

**TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF QUALITY EDUCATION
IN A LOW-INCOME PRIMARY SCHOOL**

by

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DECLARATION

By submitting this thesis electronically, I declare that the entirety of the work contained therein is my own, original work, that I am the sole author thereof (save to the extent explicitly otherwise stated), that reproduction and publication thereof by Stellenbosch University will not infringe any third party rights and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it for obtaining any qualification.

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ABSTRACT

The Western Cape Education Department (WCED) put many interventions in place to provide quality education to all schools, but barriers still remained in low-income communities. Most barriers developed due to inadequate resources such as: poor teacher training, lack of community involvement, lack of transportation, poor service delivery and sustainability within the community. Numerous communities suffered discrimination in the form of unjust distribution of social benefits and resources. The Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS), however, expects all learners to follow the same curriculum and achieve the same type of quality education. This is impossible when schools have inadequate resources. The aim of the research was therefore to explore how teachers understood the concept of quality education through their lived experiences at a low-income school. This exploration took into account what teachers viewed as contributing to or hindering a quality education, both at personal and interpersonal levels in the school. It also considered how the school system, the WCED and the social environment contributed to positive or negative outcomes regarding quality. This was important as teachers were seen as the key agents towards change in quality education.

Social constructionism and a social justice approach provided the foundation of this research and enabled the voices of previously disadvantaged communities to be heard. In keeping with the theoretical frameworks of the study, a qualitative, interpretivist research approach was used. Participants were selected through purposive sampling and focus group discussions as well as individual interviews were used to generate data. Digital audio recordings were made of the group and individual sessions, which were then transcribed. The data collected in this study were analysed through thematic analysis.

The research findings indicated that teachers experienced numerous barriers with regards to contextual factors and unjust distribution of resources. Furthermore, teachers reflected that with good pedagogy they were able to maintain quality education, by teaching a curriculum that was relevant to the context of the learner, even when resources were limited. This process was very time-consuming and not cost-effective. However, even though teachers were able to recognise the barriers present in their school they insisted that there were many positive aspects to working in a low-income school. These findings led to recommendations that were centred largely on meeting some of the support needs of teachers in low-income communities.

Keywords: quality, primary school education, teachers, low-income communities, social justice, social constructionism

OPSOMMING

Die Wes-Kaapse Onderwysdepartement (WKOD) het baie intervensies in plek gestel om gehalte-onderrig te verskaf aan alle skole, maar baie hindernisse was steeds teenwoordig in lae-inkomste gemeenskappe. Baie van die hindernisse het ontstaan as gevolg van onvoldoende hulpbronne soos: swak onderwysopleiding, gebrekkige gemeenskapsbetrokkenheid, onvoldoende vervoer, swak dienslewering en volhoubaarheid in die gemeenskap. Daar was teen talle gemeenskappe gediskrimineer in terme van ongelyke verspreiding van sosiale voordele en hulpbronne. Die Kurrikulum- en Assesseringsbeleidsverklaring (KABV) verwag egter dat alle leerders dieselfde kurrikulum volg en dieselfde tipe gehalte-onderrig behaal. Dit is onmoontlik om te bereik indien skole onvoldoende hulpbronne het. Die doel van die navorsing was dus om onderwysers se konsep van gehalte-onderrig te verstaan deur hulle beleefde ervaring in 'n lae-inkomste skool te ondersoek. Die ondersoek het in ag geneem wat onderwysers beskou het as 'n bydrae of 'n hindernis tot gehalte-onderrig, op sowel persoonlike as interpersoonlike vlak in die skool. Daar is ook gelet op watter positiewe of negatiewe invloede die skoolsisteem, die WKOD en die sosiale omgewing op gehalte-onderrig het. Dit word as belangrik geag omdat onderwysers gesien word as die belangrikste agente vir verandering in gehalte-onderrig.

Sosiale konstruksionisme en 'n sosiale geregtighedsbenadering is die grondslag van hierdie navorsing en stel die stemme van voorheen benadeelde gemeenskappe in staat om gehoor te word. In ooreenstemming met die teoretiese raamwerke van die studie is 'n kwalitatiewe, interpretivistiese navorsingsbenadering gebruik. Die deelnemers is deur middel van doelgerigte steekproeftrekking geselekteer en fokusgroepbesprekings en individuele onderhoude is gebruik om data te genereer. Digitale klankopnames is gemaak van die groep- en individuele sessies, wat toe getranskribeer is. Die data wat in hierdie studie ingesamel is, is ontleed deur middel van tematiese analise.

Die navorsing het aangedui dat onderwysers talle struikelblokke ondervind het met betrekking tot kontekstuele faktore en onregverdig verspreiding van hulpbronne. Verder het onderwysers weerspieël dat hulle met goeie pedagogie in staat was om gehalte-onderrig te beoefen deur die kurrikulum binne die konteks van die leerder te onderrig, selfs wanneer hulpbronne beperk was. Hierdie proses het egter baie tyd in beslag geneem en was nie koste-effektief nie.

Selfs al was onderwysers in staat om die struikelblokke in hul skool te herken, het hulle steeds die positiewe aspekte van werk in 'n lae-inkomste skool uitgelig. Hierdie bevindinge het gelei tot aanbevelings wat grootliks handel oor ondersteuning van die onderwysers in lae-inkomste gemeenskappe deur vervulling van hulle behoeftes.

**Sleutelwoorde: gehalte, laerskoolonderwys, onderwysers, lae-inkomste
gemeenskappe, sosiale geregtigheid, sosiale konstruksionisme**

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CHAPTER 1

CONTEXT AND RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

During the Jomtien conference, held in Thailand in 1990, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) launched a global initiative for Education for All (EFA). Through this global initiative, UNESCO aimed to bring lasting benefits to individuals and communities (Department of Basic Education [DoBE], 2010) by improving the quality of life through education. To achieve this UNESCO set out six EFA goals at the Dakar Framework for Action. Their aims were:

1. To expand and improve comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children.
2. To ensure that by 2015, all children, particularly females, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities¹, have access to a completely free and compulsory primary education of good quality.
3. To ensure that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met via equitable access to appropriate learning and life skills programmes.
4. To achieve a 50% improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults.
5. To eliminate gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2015, and achieving gender equality in education by 2015, with the focus on ensuring females' full and equal access to, and achievement in basic education of good quality.

¹ Direct quote from Education for All, Country Report: South Africa, 2010. However, ethnic minorities have historically had access to good quality education, unlike in Euro-American contexts.

6. To improve all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring for all, so that recognised and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all – especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills (DoBE, 2010, pg. 8-9).

Thus, the intention through the EFA initiative is to break the cycles of discrimination and poverty and to create equal opportunities for all. The assumption is that through EFA individuals will be equipped with the necessary life, numeracy and literacy skills resulting in accelerated economic growth and a decline in poverty rates (DoBE, 2010). Life skills not only include vocational skills, but also practical skills and knowledge to enable children to be more economically productive (Tikly & Barrett, 2011).

For the purpose of this thesis, the focus is specifically on goals 2 and 6, as it might be the basis for eliminating discriminatory practices and therefore promote equity in South African education. Universal access and improved equity should provide all children, youth and adults with a basic quality education and this could minimise educational disparities (UNESCO, 1990).

The Bill of Rights in the South African Constitution (1996), stipulates that

“everyone has the right to a basic education, including adult basic education; and further education, which the State, through reasonable measures, must make progressively available and accessible”.

The Ministry of Education also published the *Education White Paper 6 – Special Needs Education: Building an Inclusive Education and Training System*, to create an inclusive learning environment that eliminates discrimination, provides universal access to basic education and extending access to further education (Ministry of Education, 2011; September, 2008).

South Africa has attained almost universal access to primary education, with 98% of children of primary school-going age having access (Matshidiso Modisaotsile, 2012; Sayed & Ahmed, 2011; Soudien, 2011a). The problem, however, remains the question of the quality of education received (Soudien, 2011a; Tikly & Barrett, 2011).

It is therefore important that the focus of education should not only be to achieve universal access to primary education but that “actual learning acquisitions and outcomes” (UNESCO, 1990, p. 35) should also be considered. It is at this point that quality becomes an important factor. A quality education provides children with the opportunity to attain life skills and enables them to engage in further formal education (UNESCO, 1990). Quality education provides opportunities for learners, especially those in disadvantaged communities, to promote wellbeing and improve the success of their communities. Quality education gives individuals in communities a sense of belonging and the ability to improve the circumstances of the community as a whole (Bond, 2009; Keddie, 2012a).

Barriers to quality education should therefore be addressed to ensure that all learners have the basic right of “access to education, human dignity, quality of opportunity and the ability to lead a fulfilling life” (Bond, 2009).

1.2 MOTIVATION FOR THE STUDY

Literature indicated that although many interventions had been put in place in South African schools, specifically by the Western Cape Department of Education (WCED), some barriers concerning the quality of education received by our children still remain (Department of Basic Education, 2012; Soudien, 2011a; WCED, 2012).

Barriers are defined by the National Commission on Special Needs in Education and Training as the factors that hinder teaching and learning, which occurs at all levels of the system (DoE, 1997). These barriers include academic, social and personal development, language barriers, and psychosocial concerns such as unstable housing conditions, poverty due to unemployment and low levels of education, high levels of crime and violence and inadequate health care (DoE, 1997). Barriers in the community could have developed due to inadequate resources such as poor teacher training, lack of community involvement, lack of transportation, poor service delivery and sustainability within the community (Bond, 2009; Hill et al, 2012; Seedat & Lazarus, 2011; Wiggins et al, 2009 in Donald et al, 2010).

Numerous communities have been discriminated against with regards to unjust distribution of social benefits and resources, and do not have equal and equivalent access to quality education (Hill et al, 2012; Keddie, 2012a; Nussbaum, 2006). Members of different race groups in apartheid South Africa were expected to follow different curricula, with marginalised groups often receiving poorer quality education (Hill et al, 2012; Nel et al, 2010). These historical structural disadvantages in relation to education appear to persist in post-apartheid South Africa especially in schools located in low-income areas (Sayed & Motala, 2012; Soudien & Sayed, 2004).

Schools in many low-income communities do not necessarily discriminate against its own learners. Yet, these learners are immersed in a system in the broader society that discriminates against them, as their culture and community are frequently misunderstood. Thus, the community and its members are particularly discriminated against on an economic, cultural and political level (Keddie, 2012b).

The community to which this study refers is still seen as “the others”, described by Swartz (2009) as “historically excluded identity groups”. The common societal belief about children from low-income communities is that they cannot do any better at school (Swartz, 2009).

Good education, according to UNESCO, is supposed to break cycles of poverty and discrimination where they exist, while providing equal opportunities. Yet, 19 years post-apartheid, many South African schools appear to battle to provide a quality education, given the contexts in which they are located.

Available research seems to pay scant attention to teachers’ perceptions at low-income schools, namely how they define quality education in the first place and secondly what they regard as barriers and enablers to quality education.

This is an important aspect to consider, as teachers are seen as the key agents in change towards quality education (Sayed & Motala, 2012; Soudien, 2011b; UNESCO, 2012). They are able to motivate students to gain higher literacy and numeracy scores, and can identify key aspects that enable or prevent learners from receiving a quality education (Miller & Elman, 2013). This study will therefore focus on what we can learn about quality education (The concept of quality education will be explained in section 1.6.4 and 2.3) based on primary school teachers’ experiences in a low-income school.

