study seeks to find the possible importance of the phenomenon *soft skills*, and only then, can certain important *soft skills* be identified. This list of *soft skills* might differ from situation to situation (school to school or classroom to classroom), and therefore this study is

investigative in nature. Different people might also have different views on which *soft skills* are important, and whether they are indeed important.

It is therefore necessary to design a methodology which allows for a broad view, leaving space for growth as the research develops. This should help to give meaningful insight into how people construct a world around themselves (Kvale, 2007:10) thus showing which *soft skills* are apparent in excellent teachers. Given the focus on *soft skills*, the phenomenological research strategy was chosen.

### **3.2.1. Definition of Phenomenological Research**

Creswell and Creswell (2009:13) define the phenomenological research strategy as “a strategy in which the researcher identifies the essence of human experiences about a phenomenon as described by participants”. They refer to the work of Moustakas who argues that using this strategy makes it possible for the researcher to “develop patterns and relationships of meaning”.

A vital part of this strategy is for the researcher to declare, and then set aside his/her own experiences in order to understand the interviewees’ experiences of the phenomenon (Moerer-Urdahl & Creswell, 2004:6).

### **3.2.2. The Transcendental phenomenological Paradigm**

The two major approaches in phenomenology are the hermeneutic and the transcendental approaches. This study takes a transcendental approach. The reason for this is that meaning is the core of this approach, which “further explicates the essence of human experience” (Moerer-Urdahl & Creswell, 2004:2). Hermeneutics places more emphasis on reflective interpretation of a phenomenon in order to gain a deep understanding of it. The transcendental approach follows a more structured process than the hermeneutic approach, and the researcher follows these steps when analysing and reporting on the findings. Moerer-Urdahl & Creswell (2004:2) go as far as to recommend as an approach for “less experienced researchers”. This made it very appropriate for this study.

This process is called transcendental because of the integrated nature of the experiences of the interviewees and the phenomenon studied, namely the *soft skills of* excellent teachers. It allows the researcher to set aside her prejudgements, and use systematic procedures to analyse the data. In the planning of this phase, I drew on the work of Moustakas (1994:181),

Moerrer-Urdahl & Creswell (2004:1-28) and Groenewald (2004:1-26) who use variations of this approach. The process that is used is in essence a combination of the work of these three authors.

### **Steps in the transcendental phenomenological research analysis**

Moustakas (1994:180-182) identifies the following steps:

- Epoche (declaring and putting aside prejudgements)
- Horizontalization (identifying significant statements in the interviews, every statement has equal value)
- Delimitation of horizons or meanings (horizons stand out as invariant qualities of the experience, clustering significant statements into clusters of meaning)
- Identification of invariant qualities or themes (discussing statements that were made in the interviews, but lies outside the scope of the phenomenon discussed)
- Individual textual description (synthesizing the results, and illustrating the phenomenon from different perspectives)
- Composite textual description (integration of all individual textual descriptions).

Taking their lead from Moustakas, Moerer-Urdahl & Creswell (2004:6) use the following steps:

- Epoche (declaring and putting aside prejudgements)
- Framing the study within literature on the phenomenon
- Identifying significant statements
- Generating meaning units or themes (deleting statements irrelevant to the topic or which overlap so one is left with the horizons (remaining statement) which can be put into themes or meaning units)
- Providing textual and structural descriptions (additional sense is being made from different perspectives)
- Distilling the essence of the experience.

Groenewald (2004:17) names the following steps:

- Bracketing and phenomenological reduction

- Delineating of units of meaning (consider literal content and determine the amount of times this came up and how it was mentioned – verbal or non-verbal)
- Clustering of units of meaning to form themes (grouping units together)
- Summarising each interview, validating it and where necessary modifying it
- Extracting general and unique themes from all the interviews and making a composite summary.

**A combination of these was used for the analysis of the findings:**

1. Epoche (declaring and setting aside the preconceived ideas of the researcher) (Moerer-Urdahl & Creswell, 2004:7; Moustakas, 1994:181)
2. Framing the study in literature (Moerer-Urdahl & Creswell, 2004:8):
3. The review of the literature discussed soft skills, in other service vocations – not teaching, and technical skills
4. Horizontalization or determining significant statements (Groenewald, 2004:17; Moerer-Urdahl & Creswell, 2004:9; Moustakas, 1994:181)
5. Phenomenological reduction:
  - a. Delineating units of meaning (Creswell & Creswell, 2009:14; Groenewald, 2004:18; Moustakas, 1994:181).
  - b. Identifying invariant qualities or themes (discussing statements that were made in the interviews, but lies outside the scope of the phenomenon discussed (Moustakas, 1994:182).
  - c. Textual and structural descriptions (additional sense is being made from different perspectives). This entails a discussion of units of meaning with evidence from the interviews (Moerer-Urdahl & Creswell, 2004:20; Moustakas, 1994:182).
6. Distilling the essence of the experience (Moerer-Urdahl & Creswell, 2004:22).

The first step in this transcendental analysis process was the ‘epoche’ or setting aside the prejudgements of the researcher. This includes a declaration of the role of the researcher in line with the qualitative approach. The second step was framing the study within literature (see Chapter 2 thesis). Next, the process of phenomenological reduction, entailing bracketing and delineating units of meaning by looking at the significant statements took place. This was done in detail using the Analyser program (Bytheway, 2012). Every interview was broken down into units of meaning (chunks). The process of open coding was used to

code these 'chunks'. In this method themes are not identified before the analysis. Themes are allowed to organically emerge from the units of meaning that are coded.

These units of meaning were then clustered into themes. In the course of this process, links were made with the literature review. The next phase was textual description, and the identification of emergent themes tied to examples from the interviews. Lastly, general themes that emerged from the research were identified so they could be discussed (Groenewald, 2004:19; Moerer-Urdahl & Creswell, 2004:6). The final phase involves describing the essence of the experience.

### **3.3. The Transcendental Phenomenological design of this research**

#### **3.3.1. Participants**

##### **3.3.1.1. Selection of schools**

Two towns in the Cape Winelands Region of the WCED were targeted in the choice of the schools. There are six secondary schools in this region. Three schools were purposefully selected. These schools were chosen because they are similar in the number of learners that attend the school, and because they are **secondary** schools. At the same time, they are diverse in that they are vastly different in socio-economic situation of learners attending the schools. This is reflected in school fees charged, and the number of learners in the school who benefit from the WCED School Feeding Scheme. Furthermore, one school out of each of the following groups will be chosen, one former model C school, one coloured school and one black school<sup>1</sup>. The reasoning behind this selection is that it was assumed that the different environments would provide different insights. A maximum variation sample was used in this study since different schools were involved in the process which provides space for a possible diversity of perspectives.

The principal of each school was interviewed and asked to identify four excellent teachers at the school. They were given certain criteria to guide their choice:

- Teachers with at least two years experience of teaching matric
- Male and female teachers

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<sup>1</sup> Although I am not comfortable with this kind of classification, it was used to make sure that the sample was as diverse as possible

- Teachers whose learners had obtained good academic results in the grade 12 examinations
- Teachers with good relationships with staff and learners.

### 3.3.1.2. Selection of learners

Focus groups were conducted with groups of grade 12 learners. They were targeted because they were the senior learners in the school, therefore the most grown-up, and presumably in the best position to answer the questions. It is also possible to obtain the results of these learners in the previous grade 12 examinations, which makes these learners a good group to comment on their current teachers. Often the best teachers in a senior school are assigned to the grade 12 learners, as results are so important here.

The learners were chosen so the group would have the following **diversity**:

- Male and female
- Learners with different academic abilities
- Learners involved in sports and learners not involved in sports
- Learners involved in cultural activities and learners not involved in cultural activities
- Learners that have disciplinary problems.

Most schools had a grade 12 coordinator who helped to identify the learners.

During their interviews, the teachers and learners were asked the same questions as the principal had been asked. First they were asked which skills excellent teachers have (giving them ideas about different sets of skills). Next, after soft skills had been described, they were asked to discuss the soft skills of excellent teachers.

### 3.3.1.3. Selection of teachers

Certain names emerged clearly from the lists of excellent teachers given by the principal, and the lists of learners. Interviews were then conducted with **two** of these excellent teachers at each school.

They were told why they were selected until halfway through the interview, as this knowledge might have influenced the views they presented in the early stage of the interview.

### 3.3.2. Intrumentation

The qualitative research design informed the choice of techniques used in the research. Individual interviews and focus groups seemed to be the appropriate choices. It would not have made sense to do research on a topic like *soft skills*, and not use direct interaction with people as the main method. Both of these methods relied heavily on the technical and non-technical skills of the researcher. The idea was to uncover deep meaning and gather rich data collected.

#### 3.3.2.1. Face-to-face Interviews

Kvale (2007:6) defines the purpose of the semi-structured life-world interview as that of “obtaining descriptions of the life world of the interviewee with respect to interpreting the meaning of the described phenomena”. The use of interviews as a research method creates an opportunity for the participant to make sense of his/her understanding of the topic under discussion. In this case, the topic was the influence of *soft skills* on excellent teachers.

The difference between an interview and a normal everyday conversation is that **specific** open-ended questions were asked in the interview. However, even though specific questions were asked, the structure of the interview was not cast in stone: space was created for natural development of the interviews depending on the responses given by the interviewee. This will be discussed further in the paragraph regarding the question schedule (§3.3.4.1).

Individual interviews were conducted with principals and teachers from selected schools. The selection was discussed in the paragraph on population and sampling (§3.3.1).

#### 3.3.2.2. Focus group discussions

The aim of the focus group is different from group discussion in that the main aim of focus group discussion is data collection. Focus group interviews use group interaction to extract the data.

King and Horrocks (2010:67) points out that focus group participants should “share similar characteristics, experiences and/or demographics” for them to take part in this group, and make a contribution to the topic. Even though the focus group interview could make gathering the data difficult, the gains outweigh the disadvantages. A rich set of data can be

gathered as not only are individual ideas heard, but participants are allowed to influence each other.

The ideal focus group size is seen as between six and ten members (King, 2010:66). If there are fewer than six members, it might be difficult to sustain a conversation, and more than 10 members might be difficult to control.

Focus groups are seen as an appropriate method for discussions with learners. The focus group creates a non-threatening environment, where the learners can interact with the researcher and one another. As learners do not know the researcher at all, they might feel threatened if the researcher were to conduct a face-to-face interview. In addition, a focus group “facilitate[s] interactive discussion and the sharing of understandings and views, while at the same time ensuring that the data generated are able to meet the aims of the research” (King, 2010:69). By speaking to the learners, data became available on the skills that excellent teachers possess.

#### **Interaction between participants:**

- Highlights the respondents’ attitudes, priorities, language and framework of understanding;
- Encourages a great variety of communication from participants – tapping into a wide range and form of understanding;
- Helps to identify group norms;
- Provides insight into the operation of group/social processes in the articulation of knowledge;
- Encourages open conversation and facilitates the expression of ideas and experiences that might be left underdeveloped in an interview.

Through detailed attention to the information between different members of the group a researcher can:

- Explore difference between group participants in situ with them and, because participants reflect upon each others’s ideas, ensure that the data is organic;
- Use conflict between participants to clarify why people believe what they do;
- Explore the arguments people use against each other;
- Analyse how particular forms of speech facilitate or inhibit peer communication.

### **Advantages and disadvantages of focus group discussions**

The school supplied the venue on the school grounds. It was important to make sure that the researcher and the participants could meet with one another during the group session. It is important to create a relaxed atmosphere in order for learners to speak freely and openly.

One of the key reasons why a focus group was chosen is the fact that participants are allowed to interact, and influence one another. This might inhibit some participants, which might influence the validity of the data collected. It was therefore important for the focus group leader to ensure that all members had sufficient time and opportunity to voice their ideas. There was always the possibility that, if an individual seemed to be totally dominated, and it seemed that the person could add value to what had been said in the focus group, an individual interview could be done later. The chief advantage was that it allowed normal interaction, making it possible to gather a rich set of data (King, 2010:69).

#### **3.3.2.3. Learner Reflections**

The learners were asked to write a paragraph on the question 'When is a teacher an excellent teacher?' These reflections were written before the focus group interview. The learners were asked not to discuss their opinions on the topic before writing the paragraph. The rationale behind obtaining the reflective data before the interview is that they make it possible to obtain an unbiased reflection on the topic.

#### **3.3.3. Validity and Reliability**

Because research done here was qualitative, credibility, dependability and confirmability has to be ensured (Shenton, 2004:63).

#### **Credibility**

When working within the field of qualitative research, validity is described as credibility (Struwig & Stead, 2001:143). The following steps were taken to ensure credibility.

- Literature was thoroughly reviewed to ensure that the aim of the research and the findings were credible.

- The research design that was used is well documented and recognised.
- Strength of expertise: The researcher was a teacher for 16 years, and a preservice and in-service teacher educator for 6 years. She is well informed about the topic.
- Every effort was taken to study the phenomenon so that it could be accurately situated.
- Honesty of participants was encouraged in that participants were not forced to participate and did not receive any compensation for their participation.

### **Dependability**

The degree to which the study is dependable measures the consequentiality of the data (Shenton, 2004:64). The following steps were taken to achieve this:

- Numerous discussions were conducted with experts in the fields of teaching and *soft skills* to verify the codes which were used in analysis of data.
- The transcriptions of interviews and learner reflections were verified.

### **Confirmability**

Here the neutrality of the dataset comes into play:

- Direct quotes of transcribed interviews were used in the reporting of the results.
- In cases where interviews were conducted in Afrikaans, the original language and a translation were included in the discussion.
- The results were created by using an independent program the Analyser (Bytheway, 2012).

#### **3.3.3.1. Strengths and weaknesses of transcendental phenomenology**

Like any approach there are strengths and weaknesses linked to the transcendental phenomenological approach. The essence of the strength of the transcendental phenomenology as a research strategy is the fact that it gives the researcher a “systematic approach” with which to tackle the steps of analysing the data (Moustakas, 1994:95).

Transcendental phenomenology further attempts to erase the dualism between objectivity and subjectivity by leading the researcher to declare his/her experiences of the phenomenon (epoche). Nevertheless, it is difficult to achieve this position fully, as it is easier to be subjective than objective. In the reporting on the findings of such research, the rich data generated by interviewees' experiences tells the story. This makes this approach a valuable tool in human and social sciences.

There are, of course, also challenges attached to this approach. The main challenge is to create "flow" in the reporting of the results. Because the results are told through the stories of interviewees, they could have become halting and fragmented. It was thus important to spend enough time and energy on making sure that this flow was created. The second challenge was that the stories told by interviewees are never really exhausted. In this specific study, the fact that interviews were conducted with diverse groups of people from diverse economic, social and cultural backgrounds, made it even more difficult to totally exhaust the meaning in the data gleaned during the interviews. Different levels of understanding of these stories exist, and I had to make sure that a deep level of understanding reached.

The last challenge was that the unique language of transcendental phenomenology might have been difficult to understand and be represented. Because it comes from the philosophical approach of Husserl, and is in essence a philosophical stance, as well as a research methodology, it might have been difficult to apply. However, the specific structure of transcendental phenomenological thought provides a valuable structure and procedure that makes it an appealing approach.

#### **3.3.4. Interviews**

##### **3.3.4.1. Interview schedule**

The questions echo the research questions identified in Chapter 1. The questions were open-ended and left space for natural development during the interview (Creswell & Creswell, 2009:181), thus making it possible to elicit responses which would make it possible to uncover deep meanings.

After the choice of the qualitative approach, a question schedule was constructed. This is attached in Appendix A.

The basic questions asked here are:

- Which skills would you say distinguishes excellent teachers?
- How important are the *soft skills*?
- Which *soft skills* are important for a teacher in the current South African context?
- Can you give me an example (story) to illustrate being an excellent teacher?

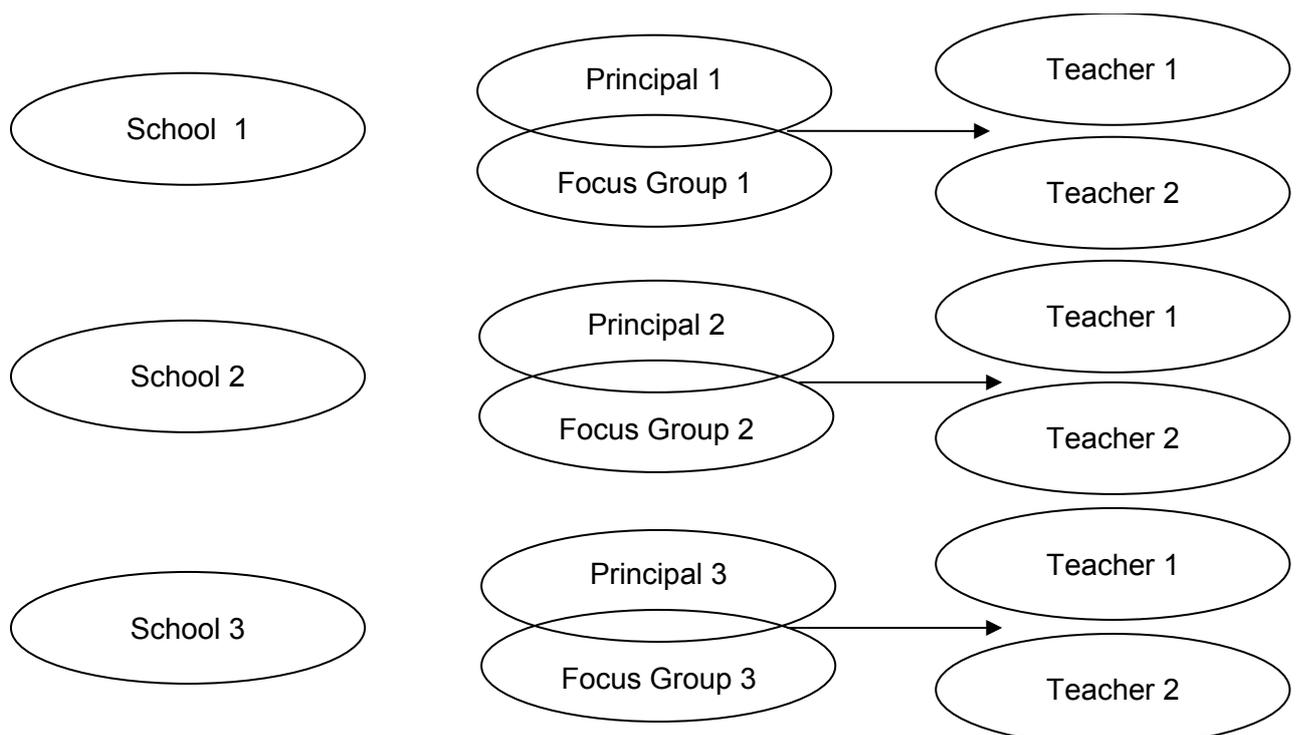
It is important to note that the interviews and focus groups were informal. Although the questions provided the broad structure, freedom in the order and structure allowed for natural development.

The interview or focus groups began with a broad question on which skills distinguished good teachers. No mention was made of *soft skills* at this stage. Once this question had been answered, a definition of *soft skills* was given to the participants, and this was then explored further.

#### 3.3.4.2. Interview procedure

At each school the principal and learners identified excellent teachers. Teachers that were identified by both principals and learners were selected for interview.