1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Although the Education Department has achieved almost universal enrolment in primary education, the quality of education is not always fairly distributed. This is due to the previously stated barriers to learning, which is perceived in the South African school

context. If quality is not achieved in schools, it is almost impossible to reach the outcomes that the education department has set in their policies (Hill et al, 2012; Soudien, 2011a; Tikly & Barrett, 2011).

Many indicators describe the difficulties that we perceive in South African education (Gilmour & Soudien, 2009; Matshidiso Modisaotsile, 2012; Spaull, 2013). Although there are high enrolment rates, they are poorly reflected by the total of Grade 12's who graduate, as only half the learners that were enrolled in Grade 1 actually complete Grade 12 (Gilmour & Soudien, 2009; Matshidiso Modisaotsile, 2012). Most of these dropout results are accounted for by marginalised groups and low-income communities (Sayed & Motala, 2012).

Although the education system receives enough funds from the government, the quality of education has not improved. Schools still experience overcrowded classrooms, inadequate resources, unqualified and unmotivated teachers, high dropout rates and low literacy and numeracy levels (Gilmour & Soudien, 2009; Matshidiso Modisaotsile, 2012; Spaull, 2013).

In order to achieve quality education, communities need adequate resources such as well-trained and qualified teachers, funds to improve infrastructure and teaching resources (Nel et al, 2012; Sayed & Ahmed, 2011). Aikman & Dyer (2012) argue that education would not necessarily lift young people out of poverty unless the quality of education is improved. Through sustainable interventions and preventions that aim to better the quality of education, community life can be improved in these disadvantaged communities (Matshidiso Modisaotsile, 2012).

1.4 AIM OF STUDY

The aim of the research was therefore to explore how teachers understood the concept of quality education through their lived experiences at a low-income school. This exploration will take into account what teachers view as contributing to or hindering a quality education, both at personal and interpersonal levels in the school but also how the school system, the WCED and the social environment contribute to positive or negative outcomes regarding quality.

1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

To achieve the aims of the research, the following questions guided the study:

What can we learn about quality in education based on primary school teachers' experiences of teaching at a low-income school?

Furthermore, to understand the experience of teachers better the following sub-questions were asked during the focus groups:

- **How do you understand the idea of quality of education in primary schools?**
- **What do you think helps schools to provide a quality education?**
 - What support is offered in the classroom for teachers?
 - What support is offered to learners in the classroom?
 - What support does the WCED offer to learners to promote learning?
 - What support is provided by the community to promote learning?
- **What do you think prevents this school from providing a quality education?**
 - What learner characteristics influence the quality of education?
- **What WCED interventions and training do you have for the school?**
 - Are the interventions achievable and sustainable in the school community?

- What do you think of the additional teacher training that the WCED offers?
- **What social factors in the community do you think support or are a barrier to quality education in the community?**

1.6 CLARIFICATION OF RELEVANT TERMS

1.6.1 Universal Access to Primary Education

During the UNESCO conference in 1990, a commitment was made to make education available to everyone, but especially to provide previously marginalised groups with a quality education (UNESCO 1990; 2012).

Universal access has almost been achieved in South African primary schools, with 12 million (84%) learners enrolled in ordinary public schools. According to the Schools Act of 1996 parents are required to enrol their children in the year in which they turn seven and should attend school until the year that they turn 15 (Republic of South Africa, 1996b in DoBE, 2010). The participation rate has increased from 96.3% in 2002 to 98.2% in 2009. During 2005 it was indicated that the majority (89%) of learners had completed Grade 7 (Department of Basic Education, 2010).

1.6.2 Primary Education

According to South African policies, schooling levels should be sub-divided according to phases: Foundation, Intermediate, Senior and Further Education and Training (FET) phases. Public schools, however, are still divided according to primary and secondary phases (Department of Basic Education, 2010).

Primary Education is thus divided into three phases namely the Foundation, Intermediate and Senior phases. The Foundation phase includes Grade R to Grade 3, whereas the Intermediate phase includes Grade 4 to Grade 6 and the Senior phase Gr 7. Learners' typical ages range from seven to 14 (Department of Basic Education, 2010).

1.6.3 Low-income Schools

Low-income schools are typically defined as schools that are situated in low-income areas. (Phurutse, 2005). These areas are further defined by the quintile in which they are situated. Since 2010, all public schools are divided into five quintiles, determined by analysing socio-economic indicators surrounding the school. Schools situated in quintile one, two and three communities were declared no-fee schools (Dieltiens & Meny-Gibert, 2012).

The school researched in the study, is situated in an area that qualifies as a quintile 4 area; it is classified as such because it falls on the border of a middle-class community. Statistics South Africa approximates the annual per capita income of a quintile 4 area to be between R 30 165 and R 68 527 (Statistics South Africa, 2005/2006).

Due to high unemployment rates and parents' inability to pay school fees, there is a call to re-evaluate the quintile area in which the school is situated.

Sunnydale² Primary School is situated in Parow, within the metropolitan area of the City of Cape Town. As mentioned previously, the unemployment rate is high and parents are not even able to pay the school fees of R400 per year. This school is also characterised by low education levels and substance abuse. If parents are able to work they are unable to provided support to their children's schooling as they have long or irregular working hours.

² Name of school has been changed.

Sunnydale Primary School is situated in a busy street which connects with one of the main roads in the area. First visible upon entering the premises is the administrative building, followed by the classrooms for the Foundation and Intermediate phases respectively. The buildings consist of drywalls and verandas making learners and teachers vulnerable to outside elements.

The classrooms in the school consist of wooden floors and dry-walls and are decorated by teaching aids made by the teachers. In each classroom there are 40-45 children sitting at double desks arranged very close to each other to ensure that all learners can see the writing board. Currently there are no formal sports fields or netball courts at school and the courtyards and open fields are used to practise sports.

As available finances are limited the staff of Sunnydale Primary makes do with what they receive from the community to provide a quality education.

1.6.4 Quality Education

Sayed and Motala (2012) characterize quality education as “meaningful learning” ensuring that students have the basic literacy and numeracy skills to progress to secondary and higher levels of education. It is not only based on the basic skills acquired by students, but also on that which takes place in the classroom and other learning environments (Sayed & Motala, 2012).

The Department of Basic Education (2010) defines quality of education by “measurable learning outcomes achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy, and essential life skills”.

For the purpose of this thesis, the focus is not only on the academic skills of students, but also on the teachers' perception of how social and contextual factors influence the quality of education in their school.

UNESCO identified the following factors in its 2005 Global Monitoring Report as contributing to the quality of education received at schools:

- Learner Characteristics i.e. Learner Achievement and Outcomes
- Context
- Enabling Inputs
- Teaching and Learning and Learning Outcomes i.e. Educator qualifications, Learner: Educator Ratio (Department of Basic Education, 2010).

1.6.5 Teacher Characteristics

Teacher characteristics are characteristics that influence the quality education provided to learners i.e. teacher's years of experience, subject knowledge, professional development and pedagogical content knowledge (Cirino et al, 2007; Hoadley, 2010). The focus on teacher characteristics is of importance as teachers are the main link between the student and the school environment (Rowe, 2003). Teachers' characteristics have a specific influence on the quality of education received at schools (Miller & Elman, 2013), as they are seen as the key agents towards change, to better the quality of education received at schools (Erasmus, 2012).

Teacher morale especially, contributes to quality (Miller & Elman, 2013) and is impacted by changes in the political and economic climate in the country. Economic and political

changes often result in changes in educational policy and the curriculum. Difficulty to cope with multiple changes often leads to a high rate of teacher attrition and a challenging school environment such as changes in working conditions, i.e. social factors, infrastructures, increase in administrative work; and in-service training for teachers and school management. All these factors jointly influence the quality of education (Matoti, 2010; Miller & Elman, 2013)

Furthermore, teachers' characteristics have an influence on learner achievement (Cirino et al, 2007; Damber, Samuelsson & Taube, 2012; Hoadley, 2010; Nicoll, 2013; Rowe, 2003; Sayed & Motala, 2012) and the learning experience that they create for their learners (Hoadley, 2010).

As teachers have many roles in the classroom (Erasmus, 2010) it is important to consider what influence they have in the class and how they support their learners when faced with barriers in the classroom, especially in low-income areas.

1.7 THE RESEARCH PROCESS

1.7.1 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework provides a way to approach research. It can provide the motivation for the study, methods to collect data, conceptualise research questions and ways to study and interpret the findings of the research (Dusick, 2011; Merriam, 2009, pp. 66-67).

Social constructionism and a social justice approach provide the foundation of this research (Burr, 2003) and enable the voices of previously disadvantaged communities to be heard (Tikly & Barrett, 2011).

This theory provides the researcher with the ability to look at conventional knowledge in a critical manner, it challenges the way that we see the social world and it recognises the constructs that we take for granted. Through observation it allows us to critically view the way people express themselves and the experiences that contribute to their worldview and how their cultural and historical view influences their experiences specifically (Beck & Kosnik, 2006; Burr 1995; 2003; Wortham & Jackson, 2008).

Furthermore, through social constructionism and a social justice approach it is possible to challenge conventional thoughts and allow members of the community to construct their own knowledge. It gives each member the chance to present their own experience and to help eliminate discriminatory practices within their community (Beck & Kosnik, 2006; Burr, 2003; Keddie, 2012b; Tikly & Barrett, 2011).

As teachers are a vital part of the school community it is especially important to consider their experiences, not to look at the research through the researcher's own understanding (Burr, 2003; Keddie, 2012a). Educational research is typically viewed as an assumptive network and the experiences of the teacher will allow for reflection and the opportunity to discuss the constructs within their community (Beck & Kosnik, 2006; Gergen, 2001).

This approach will enable teachers to reflect on the different aspects of their community that influence the quality of education received at their school. Social constructionism and a social justice approach aids an integrated approach and considers not only the formal learning in schools, but also the informal socialisation that influences education.

Teachers' experiences reflect the influence exercised by the larger society and community in terms of social and emotional support, allowing the community to be seen in many dimensions (Beck & Kosnik, 2006; Burr, 1998; 2003; Wortham & Jackson, 2008).

1.7.2 Research Methodology and Design

The research process required appropriate methods to answer the questions set by the researcher. The theoretical framework followed suggests that knowledge is constructed through social interactions and lived experiences (Burr, 2003). In keeping with a constructionist framework and a social justice approach, an interpretive framework and qualitative methodology was used.

This approach helped the researcher to gain information through an inductive mode of inquiry. Qualitative research allows the researcher to explain the meaning of the research process without disrupting the natural process of the social phenomena, as data collection happens in spaces where participants live and work. This method allowed the researcher to collect data that portrayed the experiences from the participants' point of view and not the researcher's. The researcher could therefore conduct inquiries in an unbiased manner (Creswell, 2005; Merriam 2009).

In order to gain in-depth insights and establish a good rapport with the research participants a case study design was followed. This allowed the researcher to construct valid research and to gain a comprehensive understanding of the situation as well as what it meant to the participants involved. Case studies allow the researcher to become part of the process and do not have a specific hypothesis or outcome in mind; the researcher followed an unbiased approach and helped to voice the experiences of the teachers. It

allowed for extensive data collection using multiple forms of collection (Cresswell, 2005; Merriam, 2009; Mouton, 2005).

Therefore, for the purpose of this research, data were collected by conducting semi-structured interviews with two focus groups, this consisted of one Foundation phase and one Intermediate phase group, involving eight individuals each. In addition 5 individual interviews were held. Purposive sampling was used to select participants who best reflected the characteristics (Teachers teaching at a low-income school) to best answer the research question. Selected teachers from the focus groups and the principal were invited for individual interviews. Other data collection methods included reflective notes and observations (Creswell, 2005; Merriam 2009).

1.8 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

In order to conduct the research the necessary permission for access to the setting was applied for from the Western Cape Department of Education (WCED) (Addendum B). Thereafter the principal allowed access to the particular primary school. The Research Ethics Committee of the University of Stellenbosch granted ethical clearance of the study to be conducted within a year from the date such permission had been granted (Addendum A).

Furthermore, consent was gained from the teachers at the school through a letter of consent (Addendum D), informing them that their role in the research was voluntary and if they wished to do so, they could withdraw from the research at any time.

Furthermore, it stated that there was no potential harm involved in the research and all participants' identities would be kept confidential. The findings would also, on completion,

be made available to all participants involved and the researcher would provide feedback to participants about the research results.

The researcher acknowledges that research should be conducted in a manner that shows professionalism, integrity and respect for others. Furthermore, the researcher attempted to show the necessary sensitivity and responsiveness required. The research not only benefited the researcher, but it was used as a platform to voice the experiences of teachers in low-income schools (AERA 2011; Creswell, 2005; Hofman 2004; Merriam 2009).

1.9 STRUCTURE OF THESIS

Chapter one focuses on introducing the study and contextualising the research. It highlights the key foci and issues of the research. Furthermore, it provides a clarification of the research question and the process that was implemented to conduct the research.

Chapter two consists of an in-depth review of existing literature with a focus on the theoretical framework of social constructionism and social justice, quality education, teachers' experiences and low-income schools.

Chapter three provides a comprehensive discussion of the research process, including research methodology, design, and paradigm, as well as the ethical considerations taken into account.

Chapter four contains the presentation of the research findings.

Chapter five focuses on the analysis and discussion followed by the conclusion of findings, recommendations as well as possible limitations and strengths to the study, and summarises the findings of this research. It also indicates areas for further research.

1.10 CONCLUSION

Chapter one provides the background and motivation for this research. It states the currently perceived barriers regarding quality of education in South Africa and sets aims in place to better understand the perception of teachers concerning quality of education in schools.

Research questions have been set to meet these aims. Clarification of terms has been provided to explain the usage of these terms in the text.

Furthermore, an explanation of the theoretical framework and how it fits into the research methodology and design has been provided. Lastly, the layout of the chapters has been provided as well as the ethical considerations taken into account.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses literature relating to factors of quality of education, i.e. definitions of quality of education, approaches and improvements to quality education, teacher characteristics, learner characteristics and low-income schools as well as the theoretical framework of social constructionism and a social justice approach referred to in Chapter 1.

The aim of the literature review is to identify how previous research has contributed to the current topic of research and to help the researcher justify the research problem in a manner that does not create expectations or bias (Aveyard, 2010; Cottrell & Mckenzie, 2011). Furthermore, the literature helped the researcher to place the new study in context with the previously found literature in the area of interest (Cottrell & Mckenzie, 2011).

The literature review of this study first describes social constructionism and thereafter a social justice approach, as these form the basis of this research. It explains why these frameworks are relevant to the study and why teachers' perceptions are referred to in order to understand quality of education better (Wortham & Jackson, 2008). It allows the researcher to reflect on the influence of social processes (Burr, 1995; 2003; Keddie, 2012a; Nussbaum, 2006) on quality of education and therefore not to only focus on formal learning (Fosnot & Perry, 2005; Gergen, 2001; Wortham & Jackson, 2008).

When the focus is shifted towards social processes, it is easier to identify those factors in the community that most influence quality education within the community's schools.

Quality education can then be defined not only by academic achievement, but also by what is expected of schools to develop well-rounded learners (Sharma & Ravikala, 2006).

As the focus of this thesis is on teachers and their perception of quality education, the context of teachers will be discussed, as well as which characteristics contribute to quality education. In addition to this, learners' characteristics are explained in the context of a low-income school.

The challenges facing quality education are numerous and it is the purpose of this thesis to identify the key factors that have the most significant influence on teachers' experiences (Sayed & Ahmed, 2011; Miller & Elman, 2013; Rowe, 2003).

2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.2.1 Exploring meanings of teachers' experiences through the meta-theory of social constructionism

Social constructionism states that an individual's knowledge is constructed through the social environment that s/he is involved in (Burr, 2003; Donald, et al 2010; Gergen, 2001). Thus, in order to get as close as possible to an insider's perspective of quality education in a low-income school, it is important to hear about the experiences of teachers who are involved in the community and understand the relevant social processes (Fosnot & Perry, 2005). Social constructionism focuses on how knowledge is constructed and the person as the active agent in his or her own development. Knowledge is thus constructed in a subjective manner, because it is based on the individual's own experiences (Pelech & Pieper, 2010).

In order to understand the daily experiences of teachers in a low-income school it is important to consider all aspects of their social environment. Through social constructionism we can better understand which social processes in the community have an influence on the quality of education provided at the schools (Wortham & Jackson, 2008). We can also understand *how* social processes influence (Burr, 1995; 2003) quality of education in schools. Although it is important to look at the formal learning that takes place at school, the informal socialization that takes place inevitably has considerable influence too (Gergen, 2001; Beck & Kosnik, 2006; Fosnot & Perry, 2005; Wortham & Jackson, 2008). The characteristics of both the learner and the teacher are constructed through the psychological, cultural and social elements of the community (Donald et al, 2010; Pelech & Pieper, 2010; Wortham & Jackson, 2008).

A holistic view (Burr, 1995; 2003) of the school community and sustainable interventions can be achieved if the experiences of teachers at schools are taken into account to consider what best practices for providing a quality education may be. The teachers' experiences will take into consideration the learners' characteristics, elements of the school curriculum and what the relationship is between these two sets of characteristics and the influence they have on the quality of education provided (Burr, 1995; Wortham & Jackson, 2008).

Social constructionism allows the researcher to explore the social processes of the community involved, but at the same time makes the researcher aware of the fact that she should not have pre-conceived ideas about the data that will be collected. As Burr (1995) mentions, meaning is never fixed and although knowledge has been constructed through the literature reviewed, true knowledge lies with the participants who are involved and who have a daily interaction concerning the quality of education received at their school (Burr, 1995; Donald et al, 2010; Pelech & Pieper, 2010).

As Burr (2003) describes it, social constructionism challenges “conventional thoughts” and takes into account the idea that each individual perceives the social processes within the community differently. Teachers are in effect the most important agents to provide a quality education to learners, as they are aware of departmental, curriculum and learner requirements. Social constructionism challenges what they experience in their daily school life and how to apply what they experience in practice (Burr, 2003). If we consider social constructionism in the context of quality education, it is important to explore constructions of quality education itself as this concept may vary depending on the contexts and agents involved.

In order for teachers’ voices within the study to be heard within the community, a social justice approach should be followed. Through social constructionism, the researcher can deconstruct the social processes within the community to research which of these have the greatest impact on quality education and which voices have the most influence.

2.2.2 Exploring meanings of teachers’ experiences through a social justice approach

In conjunction with social constructionism, a social justice approach is followed. Social constructionism allows for a different kind of perspective when understanding social settings and roles (Terre Blanche, Kelly & Durrheim, 2006) within a low-income community, whereas a social justice approach allows the voices of previously and currently marginalized communities to be heard (Keddie, 2012b).

Sayed and Ahmed (2011) point out three approaches that should be considered when attempting to improve quality education. The human capital approach, the human rights approach and a social justice approach.

The human capital approach's main focus is on how quality education contributes to economic development (Sayed & Ahmed, 2011; Tikly & Barrett, 2011). It states that education is relevant in terms of creating skills and knowledge in order for a learner to become a worker in the economy (Robeyns, 2006). It further assesses the input and output from schools and the processes that influence these outcomes. Thus assessment is mainly focused on academic skills and knowledge acquired (Robeyns, 2006; Sayed & Ahmed, 2011). Unfortunately with this approach there is too much focus on standardised assessment of cognitive learning while it does not take social issues into account (Sayed & Ahmed, 2011). As previously stated, the many aspects of quality education demand a holistic view (Barrett, 2011; Burr, 1995; 2003). If learners are not able to receive a good quality education and acquire the necessary knowledge and skills, there is no economic gain as required by the human capital approach (Robeyns, 2006).

The human rights approach views education as a basic right for every learner and together we should work towards a quality education for all (Sayed & Ahmed, 2011). Human rights approaches ensure that every child receives an education even if they are not able to pay school fees (Robeyns, 2006). It focuses more on a learner-centered pedagogy and a democratic school structure ensuring that every child knows that they have the right through education, to a good family structure, decent wages and a good quality education (Robeyns, 2006; Sayed & Ahmed, 2011; Tikly & Barrett, 2011). Although this approach focuses on an education for all aspect, it does not place emphasis on the quality of education received by learners who attend school (Robeyns, 2006).

Considering the focus of this thesis, a social justice approach is followed by the researcher to enable the voices of teachers to be heard concerning quality education.

A social justice approach focuses on participation and giving a voice to all, especially the marginalized, to ensure improved education for all. It emphasises socio-economic disadvantages and the multiple forms of inequality (Sayed & Ahmed, 2011). By acknowledging that community members have a voice it can create a sense of belonging, where everyone feels that they want to have a part in building up their community, including evaluating the type of education received at their school (Delors et al, 1996; Robeyns, 2006). Tikly and Barrett (2011) draws attention to Nancy Fraser's three dimensions of social justice namely "redistribution", "recognition" and "representation". These concepts from Fraser's theory of social justice will be discussed, in turn.

Redistribution focuses on economic distribution (Keddie, 2012b). In this regard it relates to the school's access to resources which it requires to achieve quality education (Delors et al, 1996; Tikly & Barrett, 2011). Redistribution of resources can enable learners to become more economically productive, healthy, secure as well as active citizens (Tikly & Barrett, 2011). Thus, the correct distribution of resources can enable marginalized learners to achieve the same quality education as their more privileged counterparts (Lingard & Keddie, 2013).

Recognition focuses on an awareness of differences in culture, language, race, religion (Lingard & Keddie, 2013; Nussbaum, 2006) and the historically marginalized groups (Tikly & Barrett, 2011). Currently there is a lack of shared understanding about issues of social justice among schools and teachers. Although teachers are mostly aware of the barriers to quality education, the question remains as to how to address these barriers (Keddie, 2012a; Nussbaum, 2006). Thus, teachers should recognize the unjust distribution of resources and the quality of education received at the previously disadvantaged schools (Keddie, 2012a; Nussbaum, 2006), in order to address these barriers. Recognition justice should therefore focus on correct curriculum development, good pedagogy in order to

accommodate all learners in school and to address all needs that may arise (Tikly & Barrett, 2011).

Representation focuses on the need for all social groups to participate as equal peers in social life. It calls for all teachers to identify barriers that prevent learners from participating in society and for institutions to create sustainable interventions that will allow learners to be part of a just society (Bozalek & Carolissen, 2012; Tikly & Barrett, 2011). Nancy Fraser highlights that through representation all people should be involved in decisions that might influence or affect them (Bozalek & Carolissen, 2012). Thus in creating a society where everyone participates, where rights of communities are recognized and everyone's voice is heard, will encourage greater participation among community members. Furthermore, this will serve as motivation for students to desire a quality education (Keddie, 2012a; Tikly & Barrett, 2011).

2.3 QUALITY EDUCATION

Quality education has many different aspects, but the literature mostly defines it as the academic achievement in literacy and numeracy reached by learners (Rowe, 2003). Although it is good to measure the quality of education received at schools in this way, it should not be all that schools should focus on achieving. There is no point in assessing the quality of education if there is no set way of improving quality of education in schools (Hoy, Bayne-Jardine & Wood, 2000).