**Figure 3.2: Diagram of the interview process**

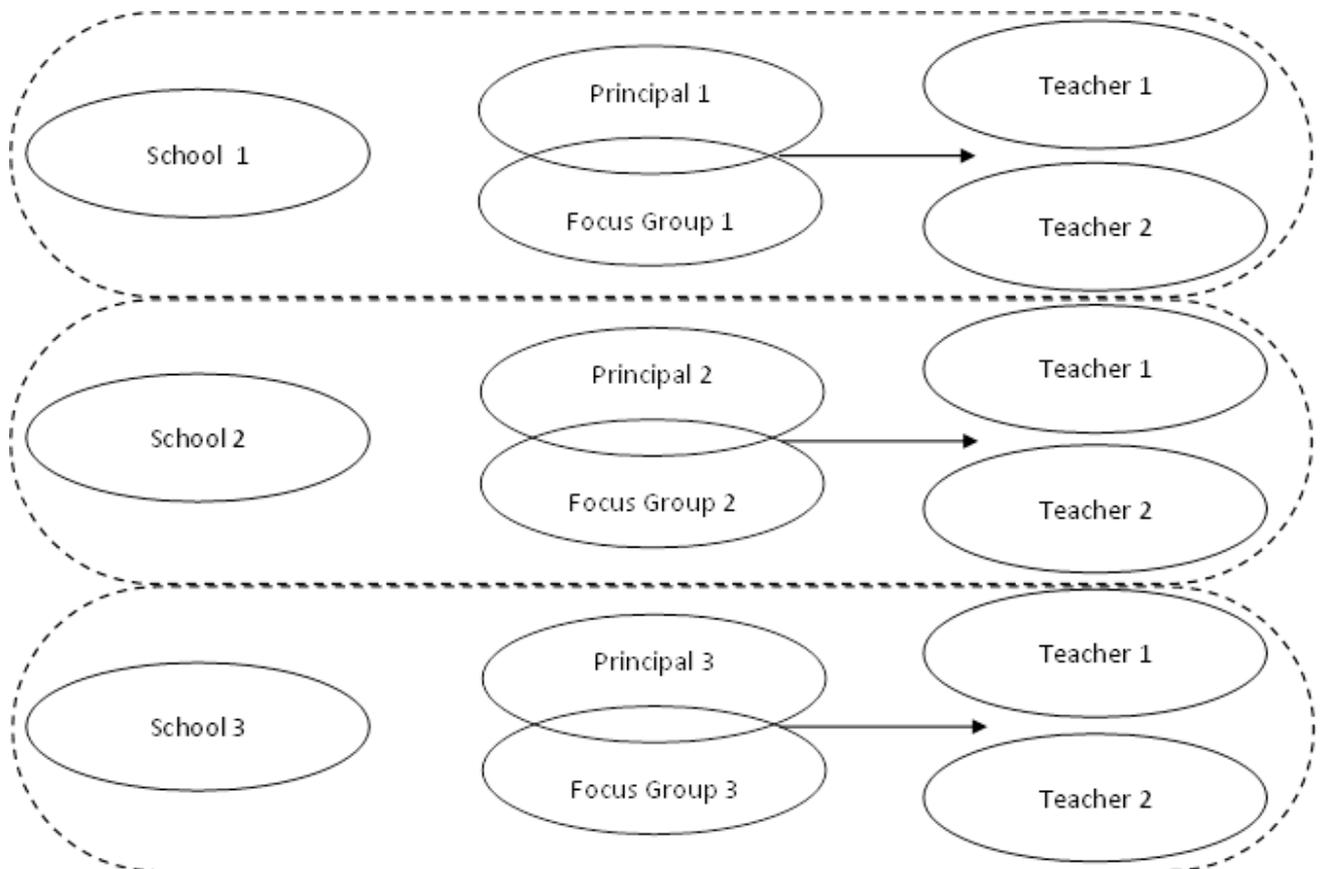


### 3.3.4.3. Procedure for interview analysis

In order to undertake the qualitative content analysis, a prototype “analyser” which is being developed by Bytheway (2012) was used. Work on qualitative methods by Corbin and Corbin, Schutz and Strauss & Corbin (cited in Uwe, 2009:307) formed the basis of this prototype. According to Uwe (2009:307), Strauss and Corbin distinguish between open, selective and axial coding in analysing qualitative content. The program allows browsing through the content according to word usage and coding patterns, provides useful charting of category frequencies, and assists in the reliable use and attribution of selected original interviewee text. The use of this prototype analyser had the advantage that specific analysis features and facilities could be discussed and adapted with its developer, and the prototype itself could be further developed to incorporate the requirements of a study such as this.

The data were approached in two ways, namely looking at the whole data set to create meaning about the phenomenon of soft skills, seeking for possible patterns, categories and themes (Delport, Fouché & Schurink, 2011:416), and secondly to look at the whole data set in a vertical way, where the schools as units were explored.

**Figure 3.3: Diagram of process of analysis**



The population and sampling in the diagram is in line with the ideas of Creswell and Creswell (2009:184) who see qualitative data analysis “as following steps from the specific to the general and as involving multiple levels of analysis”. The comments made by different groups of participants in one school were grouped (creating the possibility of triangulation). An extensive list of all the soft skills was also compiled.

### **3.4. Ethical aspects**

Ethical conduct within the field of research is becoming more important (Creswell & Creswell, 2009:91). When designing this process the following issues were addressed:

#### **3.4.1. Avoidance of harm**

It is important no harm be done to institutions or participants in the study, neither during the process of the research or the analysis and interpretation of the findings. The researcher took all possible precautions to ensure that no harm was done.

#### **3.4.2. Voluntary participation**

All participants took part in the research on a voluntary basis. No one was forced to take part in this study. Even after teacher and learners were selected the researcher met with them and gave them a chance to opt out. The principal was not informed of who attended, and did not attend the interviews.

In the case of the learners, a few learners took the forms, but did not arrive at the interview. One teacher refused to take part, and another at that particular school was selected.

It was also stressed, that even if a participant decided to withdraw during the interview that he/she was free to do that. None of the participants withdrew during the process.

#### **3.4.3. Informed consent**

The research was conducted by interviews and focus groups with three groups of respondents. The school principal, a group of learners and teachers were involved at each school. Letters were compiled in Afrikaans and English for the principal, the teachers, and learners under the age of 18 years, their parents or guardians, learners over the age of 18 years.

These letters were signed prior to the interview with each respondent.

These letters assured that all respondents were comfortable with and understood the following:

- The respondent had voluntarily chosen to take part in the study, and so had the freedom to withdraw at any time without repercussions.
- All responses will be anonymous to ensure confidentiality.

#### **3.4.4. Confidentiality/Anonymity**

Neither the schools, nor the participants are named in this report. Total anonymity was promised to all in order to make sure that everyone would be honest, and not afraid to make certain remarks.

#### **3.4.5. Compensation**

No compensation was promised to any participant.

#### **3.4.6. Publication of the findings**

This thesis, and other published articles that might arise from this research will not mention the names of the schools, principals, teachers or learners.

#### **3.4.7. Approval from Ethics committee**

Approval was gained from the the Research Ethics Committee of the University of Stellenbosch and the Western Cape Education Department. The following letters have been appended:

- Approval from the Research Ethics Committee (Appendix K)
- Approval from WCED – to approach the school (Appendix C and Appendix D).
- Approval of the principals of the schools where research was conducted to be part of the research (Appendix E).

### **3.5. Administrative procedures**

All the interviews were recorded and transcribed for analysis by the researcher. This fact, this enabled me to interact in a relaxed way with the interviewee. The intention was to take in case there was a problem with the recorder. However, detailed notes were hard to make during the interviews. Consequently, these notes were used only as a secondary source for the purposes of clarity. A professional transcriber was employed to do transcriptions.

Even though, transcribing the interviews meant the process of analysing the data had already begun, time constraints made this necessary.

### **3.6. Conclusion**

This chapter has discussed the choices that were made to design the research process. A transcendental phenomenological method was chosen. All the steps to be taken during the empirical research process were explained. Practical issues like the choice of participants, question schedule and planning of interviews were described. The procedures to ensure that the research was conducted in an ethical manner were also explained. The next chapter discusses the process of analysing the data obtained during the research.

## CHAPTER 4

### ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

#### 4.1. Introduction

Transcendental phenomenological research analysis was used to analyse the data. Based on the work of Moustakas (1994:180-182), Moerer-Urdahl and Creswell (2004:1-28) and Groenewald (2004:1-26), certain steps were identified to guide this process. The presentation of this chapter reflects the order of the steps taken:

- Epoche (declaring and setting aside the preconceived ideas of the researcher) (Moerer-Urdahl & Creswell, 2004:7; Moustakas, 1994:181) (§4.2.1)
- Framing the study in literature (Moerer-Urdahl & Creswell, 2004:8) (§4.2.2):
  - Literature discussed soft skills mainly in other service vocations – not teaching
  - Technical skills
- Horizontalization or determining significant statements (Groenewald, 2004:17; Moerer-Urdahl & Creswell, 2004:9; Moustakas, 1994:181) (4.2.3)
- Phenomenological Reduction:
  - Delineating units of meaning (Groenewald, 2004:18; Moerer-Urdahl & Creswell, 2004:14; Moustakas, 1994:95) (§4.2.3.1).
  - Invariant qualities or themes (discussing statements that were made in the interviews, but lie outside the scope of the phenomenon discussed (Moustakas, 1994:182) (§4.2.3.2).
  - Textual and structural descriptions (additional sense is being made from different perspectives). This entails discussion of units of meaning with evidence from the interviews (Moerer-Urdahl & Creswell, 2004:20; Moustakas, 1994:95) (§4.2.3.3).
- Distilling the essence of the experience (Moerer-Urdahl & Creswell, 2004:22) (§4.2.4).

#### 4.2. Analysis of Transcendental Phenomenological Research

##### 4.2.1. Epoche

In the transcendental phenomenological research method, the first step is epoche. This is a process in which the researcher sets aside her own experiences in order to look at the phenomenon in a fresh way. In this part of the process the researcher declares her views on

the phenomenon *soft skills* of excellent teachers. For the thesis, there were four main influences: first, like most people, I was once a schoolchild myself, secondly, since I was a teacher for 22 years, certain experience of *soft skills* of excellent teachers were part of my personal memories (§1.5). The third was my interest in effective learning in schools. The fourth was a deep concern for the members of the teaching profession, both as people and as educators of learners in South Africa.

As far as the first aspect mentioned is concerned, I was a schoolchild so many years ago that the subject matter taught by the teachers at school is largely forgotten. What I do remember is an English teacher with very strict boundaries, but a fantastic sense of humour and a Mathematics teacher who was inexperienced, but honest enough to share that fact with her learners and be their guide on a journey to work hard and explore for themselves.

The meaningful moments of contact with learners and students came after years of building relationships. Teaching seems to be supported by interest and insight into the lives of the learners, and love and care for each of them. The other insight is the importance of being yourself inside and outside the classroom, and sharing the life you have with learners. This has to be balanced with a good measure of respect for each other, in order to keep the professional situation in balance.

The third possible influence was my lifelong interest in the “softer side” of any process. I place a strong emphasis on understanding the role players as people – their strengths, weaknesses and the emotional world around getting the job (whatever it is) done. This resulted in a journey of extra training in emotional intelligence, lastly, during my time as a teacher and lecturer for 22 years, I have seen excellent teachers leaving the profession. Seeing the effects that stress had on them made me sad. My perception is that this definitely impacts negatively on the teaching learners receive.

#### **4.2.2. Framing of literature on *soft skills***

The aim of this study is to explore the phenomenon of *soft skills* in education, focusing on the *soft skills* of teachers. This is related to the second research question namely, “which skills are important for excellent teachers?”. Therefore, in the following paragraphs this phenomenon is going to be viewed from the perspective of the school principles, learners and excellent teachers that were interviewed. The *soft skills* that were named in the interviews are merely listed; there is no attempt to detect any themes. These *soft skills* as defined in Chapter 2 are:

...the **people** skills needed to execute a **task**. These skills **complement** the technical skills necessary to effectively complete any task (§2.3.1).

The topic *soft skills* has been used in the literature on many different fields of work, and it focuses, even in very technical jobs like that of accountants, on the **people side** of the workplace (De Villiers, 2010:1). Very little has been written about the *soft skills* of teachers though. The underlying assumption in this thesis is that because the job of the teacher is highly interpersonal, if these skills play a role in other workplaces, they would also play a role in teaching.

University lecturers have done research about the employability of graduates, and have found that these *soft skills* play an important role in their success (Ahmad, 2009:3). It has even been argued that these skills may play a more important role than technical skills (Crosbie, 2005:47; Rainsbury et al., 2002:10). Brozo (2007:20) and the Association for the Professional Quality of Teachers in the Netherlands (2006) also take this view.

At present, a neo-liberalistic paradigm is being used to manage teachers. This allows them the freedom to teach the learners well according to their strengths, but at the same time measures performance very rigidly (Dahlstrom & Lemma, 2008:33). This places immense pressure on teachers, which might influence their *soft skills*.

Hoy and Tarter (2011:428) advocate the “use of positive psychology as a perspective to refocus the study of educational organizations and administration”. They suggest “evolution and not revolution” from the negative to the positive. The use of the *soft skills* of excellent teachers as a lens is an attempt to focus on the skills of excellent teachers rather than the negative qualities as is often the practice at present.

These facts make it seem important to look at the *soft skills* of teachers.

### **4.2.3. Identifying significant statements**

This is the process in which the statements made by participants in which they specifically share their experiences of the *soft skills* of excellent teachers. These statements are taken straight from the transcripts and are provided in a table in Appendix 2. Every significant statement is treated as having equal value. These statements are listed in no specific order and not grouped at all. They were used to provide details about what the participants

experience as the skills of excellent teachers. These ‘Significant Statements’ are added at the end as Appendix B. Reading through the statements, we begin to understand the phenomenon of *soft skills* of an excellent teacher better through the eyes of the participants. (Moustakas, 1994:95) describes this phase as “the grounding or condition of the phenomenon that gives it a distinct character”.

#### 4.2.4. Phenomenological reduction

Phenomenological reduction, according to Moerer Urdahl & Creswell (2004:5) and Groenewald (2004:17) has 5 units, namely, horizontalisation, delimiting/delineating units of meaning of meaning, invariant qualities or themes, individual textual descriptions and composite textual descriptions. These are described in the following paragraphs (§4.2.4.1-4.2.4.4).

##### 4.2.4.1. Horizontalisation

According to Groenewald (2004:19) the process from here is to consider the “literal content, the number (the significance) of times a meaning was mentioned and also how (non-verbal or para-linguistic) it was stated”. Through this process *soft skills* are shown from different angles, the significant statements were put into horizons: the process of horizontalization. The following table show these skills as they came to the fore in the interviews with the frequency they were named.

**Table 4.1: Soft skills named in all interviews**

Soft skill	Frequency named
Caring towards learners	39
Goes beyond what is expected	33
Understands learners	28
Interested in the learner as a person	25
Passion for Education	19
Ability to motivate learners	17
Discusses issues rather than disciplines strictly	17
Willing to think for themselves	17
Approachable	16
Just who they are	16
Positive attitude	16

<b>Soft skill</b>	<b>Frequency named</b>
Passion for their subject	15
Unlocks learners' potential	15
Wants to make a difference	15
Wants to make a difference in the lives of learners	14
Willing to learn more themselves	14
Has an open relationship with learners	13
Has respect for learners	13
Patient with learners	13
Does not make learners feel that they are stupid	11
Gives extra academic support	10
Passion for people/learners	10
Positive attitude despite difficult circumstances	10
Does not break learners down	9
Ethical behaviour	9
Good relationship with learners	9
Sets an example	9
Good relationship with colleagues	7
Has a good sense of humour	7
Honesty	7
Self-control	7
Makes learners feel safe	6
Very strict	6
Communicates in different ways	5
Gives extra personal support to learners	5
Good listener	5
Intuitive feeling for learners	5
Punctual	5
Respect for management of school	5
Respect for opinions of others	5
Self-confident	5
Supports learners that struggle emotionally	5
Well organised	5
Ability to evaluate reasons for learners' problems	4
Congruent inside and outside school	4
Does not take questions personally	4
Has strong disciplinary boundaries	4

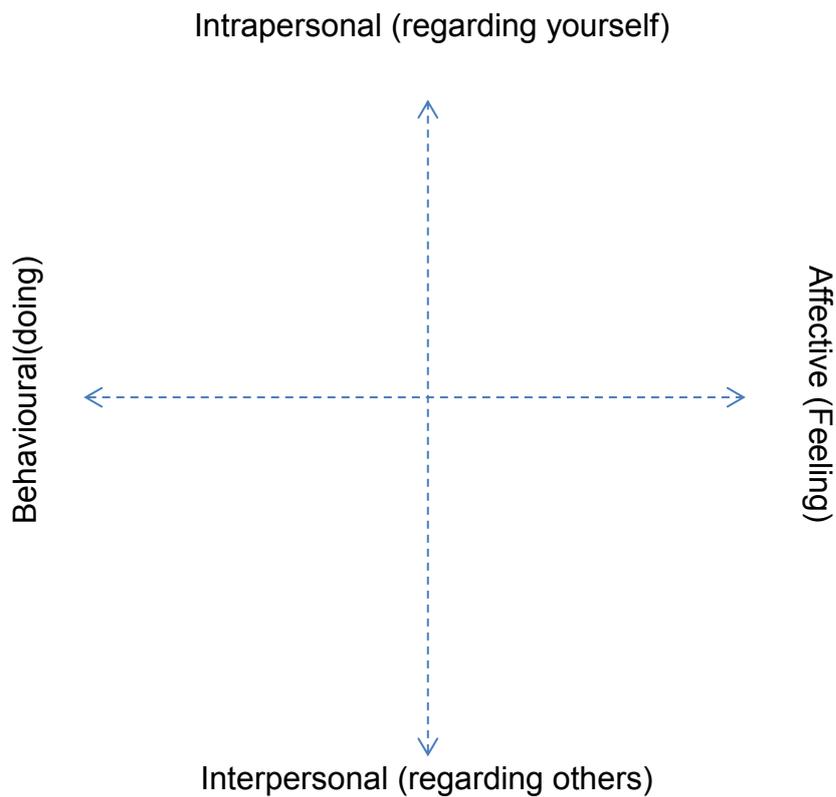
Soft skill	Frequency named
Has open communication with learners	4
People oriented	4
Positive behaviour reinforcement	4
Takes initiative	4
Treats all learners the same	4
Works hard	4
Enthusiasm	3
Good academic background	3
Applies multiple intelligences	2
Good discipline	2
Not scared to try something new	2
Perseverance	2
Professional distance between teacher and learners	2
Teaches learners life skills	2
Does not misuse or abuse power	1
Interested in the world around him/her	1
Interprets people's body language	1
Motivates learners through contact on the sport field	1
Sees education as a calling	1

All of these skills named by interviewees are related to the people side of education.

In the first part of the interview process, the simple question was asked: "Which skills do excellent teachers have?". Most of the participants named the fact that teachers must have the technical skills and academic knowledge in order to teach, but in all the interviews, the discussion progressed to *soft skills*, without the researcher asking a pertinent question about the *soft skills*, or defining the concept. This indicates that the technical skills and the *soft skills* cannot be separated from each other. An excellent teacher has to have both.