In order to improve academic achievement, quality education should be viewed in a holistic way (Burr, 1995; 2003; Barrett, 2011). Sharma and Ravikala (2006) highlight that there is much more to quality education than just academic achievement. It implies

different characteristics and attributes, and contributes to a better quality of life (Sayed & Ahmed, 2011; Sharma & Ravikala, 2006).

Quality education includes a comprehensive education that focuses on basic knowledge acquired with regards to competence and skills in all subject matter. It teaches social competence and ensures that all basic learning needs are satisfied, but mostly contributes to an overall experience of learning (Delors et al, 1996; Sharma & Ravikala, 2006; UNESCO, 2000).

UNESCO (2000) states that a quality education should contribute to “developing skills and a capacity to work, to participate in society, and take control of lives and continue learning”. The provision of a quality education, allows learners to develop the necessary skills to cultivate the mind and contribute to social change and development (Sharma & Ravikala, 2006; Slee, 2011). Quality education has the ability to break the poverty cycle and redress past injustices as it educates learners to be aware of issues of discrimination and intolerance (Delors et al, 1996; Sayed & Ahmed, 2011). Providing a quality education in primary schools encourages learners and parents to seek secondary education (Sayed & Ahmed, 2011; Sayed & Motala, 2012), thus contributing to the necessary skills to seek more skilled employment. This protects individuals against exploitative, unskilled labour or a lack of employment (Delors et al, 1996; Sayed & Ahmed, 2011).

Factors hindering quality education in low-income schools are numerous, but the literature focuses on a few main issues that need to be addressed (Delors et al, 1996; Miller & Elman, 2013; Rowe, 2003; Sayed & Ahmed, 2011; Spaul, 2011; Spaul & Taylor, 2013; UNESCO, 2000). These issues are school management, teacher performance and development, curriculum development, learners’ characteristics, overcrowding due to universal access to schools, poor infrastructure, lack of parental involvement, lack of early

childhood development and poverty (Miller & Elman, 2013; Rowe, 2003; Sayed & Ahmed, 2011). For the purpose of this thesis however, the main focus will be on teacher performance and development, learner characteristics, poverty and universal access to schools. One of the reasons for the decline of quality in education in South Africa is over-enrolment following universal access (Sayed & Ahmed, 2011). The result is a large learner to teacher ratio and teachers with inadequate skills having to maintain such large classrooms (Miller & Elman, 2013; Rowe, 2003).

With a focus on these few aspects teachers can improve their skills by considering an integrated approach which takes learners' characteristics and living conditions into account. This would deter the teacher from discriminating against learners, and encourage an understanding of what is needed in order for learners to perform optimally (Delors et al, 1996; Sayed & Motala, 2012; Soudien & Sayed, 2004).

UNESCO (2000) states that "efforts to expand enrolment must be accompanied by attempts to enhance quality education". This offers the school an opportunity to create a positive learning environment for learners which in turn attracts learners to school and helps them to achieve meaningful learning outcomes (UNESCO, 2000). The EFA initiative required that access to schooling must be available to all and that basic education should be free (DoBE, 2010; Spaul, 2013).

This increase in enrolment caused a need for greater investment in resources, infrastructure and teachers. The state's success was measured according to achieving equity rather than quality (Miller & Elman, 2013; Sayed & Ahmed, 2011). The first issue addressed is the lack of resources at schools in low-income communities (Sayed & Ahmed, 2011; Spaul, 2011) and closely tied with this is the lack of teacher training (Miller & Elman, 2013; Sayed & Ahmed, 2011). Sayed and Ahmed (2011) argue that pedagogy is

the heart of quality education. Good pedagogy is possible if teachers are well trained, even in contexts where resources are limited (Polidano, Hanel & Buddelmeyer, 2013).

Teacher training should provide teachers with the necessary skills and knowledge to teach in an overcrowded classroom and maintain the necessary discipline. Furthermore, their training should include being adaptable to changes in the curriculum, in order to provide a quality education to learners (Delors et al, 1996; Miller & Elman, 2013; UNESCO, 2000). Unfortunately this ideal was created for a global environment with minimal focus on local realities, such as differences in languages and socio-economic status, where privileged schools achieve better results than poorer schools (Lareau & Horvat, 1999; Sayed & Ahmed, 2011; Sayed & Motala, 2012). Although the Department of Basic Education created the CAPS (Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement) documents to ensure that all schools receive the same standard of education, a “one size fits all” approach cannot be followed, as there is such a big gap in terms of different resources received at school and the quality of education provided (Sayed & Ahmed, 2011).

Apart from the resources constraints, lack of teacher training and curriculum changes, are the social factors prevailing in low-income communities that have a substantial influence on learning (Miller & Elman, 2013). Rowe (2003) argues that a child’s achievement is dependent on his background and social context, thus it is important to also address the issues in the community like adult literacy, good-quality housing and understanding social issues (Miller & Elman, 2013).

Currently the curriculum puts too much pressure on learners to achieve academically, so that there is little focus on the needs of the learners, whether it is academic or emotional (Miller & Elman, 2013). Schooling provides a general education that is theory based and does not allow time to develop practical skills (Miller & Elman, 2013) that may provide the

necessary support for learners to contribute to the society they belong to (Delors et al, 1996).

Following a social justice approach, as explained in section 2.2.2 of this chapter, this approach offers a possible pathway to addressing barriers in quality education. A social justice approach provides teachers and learners with an opportunity to let their voices be heard as to what schools require to offer quality education.

In Nancy Fraser's three-part model redistribution is understood as the access the community has to resources, specifically the access to quality education in schools and such quality of education subsequently achieves. Quality education is considered then as contributing to the well-being of a child and allows the child to be economically productive, healthy, secure and an active citizen (Delors et al, 1996; Tikly & Barrett, 2011).

Recognition is considered further as recognising historically marginalized groups within the community and acknowledging their voices. Thus, through acknowledging teachers' perspectives it allows us to gain as close as possible an insider's perspective on the quality of education received at low-income schools.

Representation highlights the rights of individuals and groups to have their voices heard concerning social justice and injustices within the community (Sayed & Ahmed, 2011; Tikly & Barrett, 2011). The literature further suggests solutions regarding some of these aspects to improve quality education.

UNESCO (2000) suggests that in order to provide a quality education a few main issues should be addressed. The Western Cape Education Department (WCED) has implemented some policies in order to address these issues.

Firstly, for quality education to be implemented learners should be well nourished and motivated. In view of this fact, the WCED implemented a feeding scheme for approximately 428 500 children (Education Ministry Western Cape, 2012; UNESCO, 2000) in 2012.

Secondly, UNESCO suggests that teachers should be trained in active learning techniques and further develop a relevant curriculum that builds on the experience of teachers and learners (UNESCO, 2000).

The WCED has increased their budget to train teachers in the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) which focuses on the increasing problems encountered in reading and writing (Education Ministry Western Cape, 2012). The curriculum further focuses on accurate assessment of knowledge skills, attitudes and values as recommended by UNESCO (UNESCO, 2000).

Lastly, in order to achieve a quality education UNESCO recommends adequate facilities, learning materials and a safe environment (Delors et al, 1996; UNESCO, 2000). In response to this the WCED aims to provide every classroom from Grade 1 - Grade 12 with textbooks, free of charge, to improve security infrastructure at schools, including safety gates, burglar bars, stone guards, access gates and alarm systems and to ensure that all schools are kept in a suitable condition in order for optimal learning to take place (Education Ministry Western Cape, 2012).

However, the teachers and their perceptions and practices in relation to quality education, remain the key agents of change. It is up to them, along with adequate support, to improve their qualifications and produce better literacy and numeracy scores (Miller & Elman, 2013). There is no denying the overreliance on test scores, but attention should also be

focused on what teachers perceive to be the barriers experienced by different learners (Tikly & Barrett, 2011).

Although there are many policies describing how learners should be educated, the teachers struggle with the everyday issues (UNESCO, 2000). The teachers can identify these issues, because they face it in class every day. Teachers have different characteristics and roles that can contribute to the quality of education received at our schools.

2.4 CONTEXTUAL FACTORS THAT COULD CONTRIBUTE TO MEANINGS OF TEACHERS' EXPERIENCES

2.4.1 The context of teachers

When we consider quality in education, various elements need to be taken into account; a focus on only a few aspects will have little effect to change quality in education and change is considered a gradual process (Hoadley, 2010). Although this is the case, when we consider the key agents towards change in quality education i.e. teachers and learners, it goes to the heart of quality education (Nicoll, 2013; Sayed & Ahmed, 2011).

Unfortunately, there is no quick fix when trying to improve quality of education. The change should happen within the classroom; teachers can only achieve this in their own environment (Hoy et al, 2000; Nicoll, 2013). As a school, management should strive towards quality education, but allow the teacher to reflect her or his own teaching ability, to be able to produce the best quality education that they can possibly contribute. This should suit the learning styles of the learners as well as the learners' characteristics (Hoy, Bayne-Jardine & Wood, 2000).

2.4.1.1 Teachers' characteristics

The focus of this thesis is mainly on the teachers' characteristics, as the link between the learners and the school environment is mediated by the teacher (Rowe, 2003). Teachers are able to facilitate learning as well as play a role in school and community (Delors et al, 1996; Erasmus, 2012). As previously noted teachers are the key agents towards change in quality education (Delors et al, 1996; Erasmus, 2012; Sayed & Ahmed, 2011; UNESCO, 2000).

Change agents are considered to be lifelong learners that constantly reflect on their abilities and continually seek ways to improve their professional growth. They reflect on what is important for learners and they work as one in their school environment (Erasmus, 2012). Teachers have the ability to bring change within a community, when reaching out to individuals in their classroom. The change teachers bring within the classroom depends on the perceptions teachers have of their learners' diverse backgrounds and the best way to accommodate these learners to bring forth the best quality of education they have to offer (Erasmus, 2012; Meier, 2005).

Quality of education is influenced by the teacher's years of experience, subject knowledge, professional development and pedagogical content knowledge (Cirino et al, 2007; Hoadley, 2010). All of these factors have a direct influence on learner achievement (Cirino et al, 2007; Damber, Samuelsson & Taube, 2012; Hoadley, 2010; Nicoll, 2013; Rowe, 2003; Sayed & Motala, 2012). Even though learners do struggle with social barriers associated with living in a low-income community, a skilled teacher should be able to adapt teaching methods to accommodate these barriers. A skilled teacher is able to accommodate differences in cognitive levels and knowledge and interests of learners (Damber, Samuelsson, & Taube, 2012). Sayed & Motala (2012) suggest that in order to

better equip and provide an education for these learners, teachers should propose a more suitable curriculum and pedagogy that will suit the contexts and circumstances of the learners.

Teachers also have the ability to create a positive learning experience for learners in low-income areas even if their resources are limited (Hoadley, 2010; Polidano, Hanel, & Buddelmeyer, 2013; Sayed & Ahmed, 2011). The focus should not only be on promoting academic achievement, but on creating a safe learning environment for all learners. There are many social factors, especially in low-income areas that have an influence on the quality of education provided at these schools, and by devising a positive school environment, an environment for academic success can be created (Hill et al, 2012; Polidano et al, 2013).

The role of the teacher is thus not only one of educator, but a person who offers support, creates a sense of security and community and builds on the self-esteem of a child to enable her or him to succeed. They should be able to teach learners to succeed and cope with difficult tasks and facilitate learning (Erasmus, 2012; Tatar & Da'as, 2012).