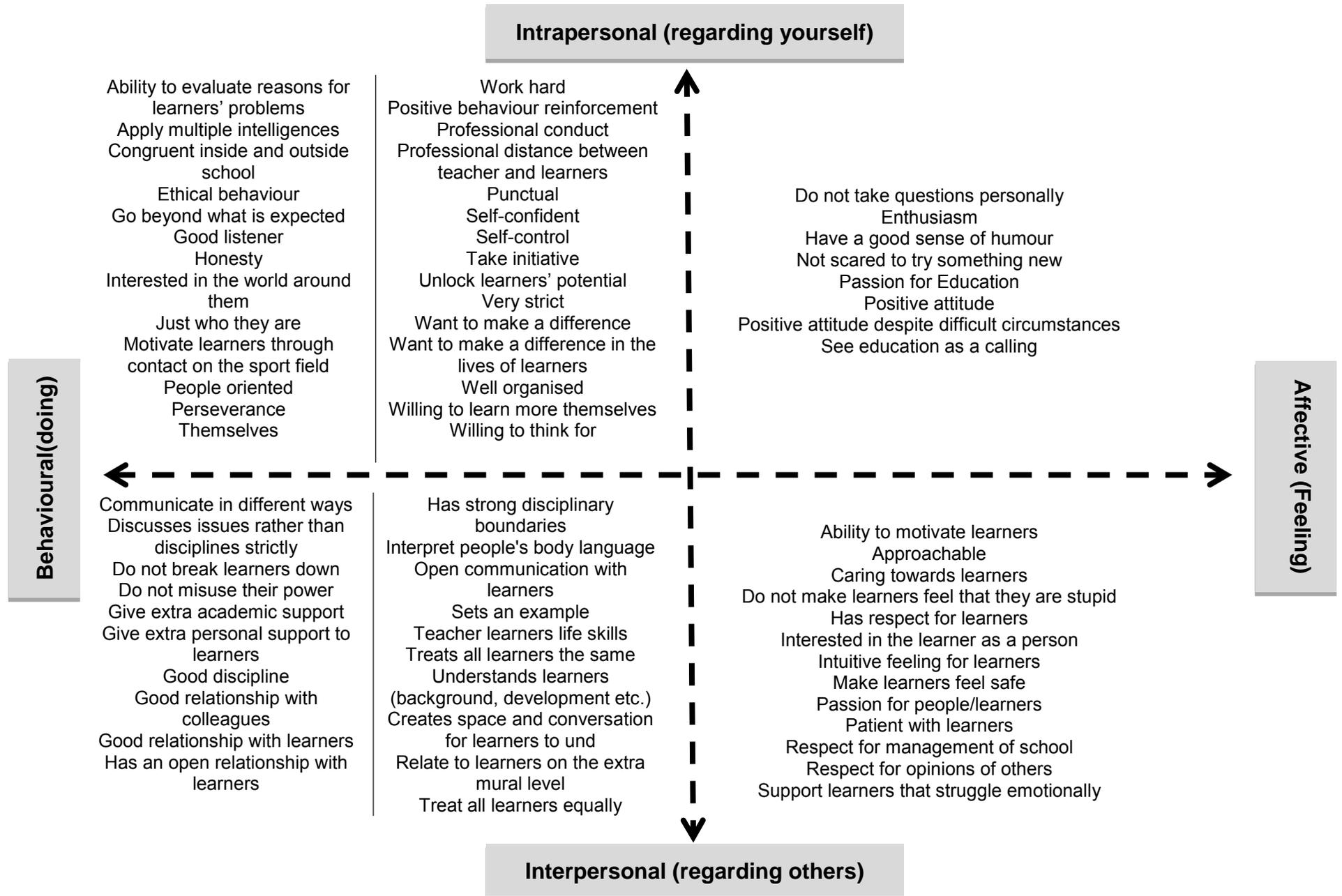
#### 4.2.4.2. Delineating horizons of meaning

The themes or meaning units that are drawn on here are the units that emerged from the data in conjunction with the literature review. Four groups emerged. These groups are represented on a matrix with two axes, namely a continuum of interpersonal to intrapersonal, and a continuum from feeling (affective) to doing (behavioural).

**Figure 4.1: Matrix for classification of *soft skills***

The reason for this categorisation, is the fact that there is a vast range of *soft skills* that can be named, and it might be useful to group the *soft skills* in this way. The lines between the ranges of interpersonal and intrapersonal, and that of affective and behavioural are not rigid. So the balance between the units of meaning could change from industry to industry. For this study the following seems like a division. The *soft skills* seen as important in the significant statements seemed to vary on a continuum between interpersonal (with other people) and intrapersonal (within yourself) (Collinson, 1999:4), and on a continuum of skills between feeling (emotive) and doing (behavioural).

Figure 4.2: Classification of soft skills of teachers



#### 4.2.4.3. Textual and structural descriptions

In this division, the units of meaning have been discussed with evidence from the interviews. In each theme, I have made an attempt to give the views of principals, learners and teachers.

##### a. Interpersonal affective skills

Within the category of interpersonal affective skills, special attention is given to how the teacher feels about the learners specifically and teaching. Across the board, principals, learners and excellent teachers felt that this is important for a teacher to be an excellent teacher. If the feeling (positive affect) is not there, the teachers will also not be able to do anything to create trust between them and learners. These skills support the academic growth a teacher is able to facilitate learning. In the following quotes the feeling that excellent teachers have for their learners is highlighted.

who really cares about the children, a child that is emotionally suffering, she will have a conversation with them, erm genuinely interested in the children's whereabouts [School 1 Principal]

[wat werklik omgee vir die kinders, wat ... Maak met die kinders, 'n kind wat, emosioneel swaarkry, sy sal 'n gesprek voer met hulle, uhm werklik belangstel in die kinders se doen en late] [School 1 Principal]

Teaching must deem a teacher to get up every day with new sense of wonder admiration for the day and the fact that children are the centre of his / her day; this must give joy to these teachers [School 1 Learner Reflections]

[Skoolgee moet vir 'n onderwyser wees soos om elke dag op te staan met nuwe bewondering vir die dag en die werklikheid dat kinders die middelpunt van sy/haar dag is, moet genot verskaf aan hierdie onderwysers.]

[School 1 Learner Reflections]

I think we should always respect each other. I always tell the kids, "I want you to have respect for me, but how would it look if I had no respect for you." Thus respect for me, comes from both sides [School 2 Teacher 1]

[en ek dink ook ons moet mekaar altyd kan respekteer. Ek sê altyd vir die kinders “ek wil hê julle moet respek hê vir my, maar hoe sou dit gelyk het as ek nie vir julle respek gehad het nie”. So respek kom vir my van albei kante [School 2 Teacher 1]

In all these cases the excellent teacher is said to feel positive and caring towards learners. This positive feeling is reflected in their actions.

#### **b. Intrapersonal affective skills**

For the teacher though, to be able to render positive feelings toward learners, they have to have a sound relationship with themselves, here again the Greek perception of the individual being mind, body and spirit (§2.3.3). Excellent teachers are able to keep control of themselves, and not allow negative situations to run away with them.

so it's almost more challenging, so it places greater demands on you to keep calm and tranquility, there are actually children who are defiant today [School 1 Principal]

[so dit is amper meer uitdagend, so dit eis groter goed van jou af om kalm en rustigheid te behou, daar is werklik kinders wat uitdagend is vandag] [School 1 Principal]

Even learners quickly note what a teacher's attitude may be, and that reflects positively in the classroom of the excellent teacher.

erm I do not think there is a skill, I just want to agree with what she said of the attitude some teachers like, to tell jokes in class and so on, and then the children feel a lot more comfortable than when the teacher is surly and not friendly with the class [School 1 Learner Focus Group]

[uhm ek dink nie daar is nog 'n vaardigheid nie, ek wil net aansluit by wat sy gesê het van die attitude, sekere onderwysers hou daarvan om soos grappies te vertel in die klas en so aan en dan voel die kinders sommer baie gemakliker as 'n onderwyser wat nors is en wat nie vriendelik is met die klas nie] [School 1 Learner Focus Group]

If a person has an affective awareness, it is possible for him/her to regulate his/her actions.

many of those good qualities in a teacher, he must discover for himself, as growth must take place in the teacher just like the growth he/she wants to accomplish in the child. If no growth occurs within you, then you are going to crack at some stage, it is all about self-discovery and self-development [School 2 Teacher 2]

[baie van daai goeie eienskappe in 'n onderwyser, hy moet homself ontdek want daar moet by jou ook groei plaasvind soos jy die groei wil bewerkstellig en kind. As daar by jou nie groei plaasvind nie gaan jy nie die, dan gaan jy êrens oppak in die hele storie is selfontdekking, selfontwikkeling] [School 2 Teacher 2]

### **c. Interpersonal behavioural skills**

In the interpersonal behavioural skills, the feeling of interpersonal affective skills becomes apparent. The fact that a teacher cares for a learner knows what is happening in the learner's life, and enquires about this has an impact on the learner.

in fact it's easy, I mean when I meet them they, the way they talk to the learners "oh you did that, how did it go", so for me they have an interest also in the learner's life not only academically but social as well [School 3 Principal]

This caring attitude gives the learner a feeling of being important, which should reflect positively on their academic work. This is supported by the following quote.

When I hear the words 'good teacher', my business teacher immediately comes to mind. She is strict, yet has an amazing sense of humor. She is driven, goal-orientated and outspoken. If she is in her class, you can hear her from outside the schoolgrounds. She shouts at you when you slack, and keeps you on your toes. [School 1 Learner Reflections]

Such teachers know that their positive attitudes towards the learners help the learners to take in what they say.

the children when they are coming into your class they must know that they are welcomed to be here, and they are going to be heard whenever they say

something [School 3 Teacher 1]

**d. Intrapersonal behavioural skills**

Lastly, there are certain skills which teachers have raw, which may it possible to know when to do certain things. These are not necessarily technical skills, but this might verge on the technical.

I think they are very well organized, all of them, they will work in advance [School 2 Teacher 2]

[ek dink hulle is baie goed georganiseerd, almal van hulle, hulle sal vooruitwerk]  
[School 2 Teacher 2]

always concern about better delivering of the curriculum and uhm he's seldom upset [School 3 Principal]

The learners also recognise whether a teacher has these intrapersonal behavioural skills, and they make that kind of teacher a role model, which might give them hope in often difficult circumstances.

To me a good teacher it's more like an entrepreneur, because entrepreneur has entrepreneurial qualities like for example confidence, perseverance, creative, positive etc. To me a good teacher has some of the qualities as an entrepreneur [School 3 Learner Reflections]

To be a teacher it's a good thing, because of the things that we learnt give us hope. [School 3 Learner Reflections]

Excellent teachers also appreciate and value this people-interaction.

and the end of the year was the saddest for me, I was really very touched. I went home, I told my husband, it was probably one of the most beautiful days in my school career as the day when they got their numbers and gave me a card "to our mother". I had a 100% pass rate with them, and then I realized that if I had not been so strict with them, if I had not taught them what it is to work hard, if I had not taught them um, that they had to find out from me, if I had refused to

care, I just gave when I received something [School 2 Teacher 1]

en die einde van die jaar was vir my die hartseerste, ek was eintlik baie geraak. Ek het huistoe gegaan, ek het vir my man gesê, dit was vir my seker een van die mooiste dae in my skool loopbaan as die dag toe hulle nommers kry en hulle het vir my 'n kaartjie gemaak "aan ons ma", en ek het 100% slaagsyfer met hulle gekry, hulle die swakste was en dit was vir my, en toe besef ek dat indien ek nie so streng met hulle was nie, as ek nie vir hulle geleer het wat dit is om hard te werk nie, as ek nie geleer het vir hulle um, hulle moes hulleself by my ontdek ek het geweier om te gee, ek het net gegee as ek iets ontvang het [School 2 Teacher 1]

#### 4.2.4.4. Invariant qualities or themes

Even though the topic of this thesis is *soft skills* of teachers, the issue of technical skills in teaching came up as well when conducting interviews. This is not surprising, as it is logical that for a teacher to be an excellent teacher he/she must be academically and technically well-equipped and well-skilled for the task of teaching. In the review of literature, this is also evident. Collison (1999:5-7) names different kinds of knowledge needed by a teacher which includes "professional knowledge" which is defined as knowledge of subject matter, curriculum and pedagogy. In the competency requirements named by the the **Association for the professional Quality of Teachers** in the Netherlands (Association for the Professional Quality of Teachers, 2006) these skills are named as "pedagogical and subject matter" skills, and in the *The Norms and Standards for Educators* in South Africa (1998:53) certain of the roles defined for the teacher are technical (hard) skills. Examples of these are: learning mediator, interpreter and designer of learning programmes and materials, leader, administrator and manager, scholar, researcher and lifelong learner, assessor and learning area/subject/discipline/phase specialist (§2.8.3).

The technical skills that came up in the interviews were the following:

- Academic excellence
- Academic knowledge
- Good academic background
- Good teaching skills
- Passion for their subject

- Task oriented
- Want their subject to make a difference.

These skills were named across the board, mainly by principals and teachers. It is certainly not debatable that this baseline has to be met for a teacher to be competent. The question is how important are the *soft skills* to supplement these technical skills? This refers to the third research question namely 'How important are *soft skills* in diverse educational situations?''.

A good academic background and training is vital for teacher excellence. Good results cannot be achieved if the teacher is not competent in his/her field.

I think training is important and I think that in a High School setting a good academic background is essential. I feel it's something where many institutions fall short. There isn't a sound academic background, well it's quite very important to me. I think when I look at myself, my colleagues at this school, most people have a degree or honours or a master's degree or PhD which in itself doesn't mean success, but yes, it's a start, a good academic background. [School 1 Teacher 1]

[Ek dink opleiding is belangrik en ek dink as 'n mens jy gaan kyk in 'n Hoërskool opset is 'n goeie akademiese agtergrond noodsaaklik. Ek voel dis nogal iets wat te kort skiet by baie instansies dat daar nie 'n grondige akademiese agtergrond is nie, nou ja dis nogal vir my baie belangrik. Ek dink as ek kyk na myself, my kollegas by hierdie skool, die meeste mense het 'n Graad of Honneurs of 'n Meestersgraad of PhD wat hier skool hou, wat op sigself mos nou nie sukses beteken nie, maar ja,, dit, dit is 'n begin, 'n goeie akademiese agtergrond.] [School 1 Teacher 1]

Although the topic of this study is *soft skills*, the balance between these two sides of teaching must be kept. The message is, that both are necessary. Good academic results seem to be possible, if there is a good relationship between the learner and the teacher.

you get only academic results if you have good relationship with children [School 1 Principal]

jy kry alleenlik akademiese uitslae as jy goeie verhouding het met kinders het

[School 1 Principal]

Good academic background and training is not the only important technical skill necessary to teach content well, taking trouble with preparation of lessons is also important.

one must come to class well prepared, and it's not just about the preparation, it is that you know what you are talking about, it's about the kids knowing that you consider what happens between you, that those interactions are important and that you have enough respect for yourself and for them to come to class prepared, that they know what you expect of them you are prepared to expect of yourself [School 1 Teacher 1]

[’n mens moet goed voorbereid klas toe kom en dit gaan nie net oor die voorbereiding dat jy weet waarvan jy praat nie, dit gaan oor dat die kinders weet jy beskou dit wat tussen julle gebeur, daai, daai interaksie as belangrik en dat jy genoeg respek vir jouself en vir hulle het om voorbereid klas toe te kom, dat hulle ook weet dit wat jy van hulle verwag is jy bereid om van jouself te verwag] [School 1 Teacher 1]

A solid academic and theoretical base must be part of who the teacher is. What they have been trained to do, must become part of the essence of how they go about their job.

my lessons are, I start from the known to the unknown, usually the part that I like so much is the Literacy one because in the Literature children are free to voice their views. They are not restricted like in grammar, this is, the past tense of “is” is “was”, nothing else, but in Literature as long as you are going to substantiate to, to give support to what you are saying then you are okay [School 3 Teacher 1]

As is evident here, good preparation is seen in conjunction with having respect for yourself and the learners, which again is a *soft skill*. This emphasises the complementary nature of *soft skills* and technical skills.

#### **4.2.5. The essence of the experience**

After all these interviews, it became apparent that *soft skills* are indeed important in order for teachers to be seen as excellent teachers. Teachers put a lot of hard work into knowing their

their subject, preparing relevant lessons and teaching the lessons with self-confidence. Without the *soft skills* this hard work does not pay off as it could, without a teacher complementing the technical skills with *soft skills*.

It is impossible to rigidly classify *soft skills* into groups. The interpersonal behavioural skill of “treating all learners the same” has to be combined with intrapersonal skills. The intrapersonal behavioural skill of “acting with self-confidence” is rooted in intrapersonal affective skills.

But, the teacher can never be seen as only a “set of skills”. Every teacher is a unique person, bringing unique skills into play in his/her interactions with learners. To really perform well, the wider situation has to be taken into account. The ancient Greeks identified three aspects of the human being namely **mind, body and spirit** (§2.3.3), and for an individual to truly perform well, all three aspects should function in a harmonious way. The research also showed the importance of keeping all three in mind. The school and how it is managed, especially human resource management, plays a role in how the teacher functions, as does the world around the school.

The last remark is that during the interviews the researcher realised that merely talking about the *soft skills*, goes a long way towards raising awareness of the importance of these *soft skills*, and can therefore enhance the quality of teaching and learning at a school.

### **4.3. Conclusion**

In Chapter 4 the steps taken to analyse the interviews and reflections using a computer program were described. These were the steps in the transcendental phenomenological method. The interviews were broken into chunks, and the chunks were coded to explore the themes that emerge from the interviews and reflections. These themes were classified. Invariant themes were also identified.

In Chapter 5 the analysis will be discussed and certain recommendations will be made.

## CHAPTER 5

### SUMMARY, FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.1. Introduction and statement of the problem

“[T]he quality of an educational system cannot exceed the quality of its teachers.” (Collinson, 1999:4; Malm, 2009:78) was a key finding in an international report (Association for the Professional Quality of Teachers, 2006; Collinson, 1999:4; Eide, Goldhaber & Brewer, 2004:230; Malm & Löfgren, 2006:62; Malm, 2009:78). A report by the Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO) contends that in under developed areas, the influence of the teacher is even greater than in developed areas. The reason for this is that “...they are *the* major learning resource in most developing country schools (VSO, 2002:10). If this is true then it is worthwhile to explore which skills make a teacher excel within the South African context, where many challenges threaten the education system. The challenges become evident when results of countrywide Matric examinations are studied (Jansen, 2009:19; Monama, 2009:8). Further issues are: violence in schools (Jansen, 2009:19; Monama, 2009:8), looming shortages of especially Science and Mathematics teachers (Joseph, 2008:6; Maluleka, 2010:2) and the socio-economic environment (Jones, 2009:9) of learners.

In the many years that I have been involved in education both as a teacher and a teacher educator, I have become increasingly intrigued with the notion of teacher excellence. The question that constantly arose was: which skills does an excellent teacher actually possess, which skills make him/her truly successful. The current management system in the schools in South Africa is one of managerialism where the yardstick used to measure teachers is chiefly performativity (Heystek et al., 2005:9). The current system does not make it easier for teachers to excel. It is as if in this situation the individual teacher is only seen as a mind, and not as a unique human being with a unique set of skills and attitudes. The roles the teachers have to play are diverse, but the measure by which they are evaluated is rigid.

It seems clear that the workplace demands that teachers in South Africa have many skills, but little support is provided to the teachers (Education Labour Relations Council Medical Research Council, & Mobile Task team on the impact of HIV/ Aids on Education of the University of KwaZulu-Natal, 2005:8). The required skills cover a broad spectrum namely cognition, affect and conation. The focus of this study is on the non-technical skills of the teachers, referred to here as *soft skills*. The main question was:

**“How important are *soft skills* for excellent teachers in diverse educational contexts?”**

**It was further subdivided as follows:**

- What is meant by the concept *soft skills*?
- When is a teacher an excellent teacher?
- Which *soft skills* are important for a teacher in the current South African educational context?
- Are *soft skills* needed for excellent teachers the same in diverse school contexts?

In the following paragraphs, some of the findings will be explored. It is important to remember that people are unique. So when looking at the excellent teacher through the lens of *soft skills* in this research, we will not see a particular combination of skills, or excellent teachers as exact copies of one another. Zarra (2004:74) stresses that excellent teachers come in “different shapes and sizes, male, female, young and old and teach in many different areas.” The phenomenon of *soft skills* as they are present in excellent teachers will now be discussed.

## **5.2. *Soft skills* and excellent teachers**

### **5.2.1. Meaning of the concept *soft skills***

In the interview process it became evident that all interviewees had an idea of what was meant by the concept *soft skills*, even though they did not necessarily use the name “*soft skills*”.

... for me I'm not sure I understand the *soft skills*, ...I would like to say this teacher is able to **learn from others, he's not on his own** [School 3 Principal]

In all the interviews the initial question was asked which set of skills excellent teachers possess. In all the interviews the discussion progressed to the *soft skills* naturally and without prompts from the interviewer. This was true for principals, learners and teachers. The following quotations illustrate this:

- **A principal**

... but they **want to make a difference** on more than one level, **with caring, and the subject contents** and in **the children's lives** [School 1 Principal]

[maar hulle wil op meer as een vlak 'n verskil maak, die met omgee, en die vak se inhoud en op die kinders se lewe] [School 1 Principal]

- **A learner**

This is someone **who prepares learners for a bright future** ahead. Someone who is always **willing to to make sacrifices** for his students. [School 2 Learner Reflections]

[Dit is iemand wat leerders gereed maak vir 'n blink toekoms vorentoe. Iemand wat bereid om altyd opefferinge te maak vir sy leerders.] [School 2 Learner Reflections]

- **A teacher**

...it starts with **the relationship** with the learners. I always say, for instance, to them "if you don't like the subject, you must love me because what I know, because if you love me you won't disappoint me anytime, always you want to make good things for the subject because you know you like me. So if you have a relationship, **because it's not only about the subject matter**, there are also other things, you look at the learners you'll find that this learners are distracted sometimes because of something. **The social**, the social thing uh at home for instance, then you must **be able to talk to the learners**, they must be able to see you as a parent as well not only as a teacher [School 3 Teacher 2]

This is consistent with what emerged from the literature review (§2.9). The definition of *soft skills* compiled from the literature review in Chapter 2 (§2.3.1) is as follows:

*Soft skills* are the **people** skills needed to execute a **task**. These skills **complement** the technical skills necessary to effectively complete any task.

And though this might seem a vague concept, from the interviews, there are many different so-called soft skills that can be named, it is definitely useful to study the soft skills in the **workplace**, in this case the **school**.

A good teacher has different types of intelligences, [School 1 Teacher 1,]

[‘n goeie onderwyser het **verskillende soorte intelligensies**,] [School 1 Teacher 1]

### 5.2.2. Importance of soft skills

Three reasons why *soft skills* are important in the workplace, here the school, are given in Chapter 2. These are also reflected in the interviews and reflections:

- *Soft skills* complement the technical skills needed for any task (§2.5.2). This refers to the combination of being goal orientated, on the one hand, and having *soft skills*, on the other. This view is reflected in many interviews.

When I hear the words ‘good teacher’, my business teacher immediately comes to mind. She is **strict**, yet has an **amazing sense of humor**. She is **driven, goal-orientated** and outspoken. If she is in her class, you can hear her from outside the schoolgrounds. She shouts at you when you slack, and keeps you on your toes. [School 1 Learner Reflections]

- *Soft skills* are vital for teamwork, which seems to be an integral part of the workplace today (§2.5.3). This is true for schools as well as any workplace, maybe even more.

... it does matter as well to have a relationship with the entire staff because we are working as a team. **If we don’t work as a team, in isolation, that mean that you won’t have good results** [School 3 Teacher 2]

These teamwork skills create a setting in a school where teachers work in harmony. This is not limited to relationships with learners, it flows over into the relationship that teachers have with one another. This makes the workplace, in this case the school, a better place for all involved.

Ms. X is the oldest teacher at the school, now **I (the principal) call her "my mom" she looks after my emotions**, she is **brilliant at reading people's body language and emotions**. She's almost like, how can you say, here is the "band" playing and she takes note and then pulls certain strings [School 2 Principal]

[Juffrou Horn is die oudste onderwyseres op die skool, nou ek( die skoolhoof) sê vir haar "my mammie" sy sorg vir my emotions, sy is brilliant met mense se lyftaal en emosies lees. Sy is amper soos, hoe kan 'n mens nou sê, hierso is die "band" wat speel, sy let op en dan trek sy die toutjie daar [School 2 Principal]

- Different *soft skills* might be important in different workplaces (§2.5.4). In this study the focus is on the specific *soft skills* which excellent teachers need.

From the review of literature, it is evident that *soft skills* are important in many jobs, and even though very little has been written about the *soft skills* in education, reference has been made by different authors, to how important, skills that regard people, are for teachers (§2.8.1, §2.8.2, §2.8.3, §2.8.4). Thus the importance of this study.

The other issue worth mentioning, is that *soft skills* can be learnt or acquired (§2.4.1). This is good news, as it is a way to improve quality of education in an alternate way. The learning of these skills is a process that cannot merely have a cognitive nature (§2.4.2). It is learning that has to entail the mind, body and spirit of the teacher and therefore it is a process that is which could be challenging. This said – *soft skills* can be learnt.

In the analysis of the data from the interviews and the practical experience that I gained in this process, better insight was gained into the phenomenon of *soft skills* of excellent teachers. It is evident that even though the interviewees did not define soft skills as such, they definitely understood the concept and could describe it. The statements made in literature about the importance of certain skills for teachers are echoed in the way the participants described an excellent teacher.

### 5.2.3. Excellent teachers and *soft skills*

In the interview process it became evident that many different skills could be identified in reflecting on the skills of an excellent teacher. In the research a list of almost 80 soft skills (§4.2.4.1) were compiled from interviews, and this was by no means comprehensive – there

would definitely be skills that could still be named. Some of the skills named seem to be contradictory, but this highlights the fact that people are unique beings, and cannot be measured using a checklist of skills.

[S]he was also a legend in her time there, but, but I told you that I, the, the enthusiasm, I think I speak of **passion, the enthusiasm with which she taught** in the class is really wonderful and she enjoyed teaching year after year ... I think this is what ignited me, that.... call it enthusiasm and passion and love and fervour for the subject ... **she had very few (soft skills), she was .... ferocious .....** **she noticed a child**, I say, and I think it's also important  
[School 1 Teacher 1]

[, sy was ook 'n legend in haar tyd gewees daar, maar, maar wat ek vir jou gesê het wat ek, die, die entoesiasme, ek dink as ek praat van passie, die entoesiasme waarmee sy vir my klas gegee het is rênigwaar wonderlik en dis vir haar jaar na jaar wonderlik ... Ek dink dit is wat my aangesteek het, daai noem dit **maar entoesiasme en passie en liefde vir die vak en vurigheid ...sy het bitter min (sagte vaardighede) gehad, sy was .... Kwaai .....** **sy het 'n kind raakgesien**, kom ek sê en ek dink dis ook belangrik] [School 1 Teacher 1]

It is to be expected that different individuals, focus on different skills when naming what makes a teacher excellent. This is why it was important to speak to different groups of role-players within the school – to hear different perspectives. Even though many people have different views on the definition of excellence in teaching, it seems as if it has to be true that a combination of technical (hard) skills (§4.2.4.3) and *soft skills* (§4.2.4.1) are important to make a teacher, an excellent teacher. This is evident from the review of literature and in the research interviews that were completed.

they **produce good results** for grade 12 [School 3 Principal]

a good teacher is a **curious teacher**, a **reading teacher**, a teacher who is **willing to develop him or herself** [School 3 Principal]

A good teacher is someone who is measured by **his characteristics**, by what he is like to you in the class and he does not only work on what he should do, he also does **extra to help** you [School 2 Learner Focus Group]

[‘n goeie onderwyser is iemand wat **aan sy karakter eienskappe gemeet** word, oor hoe hy saam met jou is in die klas en nie net dat hy werk volgens wat hy moet doen nie, is wat hy kan **ekstra insit** om jou te help [School 2 Learner Focus Group]

results are often meaningless, so for me you are a good teacher when you ...erm ...something in a child's life erm ...achieve might not be the right word, when you help them to **realize that they have a better future** in which they can bring about change] [School 2 Teacher 2 ]

[resultate is ook baiekeer nikseggend, so vir my is dit ‘n goeie onderwyser wanneer jy **iets in ‘n kind se lewe** uhm nie **bereik** is nie die regte woord nie um vir hulle bereik jy en **laat besef dat hulle ook ‘n groter toekoms** het waarin hulle kan, kan **verandering teweeg bring**] [School 2 Teacher 2 ]

In literature, when the question of what or who an excellent teacher may be arises, there is no easy answer and many different ideas emerge. Collinson (1999:4) calls it an elusive concept and continues to name a triad of knowledge that excellent teachers possess. This knowledge entails professional knowledge (subject knowledge, didactic knowledge, etc) interpersonal knowledge (relationships with learners, other teachers and role players) and intrapersonal knowledge (the teachers’ own ethics and dispositions as what defines teacher excellence).

The other important issue is that three different groups of interviewees namely the principal, learners and teachers, who were part of the process in each school, named similar skills when asked which skills excellent teachers possess. Furthermore, the names given for excellent teachers by the principals and the learners were similar. It was therefore easy to choose **two teachers** from each school who were named by the principal **and** the learners as good teachers.

#### 5.2.4. Three different perspectives

Different perspectives enrich our understanding of *soft skills*. Rather than provide ‘the truth’. Obtaining three different perspectives, and using different schools in different contexts made a degree of triangulation possible. This contributed to a better understanding and interpretation of the concepts in diverse contexts and from different perspectives.

- **The principals**

The principals approached the interview appointment and interview process very differently. All three principals were willing to take time out of their busy program to take part in the research. One of the principals was very task oriented, this could be seen by the way in which the preliminary process was handled. He made it very clear that he actually found it hard to create time in this process. In response to the question of how he would know when a teacher is an excellent teacher he answered:

They produce **good results** for grade 12 [School 3 Principal]

the good teachers are **task orientated**, they do well with the colleagues [School 3 Principal]

The further the interview process progressed, the more relaxed he became, and after the interview he kept talking about the value of this in his school. In the end he was less worried about the time which is an indication of how a heightened sense of the importance of *soft skills* in itself serves to create a people-friendly environment. His view is reflected in the following extract:

firstly, a **teacher is a parent** before he becomes a teacher and then you need to incorporate everything not necessarily the core business, you need to look at the **feelings of a child**, we need to look at the background of a child before you come to the core business that is the teaching and then a good teacher must **know his or her content** of the subject that he's teaching [School 3 Teacher 1]

Another principal stressed the importance of *soft skills* for every staff member in the school – not just the teachers, but also the secretaries and other support staff. He mentioned that in their school – where the community live in difficult circumstances and people are exposed to violence and crime on an ongoing basis – these *soft skills* are vital for all in the school.

It (*Soft skills*) are important because you can't just be good at your subject and just do the job ... in our school anyway, I would say it is characterized by the fact that our school **cares** a little more than other schools. There are many parents who come, especially now, with the applications, the school is full, and then they look at the way they are handled, right from the secretary in the reception area to the teachers – at some schools they wait an hour before they are even helped.

Here they do not even wait a few seconds before then someone comes to them  
[School 2 Principal]

[Dis (*Soft skills*) belangrik, want jy kan nie net goed in jou vak en net die job doen ...soos ons skool in elk geval is, hoe kan ek sê word gekenmerk deur die feit dat ons skool 'n bietjie meer omgee as wat ander skole dikwels. Daar is baie ouers wat kom veral nou met die inskrywings dan is die skool mos nou vol, dan kyk hulle na die manier hoe hulle hanteer word, reg van die sekretaresse af, die ontvangsarea en die onderwysers wat hulle sommer by sommige skole 'n halfuur lank sit voor hulle eers gehelp word is dit hier nie so as hulle hier is wag hulle nie eers 'n paar sekondes nie dan is iemand by hulle om] [School 2 Principal]

The personalities of the principals had an impact on the emphasis that each person brought to his views on excellent teachers. Despite this, all three principles felt that *soft skills* were very important.

- **The learners**

In the case of the learners, the groups were bigger, and because of the fact that a focus group was part of the process, the personality of **one** learner did not have such a big influence on the process, thus it was easier to see consistency in the big picture of the views regarding this phenomenon. Learners were asked to write reflections about excellent teachers before the focus group interview. The rationale behind this was to give them time to reflect on the topic before the interview, and to get views which are not influence, by peers. Most of the skills mentioned in the reflections written by learners were *soft skills*. This highlighted the importance of *soft skills* in teacher excellence. The focus group served to clarify this further.

**Anyone with an opinion** and the ability to give his / her opinion to be heard, but also to listen to other people's opinions. A good teacher is **consistent** and do **not abuse their power**, but rather **promote individuality** in a diverse group, for each **to reach his / her full potential** and to motivate. [School 1 Learner Reflections]

[Iemand met 'n opinie en die vermoë om haar/ sy opinie te laat hoor, maar ook na ander opinies te luister. 'n Goeie onderwyser is konsekwent en misbruik nie hul mag nie, maar gebruik dit eerder om in 'n diverse groep individualiteit te bevorder

en elkeen tot sy volle potensiaal te dryf en motiveer.] [School 1 Learner Reflections]

To be a teacher it's a good thing, because of the things that we learnt **give us hope**. [School 3 Learner Reflections]

I can tell you of a teacher who **helped me back on the road because I was off the road**, [School 2 Learner focus group]

[ek kan vir juffrou vertel van 'n onderwyser wat vir my gehelp het om vir my op die pad te bring want ek was van die pad af,] [School 2 Learner Focus Group]

he is the reason I do the best in the grade for business studies. Also, she **shares her life experiences** with you, so you feel like you **know her as a person**. [School 1 Learner Reflections]

- **The teacher**

In the case of the teachers who were interviewed, all teachers were technically proficient, and had many years teaching experience. This meant that the technical skills possessed by these teachers were a given requirement. All of these teachers were extremely people oriented. They cared for learners, and had a passion for teaching, understood how the background of learners influenced their ability to learn. They were all interested in the learner as a person (§4.2.4.1). These are all the skills that were named most often in the research process.

In the interview and reflection process, this question was answered in different ways. Before any participant was given a definition for *soft skills*, when the discussion was about excellent teachers, all participants named some technical skills, and then proceeded naturally to *soft skills*. None of the participants seemed to think that *soft skills* were not important at all, and many participants felt that the soft skills were actually **more important** than the technical skills.

it's **really about the person they are** uhm, that is why it is a **prestigious** profession, it's something that, that **changes lives** uhm based on **set an example** and not so much on the knowledge being taught, I do not think the knowledge they teach is as important as **the experience** you gain in school. I

think the more important knowledge is the knowledge one gains at university  
[School 1 Learner Focus Group]

[dit gaan juis oor die mens wat hulle is uhm, dit is hoekom dit 'n gesaghebbende beroep, dis iets wat, wat lewens verander uhm gebasseer op die voorbeeld te stel en nie so seer op die kennis nie, ek dink in elk geval Hoërskool onderwysers se kennisoordrag is nie so belangrik nie, ek dink nie die kennis wat hulle gee is so kwaai soos die ervaring wat jy opdoen op Hoërskool nie ek dink dis meer universiteitskennis wat belangrik is] [School 1 Learner Focus Group]

because results are often meaningless, so for me you are a good teacher when you achieve something in a child's life uhm achieve isn't really the correct word...they **realize that they have a better future** in which they can bring about change [School 2 Teacher 2]

[maar nou gaan 'n mens nie na resultate toe nie, want resultate is ook baie keer nikseggend, so vir my is dit 'n goeie onderwyser wanneer jy iets in 'n kind se lewe uhm nie bereik is nie die regte woord nie um vir hulle bereik jy en laat besef dat hulle ook 'n groter toekoms het waarin hulle kan, kan verandering teweeg bring] [School 2 Teacher 2]

what makes a good teacher, what makes a good teacher is that a good teacher must be a person **who you look up to after school**, during schooltime, must be a parent to show that we rely on if we're in trouble [School 3 Learner Focus Group]

#### **5.2.5. Soft skills within the current South African educational context**

As teachers are seen as playing a pivotal role in education, and when the current situation in South Africa is studied, the importance of excellent teachers becomes even more apparent. In the VSO report which sheds light on schooling in third world countries it is said that teachers “..... play a pivotal role in enabling societies to realise their educational aspirations” (VSO, 2002:10). Thus the role of the teachers is much more than merely teaching.

One of the teachers indicated during the interviews that teachers, especially in poverty stricken areas, are the main resource in a school. This is underlined in the VSO report on

"what makes teachers tick?" (VSO, 2002:12). The following story from the life of a teacher underscores this fact.

this learner for instance in my class, I noticed **he was always wearing a uhm grey jacket**, it was not even a new one it was just, the other day I talk and I noticed that he is not coming to school for the whole week, there is one day sometimes in a week then I talk to him sometimes, **he explained that he is staying with his grandma, his mother passed away** "nê" and they were raised by a single mother, he has also got some sisters but they are older than him, but they are not there, they are loitering around such that they are in Cape Town with their friends. If they are at home then they are doing nothing, they just go to the shebeens, so I asked how is the situation at home. He explained a **very sad and touching condition at home**. The first thing I noticed that he is a learner that is doing, that is performing very good in the subjects, in all subjects for that matter but it was the first time I met him this year because he is in grade 10, he was also here last year but I was not teaching him last year then what I noticed is that he has no confidence, then I tried to make him, by buying him a uniform down there. You know what I noticed the first day because of that he must wear the jersey, especially the jersey by that time and must take out the one he was always wearing. He is a tall, tall learner, tall child but he was shy in the class like this. The day he was wearing a new jersey, everyone was asking, "is Abongile so tall like that" because now I can see that I can show myself to other people, I can show, because the reason why he was always doing like this, maybe it was because he didn't want to be seen by others, those are the types of things sometimes you find that the study date is nearer, so for those who's that the study date maybe is going to be in December, then I organize and now his name is with the social workers, they are going to give him food parcel, the family food parcels each and every month so now he is a learner now that you can see okay [School 3 Teacher 2]

Many learners find themselves in a situation that they are not looked after at home. Teachers are expected by some to play this parenting role.

Good teacher **is like a parent to you** cause when you are in trouble he help you, no matter how hard is. [School 3 Learner Reflections]

In addition, the learners do not have good role models, so excellent teachers are expected to play this role as well.

what makes a good teacher is that a good teacher must be a person who you look up to after school, during schooltime, must be a parent to show that we rely on if we're in trouble [School 3 Learner Focus Group]

hy moet hy/sy moet besef dat hulle rolmodelle is vir die kinders, dis amper soos om 'n sport uhm wat jy van die veld af doen... So as jy nou 'n onderwyser sien wat self ongelooflik dronk drink byvoorbeeld, jy weet watter voorbeeld stel dit nou vir die kinders veral met jong onderwyse [School 1 Learner Focus Group]

Out of the discussion with the principals and teachers it was evident that the situation in schools, required excellent *soft skills* of teachers.