The problem however, in the low-income classroom, is that meaningful learning is hindered. Research has indicated that very little teaching and learning take place due to lessons starting late, discipline issues, teacher centred pedagogy where learners contribute little, and the existence of a poor work ethic among teachers (Matoti, 2010; Miller & Elman, 2013; Sayed & Motala, 2012).

Research indicates that the poor work ethic among teachers in low-income areas, can be attributed to lack of motivation, difficulty maintaining discipline, pupil achievement (Miller & Elman, 2013), lack of skills and knowledge (Hill et al, 2012; Miller & Elman, 2013),

changes in political and economic climate, changes in policy and curriculum, high teacher attrition rates, unsafe school environments, unsatisfactory working conditions (Matoti, 2010), drastic reduction of teaching posts (Meier, 2005), high learner-to-teacher ratio (Meier, 2005; Miller & Elman, 2013), heavy workloads (Meier, 2005; Miller & Elman, 2013). Furthermore, many teachers think of poverty as a deficiency, often viewing learners as not possibly being able to achieve, thus covertly or unconsciously contributing to entrenching a cycle of non-achievement. This implies that it will be difficult to remove these barriers for effective learning (Hill et al, 2012).

In order to improve the poor work ethic among teachers, research suggests that teachers should be adequately remunerated, should have access to more effective teacher training and on-going professional development and support, be equipped with a curriculum that is more relevant and be provided with improved resources and infrastructure (UNESCO, 2000). Teachers should accept their responsibilities and be involved in the decisions that affect their professional lives and teaching environments (Miller & Elman, 2013; UNESCO, 2000). In addition to this, the focus should be shifted towards values within the community and away from the negative view (Sayed & Motala, 2012) of what we perceive quality education to be today.

Although little research has been done, through informal discussions with teachers it appears that due to many curriculum changes and a high learner-to-teacher ratio, teachers perceive the quality of education to be in decline. This causes low teacher morale and a tardiness to invest in the quality of the education that learners receive. Teachers in low-income schools also perceive a lack of input from the community as contributing to the decline in the quality of education.

What we should also consider, is that teachers do not necessarily have all the answers to quality in education, as it is “never theirs entirely to possess”, but that it also lies in the hands of the policymakers, educational professionals, learners and parents (Barrett, 2011). However, teachers experience the social factors prevalent in the community on a daily basis and understand best what influence these factors have on the quality of education provided. Cirino et al (2007) argues that although teacher quality has a big influence on learner achievement, the influence of learner poverty is even bigger. Therefore it is necessary to understand the social factors that have an influence on the quality of education teachers provide.

2.4.1.2 Learner characteristics

Quality education relating to learner characteristics is described by Sayed and Ahmed (2011) as “the interaction between what learners bring to learning, what happens in the learning space (e.g. classroom setting), what happens to individual consequences of education and the context within which the activity takes place”. Research suggests that the educational outcomes achieved by low-income communities are mostly influenced by the social factors common to the community (Damber, Samuelsson & Taube, 2012; Hill et. al, 2012; Lareau & Horvat, 1999).

These social factors can either have a direct or indirect influence on the learner’s academic development. Family, friends and the classroom can have a direct influence on development whereas community can have an indirect influence (Hanson et al, 2011). Social factors can include family income, parental education, violence, poor school attendance and lack of support at home (Damber, Samuelsson & Taube, 2012; Miller & Elman, 2013; Tomul & Savasci, 2012).

In low-income communities, it is difficult for parents to support their children at home, as the parents may lack the education, time and cultural capital (Sayed & Motala, 2012). Although parents may not necessarily be able to support their children at home, they still place a high value on quality teaching and that the necessary care and discipline happens at school. It is also a high priority for them that their children attend school (Polidano et al, 2013; Sayed & Motala, 2012). Although they attach a high value to schooling, what they do not realise is that the additional support at home is needed to achieve academic success (Miller & Elman, 2013).

As a result of a lack of support at home, these economically disadvantaged children already fall behind, before they even enter the classroom (Lee & Burkham, 2002). Hoadley (2010) suggests that over and above the influence of social factors many learners are not supported in the class either, as they have a lack of resources, a teacher-centred approach in the classroom, low levels of cognitive demand, weak forms of assessment and a slow pace within the classroom. These factors in the classroom account for a high dropout rate amongst low-income community learners as academic success cannot be achieved (Polidano, Hanel & Buddelmeyer, 2013).

Ways to improve the classroom environment for these learners are to make sure that learners attend class regularly, that teachers adjust to the pace of the learner, that curriculum objectives are completed or completed near appropriate age levels, that appropriate assessment is done and that the focus remains on reading and writing (Hill et al, 2012; Hoadley, 2010). What also needs to be taken into consideration is the type of school community learners find themselves in, in order to better understand the social factors involved in learning.

2.5 LOW-INCOME SCHOOLS

“The life of an individual cannot be adequately understood without references to the institutions within which his biography is enacted” C. Wright Mills (Lareau, 2011)

Low-income schools are typically defined as schools that are geographically located in low-income areas. These schools have low school fees and a low socio-economic status is prevalent among students. It is characterised by high learner-to-educator ratios and a lack of infrastructure and school resources, as these schools are more accessible to poorer families (Phurutse, 2005). Prinsloo (2011) suggests that a low-income school is also characterised by a culture of poverty as there is a “deprivation of privileges, backlogs in education, unsupportive environment, conditions created by inadequate education, low wages, unemployment and malnutrition”.

These factors can contribute to lower quality primary schooling (Lee & Burkham, 2002), an influence on the academic achievement of learners (Tomul & Savasci, 2012), lack of grade progression (Hill et al, 2012; Polidano et al, 2013), low education aspirations (Polidano, Hanel & Buddelmeyer, 2013) and an influence on how children develop (Hanson et al, 2011). Yet, through informal discussion between the researcher and teachers, it was revealed to the researcher that there were students who in spite of their circumstances, still achieve success after their school career. It is however, not the norm, but because of the influence of parental involvement, innovative and good quality teachers, this can be achieved.

Typically a low-income school is a reflection of the low-income community in which it is situated, caused by a general pattern of inequality of the broader society (Lareau, 2011).

Literature reflects that the more assets a community has, the greater chance there is of the school achieving a better quality of education (Lareau & Horvat, 1999; Sayed & Ahmed, 2011; Sayed & Motala, 2012).

2.6 CONCLUSION

Through the literature review it has been identified why it is necessary to use social constructionism and the social justice approach as the theoretical framework, as it is essential to understand the social processes of the community to be able to achieve the best possible quality of education. These frameworks allow the researcher to understand what effect social factors have on learning and enables the researcher to identify the characteristics that the learner brings to the classroom.

What the literature review acknowledges is that quality of education is mostly measured in terms of academic achievement, but the focus should be shifted towards producing lifelong learners rather than just concentrating on literacy and numeracy skills.

Furthermore, literature indicates that teachers have characteristics that could also influence the quality of the learning that takes place. Although policy recommends that teachers should possess certain characteristics quality education is influenced by the social factors of the community as well as the consequences of constantly changing policies and curriculum (UNESCO, 2000). Learner characteristics have a large impact on the quality of education that teachers are able to provide, as there is typically little support at home and this forces the teacher to take on many roles.

Although literature reflects several factors that contribute to the quality of education received at our schools there is little literature concerning teachers' experiences of quality education and what they perceive it to be.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter aims to explain the process of the research and the methodologies that were followed. As the research is guided by the meta-theory of social constructionism and the theory of social justice, it indicates which methodologies were followed to ensure that the participants' worldviews were taken into consideration and how these influence the quality of education taught at a low-income school.

As the study is based on the experiences and voices of teachers the interpretive paradigm was followed to conduct the study in an objective manner and to allow the researcher to interact with the participants (Babbie, 2011; Schram, 2006).

The research therefore follows a case study design, to gain a deeper understanding of the social phenomenon (Gerring, 2007; Merriam, 2009; Woodside, 2010) present in the low-income school context. Following a qualitative study allows the researcher to understand the social structures present in the community and to conduct the study in a manner that is unbiased (Durrheim, 2006; Schram, 2006).

It was also important to state the ethical guidelines taken into account to ensure a study that respected the rights of participants and acknowledged that every participant had a valuable contribution (Babbie, 2011; Merriam, 2009).

Participants were selected thus not only as representatives of the context (Durrheim, 2006), but also as people situated in these contexts and who experience support of and barriers to quality education on a daily basis.

Therefore the data was collected to gain a holistic perspective (Barbour, 2007) of the school and analysed thematically (Addenda J, K, L and M) and to shed light on the factors that are most important to teachers.

3.2 THE RESEARCH PARADIGM

The research paradigm sets the tone as to how the research will be conducted. Durrheim (2006) refers to paradigms as “systems of interrelated ontological, epistemological and methodological assumptions”.

The research paradigm is thus the basic belief system or worldview (Holstein & Gubrium, 2011) guiding the researcher to follow the correct methods of data collection as well as to what kind of observations should take place and how to interpret the data (Durrheim, 2006). To best understand teachers’ perspectives of quality education in low-income schools their subjective experiences were viewed through an interpretive paradigm.

3.2.1. Interpretive research paradigm

The interpretive paradigm was used in order to understand teachers’ shared experiences through practices of quality education. This paradigm affected the way in which the research question was studied and used an objective scale to measure the perspective of the teachers (Durrheim, 2006).

Furthermore, it took the participants' subjective experiences seriously, as to them it was a real perception in the context of teaching in low-income areas and how this influenced the quality of education received at these schools. This paradigm allowed the researcher to interact with the participants' experiences and to make sense of the data that was collected. Through using qualitative research techniques this paradigm captured the language and expressions of the participants in order to understand their particular context (Terre Blanche, Kelly & Durrheim, 2006).

Within the interpretive paradigm the ontology and epistemology is defined as the nature or reality that is to be studied. This allows the researcher to be aware of the internal reality of the subjective experience in order to conduct the research in an empathetic manner (Terre Blanche, Kelly & Durrheim, 2006). From a social constructionist point of view the ontology and epistemology allows the researcher to construct their own assumptions in an objective way for the current reality to be understood, it explains what the nature of the reality is and the knowledge involved to construct the reality (Silverman, 2005; Terre Blanche, Kelly & Durrheim, 2006).

In order to gain as close as possible an insider's perspective to the realities constructed by the participant, the researcher first had to build a relationship outside the formal study. This allowed the participants to see the researcher as someone who wanted to be part of their reality. This is something that may have concerned the researcher as well as the participants. It was furthermore seen as a shared meaning and allowed the researcher to describe the social phenomena in a way that was close to reality and reflected deeper perspectives of the study (Bassey, 2002).

Furthermore, the perspective of teachers allowed the researcher to take care not to let preconceived ideas of the research influence their experiences. The participants' inputs

were considered more valuable than the researcher's as the participants faced these realities on a daily basis (Merriam, 2009).

The interpretive paradigm allowed the researcher to follow an inductive approach to data collection and to investigate themes that might have emerged in the context, as the meaning of the phenomena varied across contexts (Durrheim, 2006).

Thus in order to gain the perspective of teachers, data was collected through a literature review and interviews to best construct the existing realities. According to the social constructionist theory, this is required in order to best understand the realities created by the participants specific to the context (Silverman, 2005; Terre Blanche, Kelly & Durrheim, 2006). An interpretive paradigm allows the participants' voices to be heard. They were able to convey their experiences in a manner that was fair and just (Babbie, 2011).

The interviews mostly consisted of focus groups. Thereafter individual interviews were conducted. The focus group was structured according to the different phases taught. This arrangement was chosen in order to gain a whole school perspective according to age groups and what the teachers understood about quality education within their contexts.

Furthermore, the raw data was analysed through thematic analysis that allowed the researcher to identify themes that were present in the interviews. This highlighted what most concerned the participants as well as evidence that needed in-depth study (Babbie, 2011).

3.3 RESEARCH DESIGN

The study of quality education is mostly viewed from a quantitative perspective as measuring the parameters of quality education is based on standardized assessments done in Grade 3, 6 and 9 (Sayed & Ahmed, 2011; Soudien, 2011a; Spaul, 2011; Spaul & Taylor, 2013). In South Africa there is a significant discrepancy between rich and poor schools and this influences the scores that are achieved at these schools (Sayed & Ahmed, 2011). However, what is not taken into account is the variety of social factors present at these schools that has a major impact on the quality of education received. In order to gain a holistic perspective (Denscombe, 2007; Gerring, 2007) of understandings of quality education it was necessary to do a qualitative study. This promoted understanding of which factors, academically or socially, might have an impact on the quality of education received in low-income schools.

The research design was therefore planned according to a case study format. This allowed for an in-depth study of a social group (Denscombe, 2007; Gerring, 2007; Merriam, 2009; Woodside, 2010; Zucker 2009) in a low-income community that experienced these social factors on a daily basis. Firstly, this design assisted the researcher to define the research question and compose questions that allowed the researcher to gain a better understanding of the whole by focusing on key parts of quality education (Berg, 2007; Durrheim, 2006; Gerring, 2007). Therefore the questions related to support and barriers that teachers might experience with regard to institutions present at school. Specific attention was directed at institutions such as the WCED, the school and the community, as these had the most influence on the quality of education received.

Case study research further guided the researcher as to which theories should be followed (Berg, 2007; Durrheim, 2006). As the research was predominantly focused on a comprehensive examination of the school, it followed the meta-theoretical framework of

social constructionism to study the real-life context of teachers and to gain a subjective experience from the perspectives of teachers (Burr, 2003; Gerring, 2007; Woodside, 2010; Zucker, 2009).

To highlight the impact of social factors on quality education and the circumstances that teachers faced on a daily basis, a social justice approach was followed (Robeyns, 2006; Tikly & Barrett, 2011).

The research design ensured that information was gathered in areas particular to the research, from the appropriate groups of people, so that the research questions corresponded with the implementation of the research (Berg, 2007; Durrheim, 2006). Therefore the study was conducted in a context that existed prior to the research and that would continue to exist after the research was completed. Case study research ensured that the researcher dealt with naturally occurring phenomena (Gerring, 2007; Merriam, 2009) in low-income schools.

Case study research allowed the study of phenomena that might exist in similar contexts. Although the researcher took care not to generalize the research to all contexts, it could be used to shed light on larger cases and social factors that might be present (Denscombe, 2007; Gerring, 2007; Green, 2011; Merriam, 2009; Swansborn, 2001; Woodside, 2010; Zucker, 2009).

Additionally, the research design guided the researcher as to the methodologies to follow while collecting and analysing data (Durrheim, 2006). Case study research allowed the researcher to use a variety of data sets to gain a better understanding of the phenomenon study. The study was therefore based on a literature review, interviews, observation, data collection and thematic data analysis to gain the perspective of teachers on quality

education in a real life context (Babbie, 2011; Barbour, 2007; Denscombe, 2007, Merriam, 2009).

Case study research is mostly qualitative in nature. This research was based on the perspective of a single phenomenon to gain insights that might be a reflection of wider implications experienced in similar low-income school contexts (Denscombe, 2007). This type of research therefore allowed for valuable and unique insights into the perspective of teachers and how institutions and social factors might influence quality education in these schools (Denscombe, 2007; Merriam, 2009). The researcher, however, took care not to let evaluator bias influence the research. Thus gathering of data was done in a naturalistic way, studying the participants in their natural setting and highlighting the factors that were of most influence to them and not as seen by the researcher (Gerring, 2007; Green, 2011).

3.4 QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

Examples of qualitative research methods are observations, interviews and life history accounts. These types of data collection, direct the research to the voices of the participants (Schram, 2006; Wilkinson, 2000).

These methods allowed the researcher to collect data to study issues in-depth and to attempt to understand the data that was collected (Durrheim, 2006; Gerring, 2007; Merriam, 2009). It allowed the researcher to gain a new perspective and to put these issues into context (Terre Blanche, Kelly & Durrheim, 2006).

Thus, qualitative research seeks to answer questions by exploring communities and the participants involved in the community, in order to gain a better understanding of social structures and social roles (Berg, 2007; Holstein & Gubrium, 2011; Schram, 2006). As

schools are one of the key aspects in the community, it is vital to explore this setting as it may display many of the social roles that are present.

Furthermore, qualitative research methods focus on naturally emerging languages and the meaning individuals assign to their experiences. This helped the researcher to make sense of the experiences and identify the patterns that existed (Berg, 2007; Erikson, 2011). Qualitative research is rich in meaning and detail, and these meanings are constructed through individual experience (Babbie, 2011).

As qualitative research is mostly analysed by the researcher many aspects were taken into account to ensure the validity and reliability of the data. Firstly, the researcher selected participants who displayed the characteristics that were required of the research in a fair manner (Babbie, 2011). Secondly, to ensure the validity of the research the study reflected the answers to the questions that the researcher aimed to answer. By presenting the research in a way that was true to the context being studied, the researcher was able to present a study that was unbiased, contributing to the validity of the study (Babbie, 2011; Silverman, 2005).

Lastly, research should be conducted in a manner that ensures reliability. Qualitative research is not considered reliable as it could be influenced by the researcher's own biases and point of view. To contribute to the reliability of the research the researcher depicted the research in a manner that was descriptive and took the subjective experiences of the participants into account. Furthermore the interviews were transcribed verbatim and were seen within the context where the research was conducted (Babbie, 2011; Silverman, 2005).

3.5 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethical considerations in research serve to protect the welfare of research participants. It should be considered when the researcher starts designing the research, especially when there are human participants involved (Wassenaar, 2006). As Wassenaar (2006) correctly states: "Research participants' dignity and welfare are more important than the research."

Researchers should therefore ensure that the rights, privacy and welfare of their participants are taken into consideration at all times and should form the focus of their study (Babbie, 2011). Research ethics guide the researcher as to what kind of research would address the issues that are important to the community (Babbie, 2011) and how to be theoretically sensitive to recognise the issues and gaps that are present in the community (Babbie, 2011; Barbour, 2007). Furthermore, by taking ethical considerations into account it ensures that sustainable interventions are established in the community (Babbie, 2011).

For this research to be conducted, ethical clearance was obtained from the Research Ethics Committee: Human Research (Humanities) of the University of Stellenbosch (Proposal number: DESC_Smit2013) (Addendum A). This process involved discussing the procedures of the research and how the researcher would adhere to certain ethical guidelines. Firstly, access to the school had to be gained by obtaining permission from the Western Cape Education Department (WCED) (Addendum B) and the school principal (Addendum C). Thereafter informed consent was obtained from the research participants (Addendum D). This entailed research participants to be aware of the research that they were involved in (Christians, 2011; Kelly, 2003). The aim of the informed consent was to ensure that participants were autonomous agents of the research and that the dignity and respect of participants were adhered to (Berg, 2007; Christians, 2011; Kelly, 2003).

Research participants were informed about the process of the research and what kind of input would be required of them. Furthermore, participants were informed that the research was voluntary, what the duration of the interviews were and that there were no foreseeable risks, discomforts, or inconveniences presented by this study (Babbie, 2011; Silverman, 2005). It was explained how the research would benefit the society and participants involved (Christians, 2011) and that the research would be made available to those who took part, to ensure that all persons were appropriately quoted and that the information was interpreted correctly (Berg, 2007). Participants gave permission for the interviews to be recorded and that the information would be safeguarded by the researcher (Babbie, 2011).

The informed consent procedure explained furthermore that the researcher would take the utmost care to protect the identities of the participants and the school involved and that participants could withdraw from the research at any time (Berg, 2007). It specified the details of the researcher and supervisor involved and contactable references of persons where the participants could ensure their rights as research participants would be upheld.

The details of the informed consent were handed to each participant in writing and explained to the participants orally and in their language of choice, ensuring that participants understood all aspects of the research (Berg, 2007; Kelly, 2003). All research participants signed informed consent forms confirming that they understood all the processes involved and that they were willing to take part in the research. These forms were also dated and signed by the researcher (Berg, 2007).

Secondly, the researcher ensured that there were no forms of deception present in the research (Babbie, 2011; Christians, 2011) and that the privacy and confidentiality of participants were protected (Babbie, 2011; Berg, 2007; Christians, 2011; Silverman, 2005).

The code of ethics insists that participants' identities and the research location should be protected; this ensured that all participants were safeguarded against unnecessary exposure (Christians, 2011).

In order to protect this information pseudonyms were used for the participants and the name of the school was changed (Berg, 2007). The information obtained is secured on the researcher's personal computer and protected by an encrypted password. Furthermore, the data was only accessed by the researcher and supervisor involved and all transcripts and recording will be kept up to five years to serve as evidence that the research had been conducted in an ethical manner (Babbie, 2011; Berg, 2007; Christians, 2011; Silverman, 2005).

Thirdly, the researcher practiced beneficence and non-maleficence in her research (Babbie, 2011; Christians, 2011; Kelly, 2003; Silverman, 2005), in order to secure the well-being of the participants and to minimize any risks (Babbie, 2011; Christians, 2011). The researcher took care that the research conducted in the specific area had benefits to improve or help the society involved (Babbie, 2011; Kelly, 2003). The researcher respected the knowledge contributed by the participants and ensured that participants were treated fairly and equally during all stages of the research. Thus, in selecting research participants, careful consideration was given as to which participants could most benefit from the study. Participants were not selected according to convenience (Kelly, 2003).

Lastly, it was required of the researcher to display all data accurately; the researcher avoided any practices of fabrications, fraudulent materials, omission of data and plagiarism (Christians, 2011; Kelly, 2003; Wassenaar, 2006). Thus, the researcher included any limitations and failures produced by the research or negative findings in order to ensure

that data was interpreted truthfully (Babbie, 2011). In order to adhere to all ethical considerations the correct research procedures were followed to conduct the research.

3.6 RESEARCH PROCEDURES

3.6.1 Sampling and site selection

The school that was chosen to partake in the study was situated in a low-income community in the Western Cape. Participants in the study were selected through purposive sampling.

Participants were selected from different phases in the primary school. Seven teachers were selected from the foundation phase (Gr R-3) and five teachers were selected from the intermediate phase (Gr 4-6). In order to gain a whole school perspective an individual interview was conducted with the principal. The aim of purposive sampling was to reflect diversity of teachers working with different age groups and how that influenced their quality of teaching according to the particular age group. Using a pre-existing group, reflected a better understanding of group dynamics and how each individual influenced the study by contributing their own opinions (Barbour, 2007; Denscombe, 2007). Furthermore, choosing the correct group to represent the study reflect experiences that were most representative of the social setting (Babbie, 2011; Durrheim, 2006; Gerring, 2007; Kelly, 2003; Silverman, 2011). Thus in selecting teachers from the foundation and intermediate phases, it reflects barriers that all primary school teachers perceive .

In order to gain a more in-depth understanding of certain areas in the research individual interviews were conducted with five teachers across the foundation and intermediate phases.