Yes, when I look at our school's unique circumstances, our school's surroundings, the community itself, then **we fulfil an even more important than the parent fulfils we are the parent outside the school** [School 2 Principal]

[ja as ek kyk na ons skool se unieke omstandighede, ons skool se surroundings , die gemeenskap self dan vervul ons meer nog die rol as wat 'n ouer vervul ons meer die as wat 'n ouer daar buitekant] [School 2 Principal]

**there is no money for food so, where will money for a newspaper come from**, I bring all my old magazines and newspapers and well, they may not write on the magazines, if you are look for an article we make a copy for you, this is this is how we work at our school because the children do not have much, I mean we did not really have a large library [school 2 Teacher 1]

[daar is nie geld vir kos nie so waar's daar nog geld vir 'n koerant so wat ons, wat ek ook doen is, ek bring al my ou tydskrifte en koerante en goed, so en ons mag nie daaraan krap nie, jy kom soek 'n artikel, ons maak 'n afdruk of wat jy ookal wil hê en dis hoe ons moet werk by onse skool, ek bedoel ons het nie rêrig 'n groot biblioteek nie] [School 2 Teacher 1]

it's important because you cannot just be good at your subject and just do the job and not (have the other skills) in our school anyway, how can I say it is characterized by the fact that our **school cares** a little more than other schools.

There are many parents who come, especially now with the applications, and then the school is full, then they look the way they are handled right from the secretary in the reception area to the teachers that make them wait for half an hour before they are even helped. Here they do not even have to wait a few seconds before someone comes to them [School 2 Principal]

[dis belangrik, want jy kan nie net goed in jou vak en net die job doen en nie die ander hê nie, want ons kinders, het, ons skool in elk geval is, hoe kan ek sê word gekenmerk deur die feit dat ons skool 'n bietjie meer omgee as wat ander skole dikwels. Daar is baie ouers wat kom veral nou met die inskrywings dan is die skool mos nou vol, dan kyk hulle na die manier hoe hulle hanteer word, reg van die sekretaresse af, die ontvangsarea en die onderwysers wat hulle sommer by sommige skole 'n halfuur lank sit voor hulle eers gehelp word is dit hier nie so as hulle hier is wag hulle nie eers 'n paar sekondes nie dan is iemand by hulle om....] [School 2 Principal]

Two of the principals made special mention of the fact that the disciplinary situation in schools, was definitely a bigger challenge now than a few years ago. Teachers are under great pressure to be patient and caring, even though many students challenge them with a non-caring attitude.

so it's almost more challenging, so it **demands greater skills** from you to stay **calm and collected** ... there are **really defiant children today**, as if that time was in the past [School 1 Principal]

[so dit is amper meer uitdagend, so dit eis groter goed van jou af om kalm en rustigheid te behou daar is werklik kinders wat uitdagend is vandag, asof die tyd in die verlede was] [School 1 Principal]

From the interviews with learners, it was evident that when the learners had problems (socially and otherwise) they expected teachers to be 'there for them' and to support them (§4.2.4.1). They expected more than just cognitive stimulation – they expected teachers to teach them about life. Even in their discussions of technical skills, the learners expected the teacher to make the curriculum relevant to their everyday life.

Good teacher is **like a parent** to you cause when you are in trouble he help you, no matter how hard is. [School 3 Learner Reflections]

From the literature review on this topic, it was evident that this is not only a South African issue (§2.7.1.3). All over the world, teachers are challenged more and more by disciplinary issues. All over the world a thrust of performativity (§ 2.2.1) places pressure on individuals to strive for goals that are measurable, even though none of the skills mentioned most in this study are measurable.

#### 5.2.6. *Soft skills* in diverse school contexts

The schools that were selected to take part in this study were diverse. The main criteria was economic diversity (§3.3.1.1). The reason for this was that it was possible that the *soft skills* required from teachers might be different in different contexts.

The data indicated that that the *soft skills* required from excellent teachers did not appear to differ greatly depending on the school context: when the frequency of how many times a theme of *soft skills* was named in the different schools is regarded, it becomes evident that the ranking of skills is very similar.

**Table 5.1: Ranking of *soft skills* according to themes: School 1**

Intrapersonal Behavioural/Conceptual skills	1
Interpersonal Affective Skills	2
Interpersonal Behavioural / Conceptual Skills	3
Technical Skills	4
Intrapersonal Affective Skills	5

**Table 5.2: Ranking of *soft skills* according to themes: School 2**

Intrapersonal Behavioural/Conceptual skills	1
Interpersonal Affective Skills	2
Interpersonal Behavioural / Conceptual Skills	3
Intrapersonal Affective Skills	4
Technical Skills	5

**Table 5.3: Ranking of *soft skills* according to themes: School 3**

Intrapersonal Behavioural/Conceptual skills	1
Interpersonal Affective Skills	2
Interpersonal Behavioural / Conceptual Skills	3
Technical Skills	4
Intrapersonal Affective Skills	5

From the data analysis in all three schools which were part of this study, the top three groups of *soft skills* are as follows:

**Table 5.4: Most important *soft skills***

Intrapersonal Behavioural/Conceptual skills
Interpersonal Affective Skills
Interpersonal Behavioural / Conceptual Skills

Because of the fact that very little has been written about *soft skills* of teachers, this is definitely a field for further research. These rankings reveal that although the schools were vastly different schools in terms of economic situation and culture, all had the first three sets of *soft skills* in the same order of frequency. The conclusion can be drawn that for a teacher to be an excellent teacher, the same groups of *soft skills* are important, even though the schools are diverse.

The group of skills named **most** by **all** schools in the interviews are related to the way the teachers conduct themselves. The following are examples of these skills:

**the way a teacher carries himself** is also very important because uhm they don't have to be arrogant, but they **have to have a presence** about them that makes you want to listen to them because if they don't take themselves seriously how are we as students going to **take them seriously**. They have to have confidence and they have to make an effort, if they don't know something and we ask them a question they have to go and find the answer even if they don't know it, they will say "okay i'll go find out"... The extra mile for you [School 1 Learner Focus Group]

I know some teachers in the classroom and the same teachers outside the classroom and I personally think ...I think teachers who pretend to be who they really are not that the classroom, which is a bit hypocritical, so I do not think it

must be like that, you have to be yourself in the classroom [School 1 Learner Focus Group]

[ek ken party onderwysers in die klaskamers en dieselfde onderwysers buitekant die klaskamers en ek dink persoonlik hier is en ek dink hier is baie onderwysers wat, wat voorgee wat hulle nie rêrig is in die klaskamers nie, wat bietjie skynheilig is, so ek dink nie dit moet so wees nie, jy moet jouself wees in die klaskamers ook] [School 1 Learner Focus Group]

These examples from the interviews and reflections were categorised, and more examples of the categories are:

- Self confidence
- Willing to learn more
- Want to make a difference in learners' lives.
- Being "just themselves".

One of the examples given in the literature of when these skills are evident is the statement by Clifford (2008:5): he argues that the ability of a teacher to motivate in conjunction with a good level of expertise is what makes a good teacher. This underlines the role of **intrapersonal behavioural skills**.

The **second group of skills** that were named to be important by all schools were the **interpersonal affective skills**. These skills support the first group. These skills indicate what goes on in the teachers' hearts (affect) about the learners they are working with:

A good teacher is like a parent to you 'cause when you are in trouble he help you, no matter how hard is. [School 3 Learner Reflections]

The individual skills named most frequently when all the interviews and reflections are analysed are:

- Caring towards learners
- Being interested in learners personally
- Understanding learners' backgrounds.

One is tempted to try and quantify each skill but because the study was qualitative in nature, such quantification was not possible.

### 5.3. Synthesis

It was evident from the interviews which were conducted, that teachers who were seen as excellent teachers by principals and learners had very few problems with discipline in their classrooms. Learners seemed to enjoy their classes, and the results seemed to follow in due course. These teachers all believed in fostering intrinsic motivation.

After analysis of the interviews on the topic “soft skills of excellent teachers’, other themes that came up naturally in the process were the following:

- Discipline in the classroom
- Learning more effectively
- Motivation of learners.

#### 5.3.1. Discipline in the classroom

It was evident that discipline was an important issue for effective learning to take place.

**if you cannot maintain good discipline in your class, your class will fall apart,** your children will not do their work in your class - for me, discipline is the most important [School 2 Teacher 1]

[as jy nie daai goeie dissipline kan handhaaf in jou klas nie, gaan jou klas uitrafel, jou kinders gaan nie hulle werk doen in jou klas nie - vir my is dissipline die belangrikste ] [School 2 Teacher 1]

The teachers who were identified as excellent teachers used the following approaches in their classrooms:

- They did not check the work of the learners every day, but instead taught learners to work without being checked.
- If work was not done, they spoke to learners.
- They viewed insight into the life of the learners was more important than punishment.
- They all had systems in place, which corrected behaviour in a way to promote learning.

I **do not check homework every day** – especially not with the senior learners.[School 1 Teacher 2]

[Ek kontroleer nie huiswerk elke dag nie – veral nie by die senior leerlinge nie.]  
[School 1 Teacher 2]

because it's very easy to berate or threaten them to "sit still". I think that what distinguishes from others if you can deal with your children so that they slowly learn and **develop self-discipline**. If you can get them to **understand why they should work**, to understand why they need to listen, understand that if you can get your child to take responsibility for his own work, then I think you have good discipline, but yes discipline is very necessary [School 1 Teacher 1]

[dis baie maklik om met kinders te raas of hulle te dreig of te sê "sit stil". Ek dink die, wat regtig 'n goeie onderwyser van ander onderskei is as jy jou kinders so kan hanteer dat hulle stadig in self dissipline aanleer en ontwikkel. As jy vir hulle kan kry dat hulle verstaan hoekom hulle moet werk, kan verstaan hoekom hulle moet luister, kan verstaan dat, as jy jou kind kan kry om self verantwoordelikheid te neem vir sy werk, dan dink ek jy het goeie dissipline, maar ja dissipline is baie nodig ] [School 1 Teacher 1]

I **do not check homework every day**, and then one day I checked and gave extra work (which was actually punishment) a learner said that it is unfair, and that it was the first time she was caught not doing homework. A previous time I did not punish the learner that I caught I **had to admit it and go back to the class and discuss our agreement again**. [School 1 Teacher 2]

Ek kontroleer nie elke dag huiswerk nie, en toe een dag toe ek kontroleer en ekstra werk gee ( wat maar op strafwerk neerkom) was daar 'n leerling wat gesê het dat dit onregverdig is, en dat dit die eerste keer is wat sy uitgevang word, en dat ek 'n vorige keer nie vir 'n leerder ekstra werk gegee het toe ek vind dat hy sy huiswerk nie gedoen het nie. Ek moes dit erken en na die klas teruggaan en ons ooreenkoms weer bespreek. [School 1 Teacher 2]

When I speak of discipline, for example, if I see a learner not doing homework twice, I **will not scold**. I will ask "**why**" and I punish you "and " **come do it**

**during break or after school**". But then I ask whether it is possible for the learner to do homework in the afternoons because I often realized that **our children do not have the opportunity to work at home** [School 2 Teacher 1]

[As ek praat van dissipline, as ek byvoorbeeld twee keer sien 'n kind doen nie vir my tuiswerk nie dan gaan ek nie skel nie. Ek het die eerste twee keer gesê "hoekom" en ek straf jou" en "kom doen dit pouse of na skool" maar dan gaan ek jou vra "kan jy smiddae kom tuiswerk doen" want baie keer kom ek agter dat ons kinders nie die geleentheid het om te gaan werk by die huis nie [School 2 Teacher 1]

### 5.3.2. How children learn

Many factors influence learning and the excellent teacher has insight into this.

its also about the **feelings of children** and so on, but they also have to know about the core business you look to the child as a **whole physically, emotionally, spiritually** in other words [School 3 Teacher 1]

The *soft skills* of the teachers were definitely a factor in learning. Learners reported that they did not ask for clarification of concepts or go to teachers with learning difficulties if they were scared that they were going to be shouted at.

and will be much easier to ask question to a teacher who is nice than one whom **you are afraid to ask** [School 1 Learner Focus Group]

[en sal ook baie makliker vir 'n onderwyser vrae vra wat gaaf is met die klas as 'n onderwyser wat jy te bang is om voor te vra] [School 1 Learner Focus Group]

The fact that learners could go to teachers with problems, gave **teachers insight** into their lives, and put teachers in the position to be better teachers.

where I **know the children best is outside the classroom**..., if I'm on the sports field, when I go with them on outings, because then I am actually myself, not that I am not in my class, but I'm more relaxed and the children feel greater rapport, and many of the teacher, if you are very concerned with your children,

sports and cultural area they know you better and they will find it **easier to come to you when they have a problem** [School 2 Teacher 1]

[waar ek my kinders die beste ken is buite my klaskamers,... as ek op die sportveld is, as ek met hulle op uitstappies gaan,want dan is ek eintlik, nie dat ek myself is in my klas nie, maar dan is ek buite my klas is dan is ek meer ontspanne en die kinders vind meer aanklank en baie van die onderwysers, as jy baie betrokke is met jou kinders op, op sport en kulturele gebied dan leer ken hulle vir jou beter en hulle kom makliker na jou toe met 'n probleem][School 2 Teacher 1]

When it is possible for learners to speak about the work, they learn effectively.

my lessons are, I start from the known to the unknown, usually the part that I like so much is the Literacy one because in the Literature **children are free to voice their views**. They are not restricted like in grammar, this is, the past tense of "is" is "was", nothing else, but in Literature as long as you are going to substantiate to, to give support to what you are saying then you are okay [School 3 Teacher 1]

### 5.3.3. Intrinsic motivation

Excellent teachers believed that if they motivated the learners from within, they were learning a skill for life. The balance between disciplining learners to become independent workers and thinkers become a creative skill with these teachers.

The ideal teacher, however idealistic it might sound to suggest (in my opinion) the **perfect balance between authority enforcement without conforming to learners while simultaneously encouraging individualism** in every learner in a controlled, secure environment with their unique way of working. [School 1 Teacher Reflections]

[Die ideale onderwyser, hoe idealisties dit okal mag wees om voor te stel, kom(volgens my) die perfekte balans tussen gesag afdwing sonder konformering van leerders terwyl hulle terselfdertyd individualisme aanspoor in elke leerder binne 'n beheerde, veilige omgewing met hul unieke wyse van te werk gaan. ] [School 1 Learner Reflections]

A motivate not a judge on the learner but a **guardian in the path of success (sic)**. [School 3 Learner Reflections]

The examination alone is not the measure of what should be taught but something more, and more - in today's curriculum can demotivate children, but I **believe now that we should do more than just the exam work** [School 1 Teacher 2]

[Die eksamen alleen is nie die maatstaf vir wat geleer moet word nie, maar iets meer en verder – in vandag se kurrikulum kan dit wees dat dit kinders demotiveer, maar ek glo tog dat ons vir meer as net die eksamen werk] [School 1 Teacher 2]

think it is very important that the school when the teacher would shout at the child and tell you your marks will get worse, you learn, then you get a bad mark... that's the problem with many teachers...they think their profession is about to getting the child to get good marks and get a child a good matric ...I feel different, I feel when you're in high school you **need to develop yourself** and what happens when the teacher would shout, it is forced on you from the outside ... Whether it should actually come from within and the child within himself decided, okay I'm going to work hard, ...it's so much more real **when a teacher can get a child to decide for himself** I'm going to work harder, because I yelled at the child but merely the fact that the pressure on himself, not because there are any external factors that change him, the child who will not sit down and do something because someone else told him to do it but because he feels he is beginning to feel the need to do; it very important and that **goes beyond academically** for me, it goes much further than *soft skills*, it goes right through life, in all aspects of your life it mirrors that moment when a teacher can bring you to understand in High school that you are working for yourself then you are more grounded, your base is much stronger [School 1 Teacher Focus Group]

die feit dat wanneer die onderwyser sou skree op die kind en vir jou sê jou punte raak swakker, jy leer nie, dan kry jy dan 'n slegte punt dan sê hy kyk na wat ek vir jou gesê het, leer so en so, gaan, gaan, dis die probleem met baie onderwysers, baie onderwysers dink hulle beroep gaan oor 'n kind te kry wat goeie punte kry en 'n kind gelukkig te kry wat matriek uit die skool uit gaan en ek voel anders, ek

voel juis wanneer jy op hoërskool is dit juis waar jy moet jy jousef moet ontwikkel en wat gebeur is as die onderwysers sou skree word dit van buite af geforseer, die kind word van buite af gedruk om beter te kan ... Of eintlik gaan hy van binne af kom en die kind gaan binne homself besluit okay ek gaan nou hard werk, ek gaan punte ontwikkel en so aan, maar ek voel dis soveel meer uniek en dis soveel meer homself, dis soveel meer eg as dit van binne af kom en as 'n onderwyser dit regkry dat 'n kind vir homself kan besluit ek gaan nou harder werk, nie omdat ek geskree het op die kind nie maar bloot die feit dat die kind die druk op homself plaas, nie omdat daar enige eksterne faktore is wat homself verander nie uhm 'n kind wat dan nie sal gaan sit en iets doen omdat iemand anders vir hom gesê het om dit te doen nie maar omdat hy self voel hy begin nou die behoefte kry om dit te doen voel ek dis baie belangriker en dit trek vir my verder as akademies, dit trek vir my baie verder as uhm as selfs sagte vaardighede, dit gaan dan reg deur die lewe, dit gaan dan in alle aspekte van jou lewe weerspeël uhm die oomblik as 'n onderwyser dit kan tuisbring by jou in die hoërskool om, om ek dink van binne jou eie af, ek dink dit is soveel meer gegron, jou basis is dan soveel sterker [School 1 Learner Focus Group]

#### **5.4. Recommendations for future research**

This research has shown the importance of *soft skills* to schools and other educational institutions. However, the chief value of this research is the implications it has for teacher education.

##### **5.4.1. Recommendations for teacher pre-service training**

At this stage very little formal training is done in *soft skills* of teachers in teacher education courses, even although role-players seem to agree that *soft skills* are important and that they represent a rich resource for improving teacher excellence through training in soft skills. It seems there is a strong case for ongoing training of teachers, as training in soft skills is not just a cognitive process, but one of attitude and practise. Joubert et al. (2006:29) discusses how this is done in medical training, and shows how it could serve as example in such further study.

More detailed research of the ranking of the importance of the *soft skills* for teachers should be done first. This could lead to better understanding of the training needs of pre-service and in-service teachers.

#### **5.4.2. Recommendations for teacher in-service training**

The fact that a qualitative approach was taken, made a quantitative analysis of the data impossible. When further research on this topic is done, it might be useful to use quantitative methods of research to compile a program for the development of *soft skills* in teachers.

Because these skills can be acquired through training, a programme to develop these *soft skills* could be put designed. This could improve the quality of teachers, thus improving the quality of the education system.

School management could, by just heightening the awareness of the importance of these skills, and meta-cognitively reflecting on their value in particular situations, improve the quality of teaching.

Universities and other teacher-training institutions could make the training in *soft skills* part of the curriculum, as has been done very successfully in the medical school of the University of Pretoria.

#### **5.4.3. Recommendations for further research**

Because this was a study in a relatively new field, a qualitative approach with open-ended questions was the appropriate choice apparent. For a next study it might be useful to use the findings of this study to do further into the relative importance of skills. This could inform the compilations of a training programme on *soft skills*.

#### **5.5. Concluding thoughts**

The reason for looking at the *soft skills* of the teacher is that I chose to look at the positive angle, and not that of the difficulties. This echoes Hoy and Tarter (2011:428) writing about positive psychology as the “study of ordinary human strengths and what goes right in life. Its interest is in discovering what works, what is right, and what is improving”. Examples given by Hoy and Tarter (2011:428) of school research done in the past shows that often negative concepts, like student failure, bullying and teacher burn-out are researched. This thesis focused on the possible positive role of *soft skills* in the school.