3.6.2 Generating data

Data are considered the basic material with which a researcher works, in order to answer their research questions. Data were collected in this study through a literature review, focus groups and individual interviews. To be able to draw a valid conclusion it was of utmost importance that the researcher gathered sound data to analyse and interpret (Durrheim, 2006; Merriam, 2009).

Qualitative data was thus gathered to reflect the feelings, experiences and social setting. This put the research in the right context and reflected the voices of the participants. As this study was conducted through the meta-theoretical framework of social constructionism it was important to collect data without disturbing the natural setting. It was important to gain participants' first-hand knowledge without influencing them with the researcher's own bias (Kelly, 2003; Gerring, 2007; Green, 2011).

After the data had been collected, the raw data was reduced into manageable themes allowing the researcher to draw valid conclusions (Berg, 2007).

3.6.2.1 Literature review

Literature reviewed was in the field of policy documents, quality of education, social justice and perspectives of teachers. Literature was reviewed in order to gather data on previous related work and to contribute research in areas that had not been researched before (Babbie, 2011; Berg, 2007; Birmingham, 2000). It contributed to making the argument valid and to identify areas that could be researched in future. Furthermore, it provided a background for the new research and justified the need to conduct new research.

The literature further indicated which populations were previously studied, how many participants took part and what methods and techniques were used to gather the data, the results of the study and the conclusions that were drawn. (Berg, 2007; Birmingham, 2000)

3.6.2.2 Interviews

Interviews were conducted as it is a natural form of interacting. Interviews are mostly seen as conversation, but it is conversation with a purpose; the purpose of collecting data (Berg, 2007; Kelly, 2003). In addition to the natural way data is collected, conducting interviews fitted well with the interpretive paradigm as it allowed the researcher to get to know the participants intimately. The participants were able to reflect on what they think and feel and in turn reflected on their experiences within a low-income community (Kelly, 2003; Rubin & Rubin, 2005).

Interviews were conducted in a semi-structured form (Addenda H and I). This gave the researcher the opportunity to reorder questions if necessary. The interview did not always go as planned. Sometimes questions were answered in the course of the conversation. Thus the researcher took the initiative in being flexible considering the wording of the questions and the levels of language. Semi-structured interviewing allowed the researcher to explain when the research questions were not clear or to probe the participants if they did not understand (Berg, 2007).

Questions used in a semi-structured interview reflected the subjective experiences of the participants so that the researcher could understand the context through the participants' eyes. Interviewing was particularly useful when the researcher tried to put the research questions into the context provided (Berg, 2007; Silverman, 2005). The semi-structured interview not only provided the researcher with the opportunity to engage in in-depth

discussions, rather than just using standardized questions (Babbie, 2011) but helped to probe additional areas that might not have been discussed fully in the focus groups.

By using focus groups and individual interviews through social constructionism, it allowed the teachers to convey their ideas and experiences in a safe environment and to reflect on the ideas of others. It considered the whole person by reflecting on their thoughts and the actions they take with regard to quality education. Although participants had an individual idea of what quality education should be in their school environment, the focus groups provided them with the opportunity to see the point of view for the school as a whole. It gave them the opportunity to link the social environment with the learning that takes place at school and how it influences their daily experiences (Beck & Kosnik, 2006; Gergen, 2001).

This allowed them to explore how their prior knowledge of their experience in the community could contribute towards a better quality of education and have a more integrated approach to teaching and learning. Through sharing mutual experiences it served as an opportunity for mutual support and cooperative learning (Burr, 1995; 2003; Beck & Kosnik, 2006).

(i) Focus group

In order to select the correct focus group for the research it was necessary that the researcher familiarized herself with the literature, the context and the characteristics of the participants (Barbour, 2007).

Focus groups are discussion groups where participants share similar interests or issues and have the same types of experiences within a given context. The participants also

shared similar characteristics and working conditions (Barbour, 2007; Green, 2011; Kelly, 2003).

These discussion groups are seen as support groups where it is possible to facilitate discussions and discover what people experience in the context of a low-income school (Barbour, 2007; Green, 2011). Since there were different types of individuals involved in the group, it contributed various opinions and perspectives (Barbour, 2007). It allowed the group members to share their impressions of services, institutions and other objects of interest (Berg, 2007).

The focus group thus produced data that reflected the various knowledge and insights, which is seldom created by individual interviewing (Kamberelis & Dimitriadis, 2011). It was therefore the researcher's responsibility to create a comfortable setting for the participants to share their perspectives and to engage in the themes that were provided. As the researcher introduced the topics to the participants, the topics that were most important, emerged first. The researcher then developed an idea of what the participants thought and it helped to gain information relating to the research question (Hinds, 2000). The focus groups were furthermore a convenient way to gather data from several people simultaneously (Berg, 2007).

The focus groups consisted mostly of between five and seven individuals (Berg, 2007; Green, 2011; Hinds, 2000). Since the sampling was purposive (Kelly, 2003), the members of the group were selected from a specific school and represented the different phases ranging from Gr R – Gr 7.

The researcher was the facilitator during the focus group interviews (Addendum F), drawing information from the participants, that was important in gathering for this study

(Berg, 2007; Hinds, 2000). The semi-structured interview helped to guide the researcher in the group dynamics to be able to summarize statements provided by the group (Kelly, 2003). This data was then used as stimulus material for individual interviews (Barbour, 2007).

(ii) Individual interviews

Individual interviews (Addendum G) were conducted after the focus group interviews, in order to shed more light on particular topics that surfaced during the focus group discussions. Individual interviews also provided the opportunity for the research to expand on themes and gain a more in-depth understanding of the reality of the participants (Barbour, 2007).

Individual interviews were conducted in a manner that showed interest in issues that needed development or clarification, as well as respected the participant for the information they were sharing. The interview was conducted in the teachers' classroom to ensure that they were comfortable. Furthermore, the researcher paid special attention to the non-verbal cues of the participant research, taking note as to which topics interested the participant and which ones were delicate issues that should not be discussed (Hinds, 2000).

However, the researcher was careful not to let her own biases influence the interview (Hinds, 2000). The researcher should take care to remember that it is the individual's own understanding of their subjective experience and that these views are mostly shared by people in the community (Kelly, 2003).

3.7 DATA MANAGEMENT

3.7.1 Recording and transcribing

In order to transcribe interviews accurately and to convey the data in a manner that was ethically correct, all interviews were recorded using good quality recording equipment. Furthermore, all immediate observations were recorded while additional field notes were drafted. Observations included group dynamics and which topics of research engaged the participants most. Field notes included the order of the speakers to be able to distinguish between individual voices (Barbour, 2007).

The transcription was done by the researcher through verbatim transcription (Barbour, 2007; Berg, 2007; Hinds 2000) (Addenda H and I), capturing all questions, answers, and probes provided by the group members. This manner of transcription ensured that all group dynamics and technical languages involved in teaching were captured (Berg, 2007).

3.7.2 Analysis of data

The data collected in this study was analysed through thematic analysis (Addenda J,K,L and M). This was done by converting the transcribed data into useable themes, biases and meanings in order to correctly identify the support received and barriers raised by institutions, schools and the community in relation to quality education (Berg, 2007).

In order to identify the themes data had to be reduced by selecting, simplifying, abstracting and transforming the raw data that was collected. This ensured that the researcher had a specific focus in their study and that the data was correctly displayed in their data analysis. Furthermore, it helped the researcher to draw accurate conclusions and to identify

implications for further studies and limitations that might have presented themselves in this study (Silverman, 2005).

The data was reduced by coding the raw data and identifying themes incorporated by research participants and the researcher. This included their answers to the questions as well as their reactions when answering specific questions (Babbie, 2011; Barbour, 2007; Berg, 2007; Durrheim, 2006; Hinds, 2000; Wilkinson, 2000). This simplified the process when using quotes and reactions to interpret the participants' data (Babbie, 2011; Berg, 2007).

Qualitative data allowed the researcher to get close to the participants in order to understand their way of life. Thus the data was analysed in a way that described the situations and events of the community involved (Silverman, 2005).

The data was therefore interpreted in a manner that was empathetic, capturing the characteristics, processes and the context of the research. This placed the events of the community and the phenomena into perspective in order to convey information that was true to the research and for future researchers to gain new insights in the research that was conducted (Terre Blanche, Durrheim & Kelly, 2006).

The analysis of the data thus helps to develop new theories and interpretation of the phenomenon to guide future research in the particular area. The process of data collection and analysis should be seen as an integrated process that developed a broad picture that considers all aspects.

The researcher should thus be seen as the primary instrument in collecting and analysing data and therefore able to convey the research in a manner that is true to the community and participants involved (Merriam, 2009; Terre Blanche, Durrheim & Kelly, 2006).

3.8 TEACHER AS RESEARCHER

Teachers have many roles in schools. The role that the researcher wished to highlight was the teacher in the role of researcher. Teachers are aware of the current needs in school and have a full understanding of the process involved to produce a quality education. Thus, it was imperative to gain the perspective of teachers, because they understand, especially in low-income areas, that it is necessary to take into account the complexity of educational processes. These processes include the social, historical, philosophical, cultural, economic, political, and psychological contexts. The teacher as researcher understands that curriculum development does not always account to these contexts and could have a significant influence on the quality of education that is presented (Kincheloe, McLaren & Steinberg, 2011).

As the researcher, I also fulfil the role of a teacher in a low-income area. This presented many benefits and challenges to the research, as I had pre-conceived ideas of the support and barriers that present themselves in quality of education in these areas. In order not to influence the opinion of the reader, I have included my own reflections in the discussion chapter (Chapter 5).

3.9 CONCLUSION

This chapter began by explaining how the interpretive paradigm was used to ensure that the subjective experiences of teachers were taken into account and that the research would reflect their worldview instead of the researcher's (Babbie, 2011).

Furthermore, by introducing a case study research design it allowed the researcher to gain an in-depth understanding of the area that was researched. This further allowed the researcher to consider similar contexts for future research and look for similar phenomena (Gerring, 2007; Merriam, 2009). Qualitative research thus allowed the researcher to choose methodologies to best reflect the experiences of participants and relate it to literature that was previously presented (Durrheim, 2006).

The ethical consideration further stated that the researcher took great care to ensure that the research was conducted in an ethical manner, respecting participants at all times (Babbie, 2011; Merriam, 2009). Selection of participants thus reflected a representation of the low-income school context to gain the perspective of every individual.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH ANALYSIS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

As stated in Chapter 1, the research aimed to answer the following question:

What can we learn about quality in education based on primary school teachers' experiences of teaching in a low-income school?

In order to understand the experience of teachers better the following sub-questions were asked during the focus group interviews:

- *How do you understand the idea of quality of education in primary schools?*
- *What do you think helps schools to provide a quality education?*
- *What do you think prevents this school from providing a quality education?*
- *What WCED interventions and training do you have at school that address quality?*

After the focus group interviews had been conducted, themes became apparent that needed more in-depth understanding. To clarify these themes the following questions were asked during the individual interviews:

- *Since we did the group interview, did any further issues arise that you think you should have mentioned?*
- *Were there any issues that were raised in the group that surprised you?*
- *Why do you think that there is little support from the parents in the community?*
- *How would you explain your role as teacher at this school?*
- *Do you think it contributes to the quality of education received?*

In an attempt to answer the research question as accurately as possible, the research findings were sorted into themes. The themes were then identified according to the issues that arose during the focus group and individual interviews. This was to identify the issues that were the most important to the participants. The data were presented according to these themes. The themes were drawn from all the data, including focus groups, individual interviews and the interview with the principal. The data will be discussed and analysed in Chapter 5 in relation to the existing literature.