The journey I undertook has been an enriching one. While it is true that certain intuitive ideas about the *soft skills* of excellent teachers were apparent even in the initial phases, there was a great deal to gain. There is more clarity on the enhancing role of *soft skills* in excellence in teaching has become apparent. It is useful to note the likely positive effect on the workplace when teachers become role models and learners start imitating them.

A final reflection is that if teachers spend time in the process of reflecting on *soft skills*, they could raise the level of their *soft skills*.

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## APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE



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### Interview Schedule (English) with principal

#### Demographic details of the school:

- Number of learners in the school
- Number of learners receiving food from the Feeding scheme
- Number of matric learners in the school
- Matric results

#### Skills

- Who are the best teachers? (Give criteria to the principal to choose from)

##### **Probes / Criteria:**

- Good matric results (results)
  - At least 5 years teaching experience (experience)
  - A good relationship with staff, learners and parents (relationships)
- What are the reasons for your saying so?

##### **Probes**

- Results
  - Experience
  - Relationships
  - An incident
- Which skills would you say distinguish excellent teachers?
  - How important are the soft skills?
    - Define soft skills for them: interpersonal, intrapersonal, ethics
  - Which soft skills are important for a teacher in the current South African context?
    - Would you say it differs from 20 years ago?
  - Can you give me an example (story) to illustrate being an excellent teacher?



## Focus group: Learners

- Grade
- Subject taken with the teacher?
- Who are your best teachers?
- Why?
- Which skills would you say distinguish excellent teachers?
  - Results
  - Experience
  - Relationships
  - An incident
- How important are the so-called “soft skills”?
  - Define soft skills for them: interpersonal, intrapersonal, ethics
- Can you give me an example (story) to illustrate why teachers are seen as excellent?



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## Interview: Teachers

### Demographic detail

- Male/Female
- Age
- Subject(s)
- How long have you taught?
- At this school?

### Skills

- When is a teacher an excellent teacher?

#### Probes

- Results
- Experience
- Relationships
- An incident
- Which skills would you say distinguish excellent teachers?
- How important are the so-called “soft skills”?
  - Define soft skills for them as interpersonal, intrapersonal, ethical conduct
- You were identified as an excellent teacher – why do you think this is?
- Can you give me an example (story) to illustrate being an excellent teacher?



## Onderhoudskedule (Afrikaans)

### Sagte vaardighede van uitstekende onderwysers in diverse Suid-Afrikaanse skole in die Wes-Kaap

#### Onderhoude: Met skoolhoof

- Demografiese besonderhede van die skool
- Aantal leerders in die skool
- Hoeveelheid leerders wat voedsel van die Voedingskema kry
- Hoeveelheid Matriekleerders
- Matriek-uitslae

#### Vaardighede

- Wie is die beste onderwysers by u skool?  
**Kriteria / Verdere “probes”:**
  - Goeie matriekuitslae (resultate)
  - Minstens 5 jaar onderwyservaring (ervaring)
  - 'n Goeie verhouding met personeel, leerders en ouers (verhoudings)
- Wat is die redes waarom u so sê?
- Watter vaardighede sou u sê onderskei uitstekende onderwysers?
  - Resultate
  - Ondervinding
  - Verhoudings
  - 'n Gebeurtenis
- Hoe belangrik is die sagte vaardighede?
  - Definieer sagte vaardighede vir hulle (interpersoonlike, intrapersoonlike en etiek)
- Watter sagte vaardighede is belangrik vir 'n onderwyser in die huidige Suid-Afrikaanse konteks?
- Kan u vir my 'n voorbeeld (storie) vertel om te illustreer waarom 'n onderwyser(es) word gesien as 'n uitstekende onderwyser(es)?



## Fokusgroep: met leerders

- Wanneer is 'n onderwyser 'n uitstekende onderwyser?
- Watter vaardighede sou u sê onderskei uitstekende onderwysers?
  - Resultate
  - Ondervinding
  - Verhoudings
  - 'n Gebeurtenis
- Hoe belangrik is die sogenaamde "sagte vaardighede"?
  - Definieer sagte vaardighede vir hulle (interpersoonlike, intrapersoonlike en etiek)
- Kan u vir my 'n voorbeeld (storie) vertel om te illustreer waarom 'n onderwyser(es) word gesien as 'n uitstekende onderwyser(es)?
- Wie is julle beste onderwyser(es)?



## Onderhoud: met Onderwysers

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### Demografiese besonderhede

- Manlik / Vroulik
- Ouderdom
- Vak(ke wat jy aanbied
- Hoe lank het hou u al skool?
- By hierdie skool?

### Vaardighede

- Wanneer is 'n onderwyser 'n uitstekende onderwyser?
- Watter vaardighede sou u sê onderskei uitstekende onderwysers?
  - Resultate
  - Ondervinding
  - Verhoudings
  - 'n Gebeurtenis
- Hoe belangrik is die sogenaamde "sagte vaardighede"?
  - Definieer sagte vaardighede vir hulle (interpersoonlike, intrapersoonlike en etiek)
- U is geïdentifiseer as 'n uitstekende onderwyser - hoekom dink u is dit?
- Kan u vir my 'n voorbeeld (storie) vertel om te illustreer waarom 'n onderwyser(es) word gesien as 'n uitstekende onderwyser(es)?

## APPENDIX B: Significant Statements

- A good teacher is a person who loves what he/she is doing. A person who knows to deal with children at all times. A teacher is a parent to his/her learners during school time and after school time.

---

- I would say that they really have a passion for their work  
[Ek sal sê dat hulle het regtig 'n passie vir hulle werk.]

---

- They go a little further than a teacher who only wants to do a "job", understand, they still see it as a vocation, a "calling", you can still clearly see that calling  
[Hulle gaan so 'n bietjie verder as wat 'n onderwyser wat net die "job" wil doen, verstaan, hulle sien dit nog as 'n roeping, 'n "calling", jy kan dit nog duidelik sien, daai roeping]

---

- Their concern should be learners and curriculum and all that, especially when at work advising other people "look here I've gone through this I can advise" you know

---

- Their academic results are excellent  
[Hulle akademiese uitslae is uitstekend.]

---

- Daar is 'n bietjie van 'n verhouding wat moet bou oor 'n tyd, en dan raak die kinders en hulle onderwysers mekaar gewoon, en dan voel die kinders veilig in hierdie situasie en dan presteer hulle ook  
[There is a bit of a relationship that should build over time, and then the children and their teachers get used to each other, and then the children feel safe and then they perform in this situation]

---

- The teacher should not scream at me, that does not motivate me – I should decide to work myself  
[Die onderwyser moet nie vir my skree nie, dit motiveer my nie - ek moet self besluit om te werk]

---

- He was strict at the right times but he is also "nice" to the children  
[Hy is streng op die regte tye maar hy is ook maar "lekker" met die kinders]

---

- Some of them much more strongly people-oriented, but not all of them are people-oriented.  
[Party van hulle baie sterker mensgerig ..nie almal is mensgerig nie.]

---

- \*Teaching must mean a teacher gets up every day with new excitement in the day and the fact that children are the centre of his / her day must give the teacher pleasure.  
[Skoolgee moet vir 'n onderwyser wees soos om elke dag op te staan met nuwe bewondering vir die dag en die werklikheid dat kinders die middelpunt van sy/ haar dag is, moet genot verskaf aan hierdie onderwysers.]

---

- Teachers must have a passion to work with children.

[Onderwysers moet 'n passie het om met kinders te werk.]

- A good teacher is a person who is acting as parent in front of the class.

- If you go outside, they will say "here comes our mother" ...

[As jy buite kom dan sal hulle vir jou sê "hier kom ons ma aan"...]

- Bad teacher: She is emotionless, shows no sympathy for us as students. She is boring, she has poor body language, dresses unprofessionally and cannot speak English. She always looks angry. She never smiles, and stands with her hands crossed all the time.

- Many of them are stronger in a caring context,  
[Baie van hulle is sterker in 'n omgee konteks,]

- A good teacher is somebody who loves children or students and someone who understand students. A good teacher must be kind and caring.

- You need to really notice the child, he should know even if it is the sixth class of 40 that you see that day that you still take note of them individually and, and you should still know he or she was in your class  
[Jy moet 'n kind raaksien, hy moet weet al is dit die sesde klas van 40 wat jy die dag sien moet jy hom nog steeds as 'n individu raaksien en, en jy moet nog steeds weet hy of sy was ook in jou klas]

- Love and patience for children

[Liefde vir kinders en geduld]

- They allow space for the child to grow and develop through their lessons.

[Hulle laat ruimte vir die kind om te groei en ontwikkel d.m.v hul lesse.]

- She is driven, goal-orientated and outspoken. If she is in her class, you can hear her from outside the schoolgrands. She shouts at you when you slack, and keeps you on your toes.

- I give them the room to participate, to talk about their views

- I think they have very strong structures within their classroom where a child can feel safe ... clearly demarcated boundaries ...  
[Ek dink hulle het baie sterk strukture binne in hulle klas waar 'n kind kan veilig voel, ...om duidelike grense afgebaken ...]

- A good teacher is gentle and tolerant honest, reliable, respectful.

[ 'n Goeie onderwyser is sagmoedig en verdraagsaam eerlik, vertroubaar, respekvol.]

- Good teacher learners who shows respect towards me because they would like to have the students should show respect towards them as teachers, but some of the teachers do not show respect

[Goeie onderwyser vir my is een wat respek toon teenoor leerders want hulle wil baie graag hê die leerders moet respek toon teenoor die onderwysers maar party van die

onderwysers toon ook nie respek nie]

- It's a person who is leading by good examples and respect others.

- Some teachers like to tell jokes in class and so on and then the children feel a lot more comfortable than when a teacher is surly and not friendly towards the class  
[Sekere onderwysers hou daarvan om soos grappies te vertel in die klas en so aan en dan voel die kinders sommer baie gemakliker as 'n onderwyser wat nors is en wat nie vriendelik is met die klas nie]

- Teachers should create additional opportunities for students. To explore additional help for students.

[Onderwysers moet ekstra geleenthede kan skep vir leerders. Om ekstra hulp te verken vir leerders.]

- I think you need smart people in education, and it does not necessarily mean intelligence regarding good school marks, I'm talking about someone who, let's say is intelligent in a wide range  
[Ek dink jy het slim mense nodig in die onderwys, en dit hoef nie noodwendig, en ek praat nie nêr van intellegensie ten opsigte van goeie skoolpunte nie ek praat van iemand wat, kom ons sê ons praat van iemand wat intellegensie oor 'n wye gebied het, wat]



- I believe you must educate the child holistically.  
[Ek glo jy moet die kind in die totaliteit opvoed,]

- It is also somebody who is well organised for example if there will be event at school such as sport, concert etc.

- Diligence

[Pligsgetrouheid,]

- A person who is never late or absence on a school day.

- They make no distinction  
[Hulle staan nie en onderskeid maak nie]

- He balances individual needs with being fair  
He does not generalize  
Does not put everyone in the same "box"  
[Hy balanseer die individu met om regverdig te wees  
Hy veralgemeen nie  
Sit nie almal in die dieselfde "boks" nie]



- Do not allow other teachers' preconceived influence their ideas about a child  
[Laat nie toe dat ander onderwysers se vooropgestelde idees hulle beeld van 'n kind bepaal nie]

- When I speak of discipline, for example, the first two times I see that a child doesn't do my homework, I do not scold him. The first two times I asked "why"

[As ek praat van dissipline, as ek byvoorbeeld twee keer sien 'n kind doen nie vir my tuiswerk nie dan gaan ek nie skel nie. Ek het die eerste twee keer gesê "hoekom"]

- free in a class, when I mean free, I don't mean that they must do whatever they want to do, there are rules, there are procedures that needs to be followed that must be a relaxing one

- he has so much confidence in the teacher when he says "help me I'm going through a very difficult time, I need your help"

[hy het soveel vertroue in die onderwyser toe sê hy "help my ek gaan deur 'n baie moeilike tyd, ek het jou hulp baie nodig" ]

- I treat you as if you were my child, you were my own child, many do not like it, others are quite happy

- ek behandel jou asof jy my kind is, jy's my eie kind, baie hou nie daarvan nie, ander is heel gelukkig

- He was prepared he was doing the right thing, he was motivating us, if you pass he will just call your name in front of the others and just say "this one is excelling, he got this mark in the test"

- You should not break down a child, you must make time to listen, if you make a comment that harm a child

[Jy moet nie 'n kind afbreek nie, jy moet tyd maak om te luister, as jy 'n opmerking maak wat 'n kind benadeel]

- Despite the fact that he may have been frustrated with the learners' level of knowledge, he always let us feel part of the job. For example, when we did poems, he put his desk in the middle of the classroom and spoke to us about the poem.

[Ten spyte daarvan dat hy moontlik gefrustreerd was met die leerders se vlak van vakkennis, het hy ons altyd laat deel voel van die werk. Byvoorbeeld by gedigte waar hy sy bank in die middel van die klaskamer gesit het en met ons gesels het oor die gedig]

- A good teacher views the child's life from his (the child's) circumstances

[ 'n Goeie onderwyser kyk die kind se lewe van sy omstandighede af.]

- A good teacher is a person who understand every learner.

- How can I put it, even the voice, yes, even the examples he was making at that time, the examples that fit the, the environment where you are

- You should also know what your kids are about what makes them "tick" so to speak, it is important. You do not need to be their best pal, but you must understand them, and I think you should also have an understanding of children that the problems facing them at home

[Jy moet ook weet waarom jou kinders gaan en wat hulle maak “tick” om dit so te sê, dit is belangrik. Jy hoef nie hulle beste pel te wees nie maar jy moet begrip hê en ek dink jy moet ook begrip hê vir kinders dat die probleme waarmee hulle by die huis ]

- a person who puts his learner's interests first. Who treats his students with respect in an honorable way.

[‘n Persoon wat sy leerders se belange eerste stel. Wat met sy leerders met respek kan behandel op ‘n eerbare manier.]

- The examination alone is not the measure of what should be taught, but there is something more – today's curriculum can demotivate children, but I do believe that we work for more than just the examination.

[Die eksamen alleen is nie die maatstaf vir wat geleer moet word nie, maar iets meer en verder – in vandag se kurrikulum kan dit wees dat dit kinders demotiveer, maar ek glo tog dat ons vir meer as net die eksamen werk]

- So there was a Maths teacher who was also teaching Physics, so she was helping us out during weekends and holidays

- The quality that you have to sacrifice for, the quality time for your learners, sometimes you have to be at school even during weekends, even afternoon, even afternoon classes,

- The good teachers are task orientated

- Always concerned about better delivering of the curriculum and

- I have a thing about sharing what I know, and I read to share it with others.  
[Ek het ‘n ding van inligting oor te dra en om dit wat ek weet, dit wat ek lees om dit te deel met ander.]

- talk about best practices,

- A good teacher is the one who in every child's personality, attitude, work. A good teacher handles issues without using violence.

[‘n Goeie onderwyser is die een wat in elke leerder se persoonlikheid, houding, werk. ‘n Goeie onderwyser hanteer sake op sonder geweld.]

- They want to make a difference on more than one level.

[hulle wil op meer as een vlak ‘n verskil maak,]

- There are learners who are slow learners, so you need to be patient with those

- To be a teacher it's a good thing, because of the things that we learnt give us hope.

- explaining to learners why you do something

- When they tried to work me out of things... a teacher stood up for me when I realized the other teacher is wrong, so that the teacher acted wisely at that moment, we just did the best we could to sort out the problem

[Toe hulle probeer om my weg te werk ...’n onderwyser het vir my opgestaan nadat ek

beseft het die meneer is verkeerd, so daai meneer het verstandig opgetree op daardie oomblik nie, ons het maar net die beste gedoen om die probleem uit te sorteer]

- He is the reason I do the best in the grade for business studies. Also, she shares her life experiences with you, so you feel like you know her as a person.
- It is someone who doesn't forget that he is human  
[Dit is iemand wat nie vergeet hy is 'n mens nie.]
- So nobody is perfect and we not right all the time
- I also want to teach children the right way to give criticism, not black or white, but gray. I am a 'gray' person, but it makes it difficult for oneself to be like that - but people / kids are not in boxes  
[Ek wil ook kinders leer om op die regte manier kritiek te gee, nie swart of wit nie, maar grys. Ek is 'n 'grys' mens, maar dit maak dit moeilik vir 'n mens self – maar mense / kinders is nie in boksies nie]
- He was always interested in you as a person – in the small things – though he did not know everything about you, he knew what was important to you.  
[Hy het altyd in jou as persoon belanggestel – met klein goedjies – al het hy nie alles van jou geweet nie, het hy geweet wat vir jou belangrik was.]
- I mean when I meet them they, the way they talk to the learners “oh you did that, how did it go”, so for me they have an interest also in the learner's life not only academically but social as well
- To know about the core business you look to the child as a whole
- You need to look at the feelings of a child
- A person who know how to communicate with other people and when he or she treats them, treats them equal.
- You know exactly that there are those who are fast learners as well, so you try and get some more activities for those so that you can keep them busy while you are concentrating or trying to help those that are slow learners
- Even difficult concepts must be communicated at an understandable level  
[Selfs moeilike begrippe moet op 'n verstaanbare vlak gekommunikeer word]
- So for the kids it is difficult for them to differentiate between the schoolwork and the outside world
- A person who can handle his/her anger.
- So it's almost more challenging, so it demands you to be better at keeping calm and collected, there are actually children who are challenging today, even more so than in the past

[So dit is amper meer uitdagend, so dit eis groter goed van jou af om kalm en rustigheid te behou, daar is werklik kinders wat uitdagend is vandag, selfs meer so as in die verlede]

- and these teachers that we spoke about feel very strongly about their value systems

[en hierdie onderwysers waaroor ons gepraat het is baie sterk openlik oor hulle waardestelsels]

- Good reputation and who is always punctual to his work

- I'm very comfortable in a class and I enjoyed a subject much more than I was comfortable with my teacher

[Ek is baie gemaklik in 'n klas en ek geniet 'n vak ook baie meer as ek gemaklik is met 'n onderwyser]

- Will be much easier to ask questions to a nice teacher, than a teacher you are afraid of  
[Sal ook baie makliker vir 'n onderwyser vrae vra wat gaaf is met die klas as 'n onderwyser wat jy te bang is om voor te vra]

- They should make themselves accessible to learners

[Hulle moet hulself toeganklik maak vir leerders.]

- Someone who share the knowledge with the learners and also permit learners to ask questions and to come out with their own views because it is not like because you are a teacher you always know everything.

- They are friendly so that they, they are approachable

- I must say their expertise and how they conduct themselves and teach the children and the method they follow to explain the work

[Ek moet sê hulle vakkennis en hoe hulle hulself "present" en aanbied aan die kinders en die metode wat hulle volg om die goed oor te bring]

- Must know his or her content of the subject that he's teaching

- You need to be on the their level so that the child can be free in class even to participate in class in whatever activity what you are doing

- you'd be down, he would pick you up

- A good teacher helps students to build a positive attitude.

[ 'n Goeie onderwyser help leerders om 'n positiewe ingesteldheid op te bou.]

- It is a kind of a "presence" that you should have, it's a kind of body language that a person should have. You, as a man with children you must exhibit positive body language. You, you, you when you walk into a class, you should greet them and they should know immediately...

[dit is 'n tipe van 'n "presence" wat jy moet hê, dis 'n tipe lyftaal wat 'n mens moet hê. Jy moet, ás 'n mens met kinders werk moet jy 'n positiewe lyftaal uitstraal. Jy, jy moet, jy

moet 'n klas instap en jy moet hulle groet en hulle moet onmiddelik weet ]

- I really think that what distinguishes a good teacher from other is being able to deal with your children so that they slowly um learn and develop self-discipline. If you can get them to understand why they should work  
[Ek dink die, wat regtig 'n goeie onderwyser van ander onderskei is as jy jou kinders so kan hanteer dat hulle stadig in um self dissipline aanleer en ontwikkel. As jy vir hulle kan kry dat hulle verstaan hoekom hulle moet werk]
- Someone who can motivate learners to never give up.  
[Iemand wat leerders kan motiveer om nooit moed op te gee nie.]
- a good teacher is a curious teacher, a reading teacher, a teacher who is willing to develop him or herself
- you have to interpret the rules for yourself rather than just follow and enforce on people  
[jy moet die reëls vir jouself kan uitlê eerder as om dit net te volg en af te dwing op mense]
- A good role model for his / her learner.  
[’n Goeie rolmodel wees vir sy/ haar leerder.]
- that change lives uhm based on the example set and not so much on the knowledge  
[wat lewens verander uhm gebaseer op die voorbeeld te stel en nie so hard op die kennis nie,]
- For me a good teacher is someone who you can see that is passionate about their subject and that really bother with every lesson offered.  
[Vir my is ’n goeie onderwyser iemand wie jy kan sien wat passievol is oor hul vak en wat regtig moeite doen met elke les wat aangebied word.]
- a teacher who does not simply follow the rules and regulations established in the school blindly, and enforce them on the kids, I think someone who is a good teacher makes out the rules for themselves who tries to logically "figures them out"  
[’n onderwyser wat nie net reëls en regulasies wat ingestel is in die skool ingestel en nie net blindelings navolg en afdwing op die kinders nie, ek dink iemand wat ’n goeie onderwyser is sal die reëls vir homself eers logies te probeer “uit figure” en ]
- Anyone with an opinion and the ability to give his / her opinion to be heard, but also to listen to other opinions.  
[Iemand met ’n opinie en die vermoë om haar/ sy opinie te laat hoor, maar ook na ander opinies te luister.]
- but still have respect for the person who instituted those rules, to have respect for them, continue to respect those people's opinions because they also have a point of view  
[maar om nog steeds respek hê vir die persoon wat daai reëls wat ingestel is, respek vir hulle ook te hê, nog steeds daai mense se opinie te respekteer want hulle het ook, ’n oogpunt sien]

- if they are good coaches you do your best on the field and when you are in class you your best for them  
[as hulle goeie afrigters is doen jy jou beste op die veld en as jy nou in die klas is gaan jy ook jou beste vir hulle]
- If I ask a question because I do not understand, and the teacher makes me feel stupid I just later just become quiet  
[As ek 'n vraag vra omdat ek nie verstaan nie, en die onderwyser laat my dom voel dan word ek later net stil]
- A teacher who has a good personality and kids off crack and swear at them.  
[‘n Onderwyser wat ‘n goeie persoonlikheid het en nie kinders af kraak en op hulle vloek nie.]
- and a good teacher who is someone who can separate his personal things from school,
- he’s always in class.
- A confident teacher is regarded as a good teacher.
- I would like to say this teacher is able to learn from others, he’s not his own
- I want to teach children to think critically, but it also means that they will possibly also be critical of me  
[Ek wil kinders leer om krities te dink, maar dit beteken ook dat hulle moontlik krities sal wees oor my –]
- you must keep up with the children, children changed, I mean the time when I began to teach they were different, and now they are even more different from earlier  
  
[jy moet voorbly, die kinders verander, ek bedoel hulle, die tyd toe ek al begin skoolhou het hulle gesê vandag se kinders is anders as vroeër, hulle is nog steeds anders as vroeër]
- They have to have confidence and they have to make an effort, if they don’t know something and we ask them a question they have to go and find the answer even if they don’t know it, they will say “okay i’ll go find out”... The extra mile for you
- uses criticism constructive and if you come to something and then you say “ here is the problem, I think here’s the solution” I think give a suggestion, not always seeing problems and not solutions
- understands learners and communicate with them enough
- He must always stimulating and challenging  
[Hy moet hulle altyd prikkel en uitdaag]
- trying not only focus on the negative only, because we focus too much on the life and just give too much attention to children who do wrong and forget those good children who are most, if I think about it now  
[probeer nie net fokus op die negatiewe nie, want ons fokus te veel op die lewe en ons gee te veel aandag aan kinders wat net verkeerd doen en vergeet van daai goeie kinders]

wat die meeste is as ek nou kyk,]

- she expected of me that I will participate in the class. I think positive behaviour reinforcement is an important skill that a person should do, or should apply um children thrive anyway on encouragement and reward even if they are in matric  
[sy verwag van my dat ek sal deelneem aan die klas. Ek dink positiewe gedragsversterking is 'n belangrike vaardigheid wat 'n mens moet doen, of moet toepas um kinders floreer in elk geval op prysing en aanmoediging en beloning al is hulle ook in matriek]
- in many cases it is a "gut feeling" that's a ... skill if I may say so that you have what is sometimes difficult to pin down  
[In baie gevalle is dit 'n "gut feeling" dis 'n ... vaardigheid as ek dit so kan sê wat jy het wat moeilik is partykeer neer te pen]
- She is strict, yet has an amazing sense of humour.
- a good teacher must be caring, loving and concerning the children,
- he will not like give up easily even if you talk in class ... will stand up and talk and uhm like ... some children make fun of others, but he will be there and talk to us
- die perfekte balans tussen gesag afdwing sonder konformering van leerders terwyl hulle terselfdertyd individualisme aanspoor in elke leerder binne 'n beheerde, veilige omgewing met hul unieke wyse van te werk gaan.
- Dit is iemand wat leerders gereed maak vir 'n blink toekoms vorentoe. Iemand wat bereid om altyd opofferinge te maak vir sy leerders.
- Om nog steeds die beste uit ons kinders te haal
- wys hulle 'n groter toekoms as wat jhulle vir hulleself sou bedink
- hulle gaan so 'n bietjie verder as wat 'n onderwyser wat net die "job" wil doen verstaan, hulle sien dit nog as 'n roeping , 'n "calling", jy kan dit nog duidelik sien, daai roeping
- She is driven, goal-orientated and outspoken. If she is in her class, you can hear her from outside the schoolgrounds. She shouts at you when you slack, and keeps you on your toes.
- A good teacher starts with ... discipline in your class  
[ 'n goeie onderwyser begin by ...dissipline in jou klas]
- I think you have to be very honest  
[ek dink jy moet baie eerlik kan wees]

- I want to teach children to think critically – I do not check homework every day, and then one day I checked and gave extra work gives (which came down to punishment) and there was a learner who said that it is unfair, and that it was the first time she was caught

[ek wil kinders leer om krities te dink, ek kontroleer nie elke dag huiswerk nie, en toe een dag toe ek kontroleer en ekstra werk gee ( wat maar op strafwerk neerkom) was daar 'n leerling wat gesê het dat dit onregverdig is, en dat dit die eerste keer is wat sy uitgevang word]

- I want the teacher who works, especially Mathematics teachers but every teacher, I want the teacher to work with other teachers to do network

- it does matter as well to have a relationship with the entire staff because we are working as a team. If we don't work as a team, in isolation, that mean that you won't have good results

- integrity at all times to give your best because it

[integriteit ten alle tye jou beste te gee want dis]

- he may not be too strict

[hy mag nie te streng wees nie]

- A good listener - and let learners to pursue greater heights  
[‘n Goeie luisteraar en leerders tot groter hoogtes te laat strew.]

- you need to give the children their time to express their views

- A good teacher it's a person who has perseverance towards his or her work.

## APPENDIX C: PERMISSION FROM THE WCED

Navrae  
Enquiries      Dr A.T Wyngaard  
IMibuzo  
  
Telefoon  
Telephone      021 467 9272  
IFoni  
  
Faks  
Fax  
IFeksi

Mrs Eli  
33 Berg  
Welling



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Wes-Kaap Onderwysdepartement

---

Western Cape Education Department

---

ISEbe leMfundo leNtshona Koloni

---

Verwysing  
Reference      20110215-0055  
ISalathiso

Dear Mrs Elizabeth Fleischmann

### RESEARCH PROPOSAL: SOFT SKILLS OF EXCELLENT TEACHERS IN DIVERSE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENTS IN THE WESTERN CAPE

Your application to conduct the above-mentioned research in schools in the Western Cape has been approved subject to the following conditions:

1. Principals, educators and learners are under no obligation to assist you in your investigation.
2. Principals, educators, learners and schools should not be identifiable in any way from the results of the investigation.
3. You make all the arrangements concerning your investigation.
4. Educators' programmes are not to be interrupted.
5. The Study is to be conducted from **1 March 2011 till 30 August 2011**
6. No research can be conducted during the fourth term as schools are preparing and finalizing syllabi for examinations (October to December).
7. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey, please contact Dr A.T Wyngaard at the contact numbers above quoting the reference number.
8. A photocopy of this letter is submitted to the principal where the intended research is to be conducted.
9. Your research will be limited to the list of schools as forwarded to the Western Cape Education Department.
10. A brief summary of the content, findings and recommendations is provided to the Director: Research Services.
11. The Department receives a copy of the completed report/dissertation/thesis addressed to:  
**The Director: Research Services  
Western Cape Education Department  
Private Bag X9114  
CAPE TOWN  
8000**

We wish you success in your research.

Kind regards.

Signed: Audrey T Wyngaard  
for: **HEAD: EDUCATION**  
**DATE: 15 February 2011**

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MELD ASSEBLIEF VERWYSINGSNOMMERS IN ALLE KORRESPONDENSIE / PLEASE QUOTE REFERENCE NUMBERS IN ALL CORRESPONDENCE /  
NCEDA UBHALE IINOMBOLO ZESALATHISO KUYO YONKE IMBALELWANO

GRAND CENTRAL TOWERS, LAER-PARLEMENTSTRAAT, PRIVAATSAK X9114, KAAPSTAD 8000  
GRAND CENTRAL TOWERS, LOWER PARLIAMENT STREET, PRIVATE BAG X9114, CAPE TOWN 8000

WEB: <http://wced.wcape.gov.za>

**INBELSENTRUM /CALL CENTRE**

INDIENSNEMING- EN SALARISNAVRAE/EMPLOYMENT AND SALARY QUERIES ☎0861 92 33 22

VEILIGE SKOLE/SAFE SCHOOLS ☎ 0800 45 46 47



**WESTERN CAPE**  
**Education Department**

Provincial Government of the Western Cape

**APPENDIX D: EXTENDED  
PERMISSION FROM THE  
WCED**

**RESEARCH**

awyngaar@pgwc.gov.za  
tel: +27 021 476 9272 fax: 0865902282  
Private Bag x9114, Cape Town, 8000  
wced.wcape.gov.za

**REFERENCE:** 20110215-0055

**ENQUIRIES:** Dr A T Wyngaard  
Mrs Elizabeth Fleischmann  
33 Berg Street  
Wellington

**Dear Mrs Elizabeth Fleischmann**

**RESEARCH PROPOSAL: SOFT SKILLS OF EXCELLENT TEACHERS IN DIVERSE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENTS IN THE WESTERN CAPE**

Your application to conduct the above-mentioned research in schools in the Western Cape has been approved subject to the following conditions:

12. Principals, educators and learners are under no obligation to assist you in your investigation.
13. Principals, educators, learners and schools should not be identifiable in any way from the results of the investigation.
14. You make all the arrangements concerning your investigation.
15. Educators' programmes are not to be interrupted.
16. The Study is to be conducted from **17 January 2012 till 30 September 2012**
17. No research can be conducted during the fourth term as schools are preparing and finalizing syllabi for examinations (October to December).
18. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey, please contact Dr A.T Wyngaard at the contact numbers above quoting the reference number.
19. A photocopy of this letter is submitted to the principal where the intended research is to be conducted.
20. Your research will be limited to the list of schools as forwarded to the Western Cape Education Department.
21. A brief summary of the content, findings and recommendations is provided to the Director: Research Services.
22. The Department receives a copy of the completed report/dissertation/thesis addressed to:  
**The Director: Research Services**  
**Western Cape Education Department**  
**Private Bag X9114**  
**CAPE TOWN 8000**

We wish you success in your research.

Kind regards.

Signed: Audrey T Wyngaard

for: **HEAD: EDUCATION**

**DATE: 05 May 2011**

## APPENDIX E: INFORMED CONSENT - PRINCIPAL



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jou kennisvennoot • your knowledge partner

### CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH: PRINCIPAL

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#### Research Topic:

#### **Soft skills of excellent teachers in diverse South African schools in the Western Cape**

You are asked to participate in a research study conducted by Elma Fleischmann, towards achieving M.Ed. from the Department Education Policy Studies at Stellenbosch University. The results of this study will be reported in the thesis towards the achievement of the M.Ed. (Policy Studies) degree. You \_\_\_\_\_ were selected as a possible participant in this study because, you, as principal were identified as a person that could give deep insight into the skills of excellent teachers.

#### **1. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

The main question that guides the study is:

#### **How important are soft skills for excellent teachers in diverse educational contexts?**

This will be subdivided into the following questions:

- What are soft skills?
- Why are soft skills important for teachers in diverse school contexts?
- When is a teacher an excellent teacher?
- Which soft skills are important for a teacher in the current South African educational context?

#### **2. PROCEDURES**

The research consists of a similar set of questions that will be asked to the school principal, selected teachers and groups of grade 11 and 12 learners.

If you are willing to participate in this study, you will take part in an interview, where you will be asked the following:

- the skills which excellent teachers have
- which of these skills are soft skills
- Tell a story of an excellent teacher

You will also be asked to identify **six** excellent teachers for Grade 11 and 12 and **ten** learners to take part in the research, according to certain given criteria.

There will be one interview only, for about an hour.

### **3. POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS**

There are no risks attached to this study.

A recording will be made of the discussion, but there will be no names attached to the recording.

By taking part in this study, the person is choosing to help the researcher to reflect on the skills an excellent teacher might have. We hope that the research will help us know more about the soft skills of excellent teachers and you are part of this process.

### **4. POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO SUBJECTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY**

Hopefully the results from this research will give the researcher insight into the skills (and especially soft skills) a teacher should have to be an excellent teacher.

In teacher training there seems to be a lack of training in these skills. The study might make people aware of the importance of these skills.

### **5. PAYMENT FOR PARTICIPATION**

The participant will receive no compensation for taking part in this study.

### **6. CONFIDENTIALITY**

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. Confidentiality will be maintained by means of recordings being kept in a safe by the researcher, and no names of schools, teachers or learners to be attached to transcripts.

The information will be analysed in such a way that no-one will know who gave which responses.

The interviews and focus groups will be recorded on a tape recorder and in the form of transcriptions. Notes will also be taken. These will be stored in a safe place until the thesis and other articles based on this have been exhausted. Then they will be destroyed.

### **7. PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL**

The participant can choose whether to be in this study or not. If he/she volunteers to be in this study, he/she may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. He/she may also refuse to answer any questions he/she don't want to answer and still remain in the study. The investigator may withdraw the learner from this research if circumstances arise which warrant doing so.

### **8. IDENTIFICATION OF INVESTIGATORS**

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact:

Mrs. Elma Fleischmann, cellular number: 0846845828

Prof. Jan Heystek, office telephone number (021)8082877

### **9. RIGHTS OF RESEARCH SUBJECTS**

You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of your participation in this research study. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject, contact Ms Maléne Fouché ([mfouche@sun.ac.za](mailto:mfouche@sun.ac.za); tel. 021 808 4622) at the Division for Research Development.

**SIGNATURE OF RESEARCH SUBJECT OR LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE**

The information above was described to \_\_\_\_\_ me by Mrs. Elma Fleischmann in English and I am in command of this language or it was satisfactorily translated to me. I was given the opportunity to ask questions and these questions were answered to my satisfaction.

I hereby consent voluntarily to participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this form.

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Name of Subject/Participant**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Name of Legal Representative (if applicable)**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Signature of Subject/Participant or Legal Representative**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

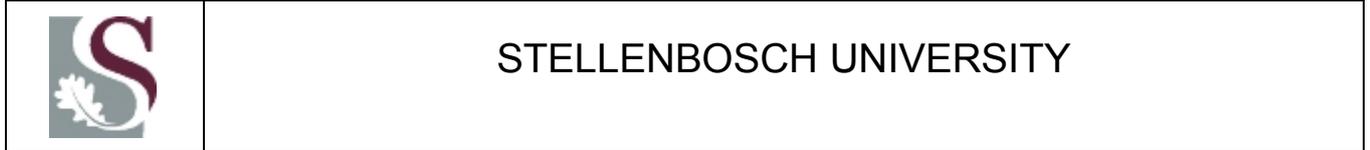
**SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR**

I declare that I explained the information given in this document to \_\_\_\_\_ [*name of the subject/participant*] and/or [his/her] representative \_\_\_\_\_ [*name of the representative*]. [He/she] was encouraged and given ample time to ask me any questions. This conversation was conducted in *English* and [*no translator was used/this conversation was translated into \_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_*].

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Signature of Investigator**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

## APPENDIX F: INFORMED CONSENT – LEARNERS UNDER 18



### PARTICIPANT INFORMATION LEAFLET AND ASSENT FORM



#### TITLE OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT:

Soft skills of excellent teachers in diverse South African schools in the Western Cape

**RESEARCHERS NAME(S):** Elma Fleischmann

**ADDRESS:** 33 Berg Street Wellington

**CONTACT NUMBER:** (021)8645284

#### What is RESEARCH?

Research is something we do to find new knowledge about the way things (and people) work. We use research projects or studies to help us find out more about disease or illness. Research also helps us to find better ways of helping, or treating children who are sick.

#### What is this research project all about?

We want to know which skills are prominent in excellent teachers. We will also talk to the school principal and teachers themselves, to determine which skills distinguish an excellent teacher.

#### Why have I been invited to take part in this research project?

Learners are the people that will be able to tell us when a teacher is an excellent teacher, and which skills excellent teachers have which other teachers might not have. The principal was asked to identify different students. The group will consist of boys and girls, students taking different subjects, students of different ability and personality.

#### Who is doing the research?

I am a lecturer training Grade 10 – 12 teachers at the Wellington Campus of the CPUT. I was a teacher myself in different High Schools for 18 years, and I want to know how to train teachers more effectively.

That is the other reason I am doing this research. I am studying for my master's degree at the University of Stellenbosch.

#### What will happen to me in this study?

You have been identified to speak in a group about the skills you think excellent teachers have. You are going to be asked to fill in a questionnaire on which you rate certain skills of excellent teachers, and then I am going to lead the group to discuss their ideas about which skills and excellent teacher has. I want to repeat that you may at any time leave the discussion.

### Can anything bad happen to me?

Nothing bad can happen to you. There may be some questions which may be more sensitive for example, why you think a teacher is an excellent teacher, but if you do not want to answer them you are free to leave the room. Please be honest. I am making a recording of the group discussion, but no-one will know who said what.

### Can anything good happen to me?

If you do this, you are choosing to help me think about when a teacher is a good teacher. You do not really get anything out of this. We hope that the research will help us know more about the skills of excellent teachers.

It gives you a chance to voice your opinion about what good teachers should be like. You may also find that other students agree/disagree with you.

### Will anyone know I am in the study?

The principal identified you as part of the group – I asked him to identify a group of Grade 11 and 12 students, that are as diverse as possible, in terms of gender, ability, attitude, so he knows, but what you say in the group will be confidential. That means nobody will know what you said. Information about him/her will be given to the study sponsor.



### Who can I talk to about the study?

#### Prof Jan Heystek

Department of Education Policy Studies  
Faculty of Education  
Stellenbosch University  
+ 27 21 808 2877  
084 722 9136

#### Malene Fouché

tel. 021 808 4622

### What if I do not want to do this?

If you do not want to be in this group, you do not have to. Even if you find that during the group session that you do not want to take part further, you may, at any time leave.

Do you understand this research study and are you willing to take part in it?

YES

NO

Has the researcher answered all your questions?

YES

NO

Do you understand that you can pull out of the study at any time?

YES

NO

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Child

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**APPENDIX G: INFORMED CONSENT – PARENTS OF LEARNERS UNDER 18**

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**STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY  
PARENTAL CONSENT FORM**

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**Research Topic:****Soft skills of excellent teachers in diverse South African schools in the Western Cape**

You are asked to give permission for your child / the child of whom you are the guardian to participate in a research study conducted by Elma Fleischmann, from the Department Education Policy Studies at Stellenbosch University. The results of this study will be reported in the thesis towards the achievement of the M.Ed. (Policy Studies) degree. Your child / the child of whom you are the guardian \_\_\_\_\_ was selected as a possible participant in this study because, as part of the study of skills of excellent teachers it is important to ask learners what they think the skills of excellent teachers entail.

**10. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

The main question that guides the study is:

**How important are soft skills for excellent teachers in diverse educational contexts?**

This will be subdivided into the following questions:

- What are soft skills?
- Why are soft skills important for teachers in diverse school contexts?
- When is a teacher an excellent teacher?
- Which soft skills are important for a teacher in the current South African educational context?

**11. PROCEDURES**

The research consists of a similar set of questions that will be asked to the school principal, selected teachers and groups of Grade 11 and 12 learners.

If you give consent for your child/the child of whom you are the guardian to volunteer to participate in this study, we would ask him/her to do the following things:

- Take part in a focus group (a discussion with other learners), discussing the skills excellent teachers have
- Discuss which of these skills are soft skills
- Tell a story of an excellent teacher
- Fill in a form on which the learner will rate the importance of certain skills of excellent teachers

This group will only meet once, for about an hour, after school time on the school grounds.

## **12. POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS**

There are no risks attached to this study. If at any time the learner wants to leave the room or not answer a question, he/she is free to do so.

A recording will be made of the group discussion, but no-one will know who said what.

By taking part in this study the learner is choosing to help the researcher to determine the skills an excellent teacher might have. We hope that the research will help us to know more about the skills of excellent teachers.

It gives the learner an opportunity to voice his/her opinion about what excellent teachers are like. The learners might also gain new insights into what other learners think about this topic.

## **13. POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO SUBJECTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY**

Hopefully the results from this research will give the researcher insight into the skills (and especially soft skills) a teacher should have to be seen as an excellent teacher.

In teacher training there seems to be a lack of training in these skills. The study might make people aware of the importance of these skills.

## **14. PAYMENT FOR PARTICIPATION**

The learner will receive no compensation for taking part in this study.

## **15. CONFIDENTIALITY**

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. Confidentiality will be maintained by means of recordings being kept in a safe by the researcher, and no names of schools, teachers or learners to be attached to transcripts.

The information will be analysed in such a way that no-one will know which learner gave which responses.

The interviews and focus groups will be recorded on a tape recorder and transcribed. Notes will also be taken. These will be stored in a safe place until the thesis and other articles based on this have been exhausted. Then it will be destroyed.

## **16. PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL**

The learner can choose whether to be in this study or not. If he/she volunteers to be in this study, he/she may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. He/she may also refuse to answer any questions he/she don't want to answer and still remain in the study. The investigator may withdraw the learner from this research if circumstances arise which warrant doing so.

## **17. IDENTIFICATION OF INVESTIGATORS**

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact:

Mrs. Elma Fleischmann, cellular number: 0846845828

Prof. Jan Heystek, office telephone number (021)8082877

## 18. RIGHTS OF RESEARCH SUBJECTS

You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because you're the participation of your child or the child you are the guardian of in this research study. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject, contact Ms Maléne Fouché ([mfouche@sun.ac.za](mailto:mfouche@sun.ac.za); tel. 021 808 4622) at the Division for Research Development.

### SIGNATURE OF PARENT / GUARDIAN OR LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE

I hereby consent that the my child/ the child of whom I am the guardian may participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this form.

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Name of Parent or guardian**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Name of Legal Representative (if applicable)**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Signature of Parent or Guardian**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

### SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR

I declare that I explained the information given in this document to \_\_\_\_\_ [name of the subject/participant] and/or [his/her] representative \_\_\_\_\_ [name of the representative]. [He/she] was encouraged and given ample time to ask me any questions. This conversation was conducted in English and [no translator was used/this conversation was translated into \_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_].

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Signature of Investigator**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

## APPENDIX H: INFORMED CONSENT – LEARNERS UNDER 18



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jou kennisvennoot • your knowledge partner

### STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY PARENTAL CONSENT FORM

#### Research Topic:

#### **Soft skills of excellent teachers in diverse South African schools in the Western Cape**

You are asked to give permission for your child / the child of whom you are the guardian to participate in a research study conducted by Elma Fleischmann, from the Department Education Policy Studies at Stellenbosch University. The results of this study will be reported in the thesis towards the achievement of the M.Ed. (Policy Studies) degree. Your child / the child of whom you are the guardian \_\_\_\_\_ was selected as a possible participant in this study because, as part of the study of skills of excellent teachers it is important to ask learners what they think the skills of excellent teachers entail.

#### **19. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

The main question that guides the study is:

#### **How important are soft skills for excellent teachers in diverse educational contexts?**

This will be subdivided into the following questions:

- What are soft skills?
- Why are soft skills important for teachers in diverse school contexts?
- When is a teacher an excellent teacher?
- Which soft skills are important for a teacher in the current South African educational context?

#### **20. PROCEDURES**

The research consists of a similar set of questions that will be asked to the school principal, selected teachers and groups of Grade 11 and 12 learners.

If you give consent for your child/the child of whom you are the guardian to volunteer to participate in this study, we would ask him/her to do the following things:

- Take part in a focus group (a discussion with other learners), discussing the skills excellent teachers have
- Discuss which of these skills are soft skills
- Tell a story of an excellent teacher
- Fill in a form on which the learner will rate the importance of certain skills of excellent teachers

This group will only meet once, for about an hour, after school time on the school grounds.

## **21. POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS**

There are no risks attached to this study. If at any time the learner wants to leave the room or not answer a question, he/she is free to do so.

A recording will be made of the group discussion, but no-one will know who said what.

By taking part in this study the learner is choosing to help the researcher to determine the skills an excellent teacher might have. We hope that the research will help us to know more about the skills of excellent teachers.

It gives the learner an opportunity to voice his/her opinion about what excellent teachers are like. The learners might also gain new insights into what other learners think about this topic.

## **22. POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO SUBJECTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY**

Hopefully the results from this research will give the researcher insight into the skills (and especially soft skills) a teacher should have to be seen as an excellent teacher.

In teacher training there seems to be a lack of training in these skills. The study might make people aware of the importance of these skills.

## **23. PAYMENT FOR PARTICIPATION**

The learner will receive no compensation for taking part in this study.

## **24. CONFIDENTIALITY**

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. Confidentiality will be maintained by means of recordings being kept in a safe by the researcher, and no names of schools, teachers or learners to be attached to transcripts.

The information will be analysed in such a way that no-one will know which learner gave which responses.

The interviews and focus groups will be recorded on a tape recorder and transcribed. Notes will also be taken. These will be stored in a safe place until the thesis and other articles based on this have been exhausted. Then it will be destroyed.

## **25. PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL**

The learner can choose whether to be in this study or not. If he/she volunteers to be in this study, he/she may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. He/she may also refuse to answer any questions he/she don't want to answer and still remain in the study. The investigator may withdraw the learner from this research if circumstances arise which warrant doing so.

## **26. IDENTIFICATION OF INVESTIGATORS**

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact:

Mrs. Elma Fleischmann, cellular number: 0846845828

Prof. Jan Heystek, office telephone number (021)8082877

## 27. RIGHTS OF RESEARCH SUBJECTS

You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because you're the participation of your child or the child you are the guardian of in this research study. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject, contact Ms Maléne Fouché ([mfouche@sun.ac.za](mailto:mfouche@sun.ac.za); tel. 021 808 4622) at the Division for Research Development.

<b>SIGNATURE OF PARENT / GUARDIAN OR LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE</b>
---

I hereby consent that the my child/ the child of whom I am the guardian may participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this form.

\_\_\_\_\_

**Name of Parent or guardian**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Name of Legal Representative (if applicable)**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Signature of Parent or Guardian**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Date**

<b>SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR</b>
----------------------------------

I declare that I explained the information given in this document to \_\_\_\_\_ [name of the subject/participant] and/or [his/her] representative \_\_\_\_\_ [name of the representative]. [He/she] was encouraged and given ample time to ask me any questions. This conversation was conducted in English and [no translator was used/this conversation was translated into \_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_].

\_\_\_\_\_

**Signature of Investigator**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Date**

## APPENDIX I: INFORMED CONSENT – LEARNERS OVER 18



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### CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH: LEARNERS OVER 18

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#### Research Topic:

#### **Soft skills of excellent teachers in diverse South African schools in the Western Cape**

You are asked to participate in a research study conducted by Elma Fleischmann, towards achieving M.Ed. from the Department Education Policy Studies at Stellenbosch University. The results of this study will be reported in the thesis towards the achievement of the M.Ed. (Policy Studies) degree. You \_\_\_\_\_ were selected as a possible participant in this study because, you as a learner were identified as a person that could give deep insight into the skills of excellent teachers.

#### **28. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

The main question that guides the study is:

#### **How important are soft skills for excellent teachers in diverse educational contexts?**

This will be subdivided into the following questions:

- What are soft skills?
- Why are soft skills important for teachers in diverse school contexts?
- When is a teacher an excellent teacher?
- Which soft skills are important for a teacher in the current South African educational context?

#### **29. PROCEDURES**

The research consists of a similar set of questions that will be asked to the school principal, selected teachers and groups of grade 11 and 12 learners.

If you are willing to participate in this study, you will take part in an interview, where you will be asked the following:

- the skills which excellent teachers have
- which of these skills are soft skills
- Tell a story of an excellent teacher

There will be focus group only, for about an hour, after school time on the school grounds.

### **30. POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS**

There are no risks attached to this study. If at any time you want to leave the room or not answer a question, you are free to do so.

A recording will be made of the discussion, but there will be no names attached to the recording.

By taking part in this study, the person is choosing to help the researcher to reflect on the skills an excellent teacher might have. We hope that the research will help us know more about the soft skills of excellent teachers.

### **31. POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO SUBJECTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY**

Hopefully the results from this research will give the researcher insight into the skills (and especially soft skills) a teacher should have to be an excellent teacher.

In teacher training there seems to be a lack of training in these skills. The study might make people aware of the importance of these skills.

### **32. PAYMENT FOR PARTICIPATION**

The participant will receive no compensation for taking part in this study.

### **33. CONFIDENTIALITY**

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. Confidentiality will be maintained by means of recordings being kept in a safe by the researcher, and no names of schools, teachers or learners to be attached to transcripts.

The information will be analysed in such a way that no-one will know who gave which responses.

The interviews and focus groups will be recorded on a tape recorder and in the form of transcriptions. Notes will also be taken. These will be stored in a safe place until the thesis and other articles based on this have been exhausted. Then they will be destroyed.

### **34. PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL**

The participant can choose whether to be in this study or not. If he/she volunteers to be in this study, he/she may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. He/she may also refuse to answer any questions he/she don't want to answer and still remain in the study. The investigator may withdraw the learner from this research if circumstances arise which warrant doing so.

### **35. IDENTIFICATION OF INVESTIGATORS**

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact:  
Mrs. Elma Fleischmann, cellular number: 0846845828  
Prof. Jan Heystek, office telephone number (021)8082877

### 36. RIGHTS OF RESEARCH SUBJECTS

You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of your participation in this research study. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject, contact Ms Maléne Fouché ([mfouche@sun.ac.za](mailto:mfouche@sun.ac.za); tel. 021 808 4622) at the Division for Research Development.

#### SIGNATURE OF RESEARCH SUBJECT OR LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE

The information above was described to \_\_\_\_\_  
me by Mrs. Elma Fleischmann in English and I am in command of this language or it was satisfactorily translated to me. I was given the opportunity to ask questions and these questions were answered to my satisfaction.

I hereby consent voluntarily to participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this form.

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Name of Subject/Participant**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Name of Legal Representative (if applicable)**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Signature of Subject/Participant or Legal Representative**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

#### SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR

I declare that I explained the information given in this document to \_\_\_\_\_ [*name of the subject/participant*] and/or [his/her] representative \_\_\_\_\_ [*name of the representative*]. [He/she] was encouraged and given ample time to ask me any questions. This conversation was conducted in *English* and [*no translator was used/this conversation was translated into* \_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_].

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Signature of Investigator**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

## APPENDIX J: INFORMED CONSENT – TEACHERS



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### CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH: TEACHERS

#### **Research Topic:**

#### **Soft skills of excellent teachers in diverse South African schools in the Western Cape**

You are asked to participate in a research study conducted by Elma Fleischmann, towards achieving M.Ed. from the Department Education Policy Studies at Stellenbosch University. The results of this study will be reported in the thesis towards the achievement of the M.Ed. (Policy Studies) degree. You \_\_\_\_\_ were selected as a possible participant in this study because, you were identified as a person that could give deep insight into the skills of excellent teachers.

#### **37. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

The main question that guides the study is:

#### **How important are soft skills for excellent teachers in diverse educational contexts?**

This will be subdivided into the following questions:

- What are soft skills?
- Why are soft skills important for teachers in diverse school contexts?
- When is a teacher an excellent teacher?
- Which soft skills are important for a teacher in the current South African educational context?

#### **38. PROCEDURES**

The research consists of a similar set of questions that will be asked to the school principal, selected teachers and groups of grade 11 and 12 learners.

If you are willing to participate in this study, you will take part in an interview, where you will be asked the following:

- the skills which excellent teachers have
- which of these skills are soft skills
- Tell a story of an excellent teacher

There will be one interview only, for about an hour, after school time on the school grounds.

#### **39. POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS**

There are no risks attached to this study. If at any time you want to leave the room or not answer a question, you are free to do so.

A recording will be made of the discussion, but there will be no names attached to the recording.

Informed consent teachers

By taking part in this study, the person is choosing to help the researcher to reflect on the skills an excellent teacher might have. We hope that the research will help us know more about the soft skills of excellent teachers.

#### **40. POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO SUBJECTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY**

Hopefully the results from this research will give the researcher insight into the skills (and especially soft skills) a teacher should have to be an excellent teacher.

In teacher training there seems to be a lack of training in these skills. The study might make people aware of the importance of these skills.

#### **41. PAYMENT FOR PARTICIPATION**

The participant will receive no compensation for taking part in this study.

#### **42. CONFIDENTIALITY**

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. Confidentiality will be maintained by means of recordings being kept in a safe by the researcher, and no names of schools, teachers or learners to be attached to transcripts.

The information will be analysed in such a way that no-one will know who gave which responses.

The interviews and focus groups will be recorded on a tape recorder and in the form of transcriptions. Notes will also be taken. These will be stored in a safe place until the thesis and other articles based on this have been exhausted. Then they will be destroyed.

#### **43. PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL**

The participant can choose whether to be in this study or not. If he/she volunteers to be in this study, he/she may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. He/she may also refuse to answer any questions he/she don't want to answer and still remain in the study. The investigator may withdraw the learner from this research if circumstances arise which warrant doing so.

#### **44. IDENTIFICATION OF INVESTIGATORS**

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact:  
Mrs. Elma Fleischmann, cellular number: 0846845828  
Prof. Jan Heystek, office telephone number (021)8082877

#### **45. RIGHTS OF RESEARCH SUBJECTS**

You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of your participation in this research study. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject, contact Ms Maléne Fouché ([mfouche@sun.ac.za](mailto:mfouche@sun.ac.za); tel. 021 808 4622) at the Division for Research Development.

<b>SIGNATURE OF RESEARCH SUBJECT OR LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE</b>
--

Informed consent teachers

The information above was described to \_\_\_\_\_  
me by Mrs. Elma Fleischmann in English and I am in command of this language or it was satisfactorily translated to me. I was given the opportunity to ask questions and these questions were answered to my satisfaction.

I hereby consent voluntarily to participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this form.

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Name of Subject/Participant**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Name of Legal Representative (if applicable)**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Signature of Subject/Participant or Legal Representative**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

<b>SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR</b>
----------------------------------

I declare that I explained the information given in this document to \_\_\_\_\_ [*name of the subject/participant*] and/or [his/her] representative \_\_\_\_\_ [*name of the representative*]. [He/she] was encouraged and given ample time to ask me any questions. This conversation was conducted in *English* and [*no translator was used/this conversation was translated into* \_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_].

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Signature of Investigator**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

## APPENDIX K: PERMISSION FROM THE RESEARCH ETHIC COMMITTEE



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### Approval Notice New Application

13-Mar-2012  
FLEISCHMANN, Elizabeth Martha

Protocol #: HS598/2011

Title: Soft skills of excellent teachers in diverse South African schools in the Western Cape

Dear Mrs Elizabeth FLEISCHMANN,

The New Application received on 12-Jul-2011, was reviewed by Research Ethics Committee: Human Research (Humanities) via Committee Review procedures on 28-Jul-2011 and has been approved.

Please note the following information about your approved research protocol:

Protocol Approval Period: 28-Jul-2011 -27-Jul-2012

**Present Committee Members:**

De Villiers, Mare MRH  
Hattingh, Johannes JP  
Theron, Carl CC  
Somhlaba, Ncebazakhe NZ  
Viviers, Suzette S  
Bitzer, Elias EM  
Engelbrecht, Sidney SF  
Van Zyl, Gerhard Mkhonto  
Van der Walt, Nicolene N  
Fouche, Magdalena MG  
Van Wyk, Berte B

**Standard provisions:**

1. The researcher will remain within the procedures and protocols indicated in the proposal, particularly in terms of any undertakings made in terms of the confidentiality of the information gathered.
2. The research will again be submitted for ethical clearance if there is any substantial departure from the existing proposal.
3. The researcher will remain within the parameters of any applicable national legislation, institutional guidelines and scientific standards relevant to the specific field of research.
4. The researcher will consider and implement the foregoing suggestions to lower the ethical risk associated with the research.

You may commence with your research with strict adherence to the abovementioned provisions and stipulations.

Please remember to use your **protocol number (HS598/2011)** on any documents or correspondence with the REC concerning your research protocol.

Please note that the REC has the prerogative and authority to ask further questions, seek additional information, require further modifications, or monitor the conduct of your research and the consent process.

**After Ethical Review:**

Please note that a progress report should be submitted to the Committee before the approval period has expired if a continuation is required. The Committee will then consider the continuation of the project for a further year (if necessary). Annually a number of projects may be selected randomly for an external audit.

National Health Research Ethics Committee (NHREC) number REC-050411-032.

This committee abides by the ethical norms and principles for research, established by the Declaration of Helsinki, the South African Medical Research Council Guidelines as well as the Guidelines for Ethical Research: Principles Structures and Processes 2004 (Department of Health).