4.2 RESEARCH FINDINGS

The research findings are presented under the following main headings: *Teacher/Principal perceptions of quality education, influences on quality education, roles of teachers and the positive aspects of working in a low-income school*. The research is presented to best reflect the themes that participants chose to highlight. The narratives were taken from the data collected during the focus group and individual interviews. Two focus group interviews as well as five individual interviews were conducted to clarify themes that emerged during the focus group interviews.

4.2.1 Teachers' perceptions of quality education

This theme consists of four parts in relation to how teachers perceived quality education at Sunnydale Primary School. The teachers felt that planning for the curriculum and daily activities, resources and innovative teaching had a big impact on the quality of education received at their school.

4.2.1.1 Planning for the curriculum and daily activities

The participants felt it was necessary for a thoroughly planned lesson in order to provide a quality education to their learners.

Mrs Daniels³ commented that:

“As jy nie gaan beplan nie gaan jy nie weet wat om te doen nie en jy gaan rondval in die klas, en met goeie beplanning gaan jy weet wat gedek moet word deur die dag of vir die week. So goeie beplanning is belangrik.”

[If you are not going to plan well, you will not know what to do; if your planning is well organized, you will know what to cover for the day and for the week. So good planning is important.]

She added that meticulous planning incorporated all daily activities, which would make it easier to attend to matters that cropped up in the classroom. Mrs Hendricks explained that thorough planning made it possible to devise activities that are suited to the curriculum and the competency levels of their learners.

Mr Martins confirmed that to be able to elicit the best possible results from learners, lessons should be taught in a way that best reflected their competency, while still working in combination with the curriculum.

Mr October highlighted this point especially:

“Juffrou ek sal sê kwaliteitonderrig vir my is...sou ek sê is dit wat van jou vereis word van die kurrikulum in die eerste plek, dat jy dit met jou kinders in die klas heeltemal deurwerk...um...aan die anderkant van die "coin" is mens moet so ook werk dat jy nou nie so kurrikulum-gerig is dat jy afskeepwerk doen nie. So kwaliteitwerk vir my sal wees dat jy dat dit wat gedek moet word, maar dat jy dit so dek dat jou kinders verstaan die inhoud wat jy met hulle moet behandel.”

[I would say quality education for me...I will say it is what is required by the curriculum in the first place, that you cover it completely with the children in your class...um...on the flipside of the coin you shouldn't be so curriculum orientated either that you skim over the work. So quality education for me

³ All names have been changed.

would be that, what should be covered must be covered in a way that the children understand the content that you cover with them.]

Ms February added that:

“...ek het nou die dag vir een van ons kurrikulum-adviseurs gesê: ‘Hoe kan ek byvoorbeeld aangaan met nuwe konsepte as my kind nog nie ‘n konsep baasgeraak het nie’. Mnr Martins het een jaar ‘n baie goeie ding aangeraak en gesê...um...met al die kurrikulums en die veranderings wat daar is, ‘we just skim over the surface and we never go deep’ en dit is waar ons besluit het ‘we don’t skim anymore’ ons lê die basis.”

[...I said to one of our curriculum advisors: ‘How can I for example move on with new concepts if my child hasn’t mastered a concept’. Mr Martins said something very true one day and said...um...with all the curriculum changes that there are, we just skim over the surface and we never go deep and that is where we decided, we don’t skim anymore we lay the foundation.]

Mr October stressed that the curriculum should be taught within the context that the learners best understood.

The teachers all confirmed that in order to produce a quality education that was most relevant for the learners; the content should be planned to relate to a context that made sense for the learners while still expanding their knowledge about a given subject.

4.2.1.2 Resources

Mrs Hendricks explained that, especially in the Foundation Phase, it was important to have all relevant teaching aids to deliver quality education. She used the following example:

“...dis ook vir my wanneer jy alle apparaat beskikbaar het, dan kan jy definitief, baie goeie onderwys gee. Ek bedoel as ek nou gaan praat van, kom ons praat nou van ‘n horlosie. Ek het een groot horlosie in die klas, as elke kind sy eie horlosie kan hê en dan saam met my kan werk, dan gaan dit baie beter werk as wat ek nou een horlosie het en die hele klas sal moet verduidelik...”

[...for me when you have all the teaching aids available, then definitely you can teach well. I mean if I talk about, let us talk about a clock. I have one big clock in my class, if every child could have their own clock, then they

can work with me, it will work much better than only having one clock and I must explain to the whole class...]

4.2.1.3 Innovative teaching

All the teachers were in agreement that to be able to teach a quality education, teachers had to be innovative. The teachers explained that because they had numerous barriers in their community it was necessary to use alternative methods to teach.

Mrs Hendricks commented that teaching aids or materials could improve their quality education:

“Wat ek wil sê is ons gee kwaliteitonderrig met wat ons het, gebruik ons vir onse kwaliteitonderwys, maar ons sal graag ook daai goed wil hê en dan sal dit met ons kinders beter gaan.”

[What I want to say is we teach quality education with what we have, we use for our quality education, we also want those things and then it will be better for our children.]

4.2.1.4 Cooperation

The Foundation and Intermediate phases teachers emphasised that in order to teach quality education cooperation was necessary. They felt that cooperation from the school, the community and all teachers was vital.

Mrs Botha explained that especially when they became aware of problems with learners, they needed the input from all teachers to have a well thought out plan of action:

“...veral die kinders wat sukkel en nou spreek jy dit aan...kyk hier ons kinders sukkel met die probleem ons moet dit almal as klasonderwysers, wat kan ons daar omtrent doen, wat kan die leerondersteuning doen, wat kan ons dan in die klas doen, die ouers die skoolopset die gemeenskap, `everything's in`.”

[...especially the children who struggle and then we discuss it...look our children struggle with this problem we have to as class teachers, what can we do about it, what can the learning support do, what can we do in the classroom, the parents, the school, the community, everything's in.]

Mrs Hendricks concurred that it was especially necessary to have cooperation among teachers as they had all worked with the learners at some or other stage in their school career:

“Ons praat gedurig met mekaar oor die probleme wat ons ervaar. Met Sunnydale werk dit so, hulle begin hier onder by ons en dan gaan hulle reg deur na die intermediêre fase, so op een of ander tydperk het ons almal met dieselfde kinders gewerk en ons is bekend met hulle probleme. Verder die kinders wat nou in ons klas is hulle ouers was ook gewoonlik in ons klas so ons ken hulle huislike omstandighede goed.”

[We talk constantly to each other about the problems we perceive. With Sunnydale, it works like this, they start with us and then they go to the intermediate phase, some time or another we all work with the same children and we are familiar with their problems. Further the children that are in our classes now, their parents were in our classes too so we understand their home context.]

4.2.2 Principal’s perceptions of quality education

The principal’s perceptions on quality education were taken from a more administrative and policy orientated view and differed from teachers’ views. Thus in the interest of research it was necessary to gain his perspective of quality education.

Mr Davids explained that quality education had to be inclusive, but that it could not happen if there was no learner attendance. He added that the relationship with their parents was very important to make sure that the learners attended school. Education of the learner was not just the teachers’ responsibility.

Mr Davids also spoke about the importance of planning for the day and ensuring that every learner’s competency level was catered for.

He accentuated that:

“Kwaliteitonderrig is ‘n holistiese benadering.”

[Quality education is a holistic approach.]

Thus in order to provide a quality education all aspects had to be taken into account and that as a teacher one had to walk the extra mile to provide learners with a good education. Mr Davids said that a holistic and quality education also entailed making time for culture and sport in order to have a balanced approach.

4.2.3 Influences on quality education

When researching quality education it is necessary to consider a whole school perspective and shed light on the institutions that have the most influence on the school. Therefore, the Western Cape Department of Education, the school itself, the community and relevant social factors as well as how teachers perceived these institutions were taken into account.

4.2.3.1 Western Cape Education Department (WCED)

In order to contribute to quality education the WCED has put interventions in place. These interventions, which will be explained below, include workshops, conferences and guidance; feeding schemes; Khanya laboratories; support and resources. In the teachers' experience these interventions represented both support and barriers.

i. Workshops, Conferences and Guidance

Mrs Anthony explained that the support they received from the WCED was mostly in the form of workshops.

Mr October agreed that the workshops helped with concepts, curriculum and problems perceived in the classroom and that these workshops were the most relevant as one could learn something from them.

Ms February added that:

“Daar is goed wat...jy woon partykeer ‘n ‘workshop’ by wat jy nou letterlik jou tyd mors en...um...dan kry jy nou weer ‘workshops’ wat jy besef, haai jy het nou nie dit geweet nie...so um...mens kan nie sê al die ‘workshops’ is dieselfde nie, maar jy kry ook maar jou ‘workshops’ wat ‘n mors van tyd is, seker maar omdat mense dit moet doen.”

[There are things that...you sometimes attend a workshop that you literally waste your time and...um...then you attend workshops and you think: ‘I did not know that’. So um...you cannot say that every workshop is the same, but you also get your workshops that are really a waste of time...probably because the department has to do it.]

Mr Martins agreed that some of the workshops wasted their time and the workshops that were really needed, received no attention.

Mr Martin and Mrs Hendricks agreed that the greatest need in their school community was for parental guidance workshops. They felt that if the parents were guided to be able to help their children more support would be forthcoming from the parents.

Mr Davids also mentioned that with regard to principals, the WCED organised workshops and conferences to ensure that they were knowledgeable about the school administration and the organisation of governing bodies. He indicated that the conferences were held at least once month and that he benefited by attending them.

Ms February lastly mentioned that the WCED was always available to offer guidance when they had specific problems and that that helped them tremendously in the classroom.

ii. Feeding Schemes

The teachers explained that the WCED had started a feeding scheme in the low-income schools in order to aid the concentration levels of hungry learners during their school day.

Mr Davids explained that the WCED provided the feeding scheme, and that although they had lost the tender a while ago, they continued to send food to the schools. However, the food sent to the school was a lot less and that resulted in a smaller number of learners that they could feed. Therefore the school was only able to feed those learners most in need.

Mr Martins said it was their responsibility as teachers to create a plan to address the problem that arose:

“...ons het weer terug gegaan, die groepie was groter gewees en ons klasonderwysers het in die opset self besluit, watter van hierdie voedingskema-kindere dit meer nodig, ons kon ’n koptelling maak en by ’n wyse van indikasie vasstel, wie het al vanoggend geëet wat in die voedingskema was, en wie het glad nie geëet nie en wie het baie minder. Snaaks genoeg ons het dit wel gedoen, maar ek het nie my getalle verminder nie.”

[...we went back, the group was bigger and the class teachers decided by themselves, which of these children needed the feeding scheme more, with a head count, we could establish who ate this morning, that was in the feeding scheme, and who did not eat at all and who has a lot less. Funny enough, we did it but I did not reduce my numbers.]

Mr October added that it was more important for them to feed the learners and that they provided less food per child, rather than giving learners no food at all.

Mrs Hendricks emphasised the importance of the feeding scheme:

“...jy kan nie ‘n honger kind leer nie juffrou, jy kan nie, hy sit en slaap somtyds en hy konsentreer nie en hulle baklei. Hulle is die boelies en die bakleiers in die klas.”

[...you cannot teach a hungry child miss, you cannot, he sits and sleeps sometimes and he does not concentrate and they fight. They are the bullies and the fighters in the classroom.]

Mrs Africa highlighted this statement by saying:

“...en hulle pes mekaar aan, as jy nie nou vir my hierdie brood gee nie, dan sal ek vir jou na die tyd buite kry.”

[...and they pick on each other, if you don't give me a piece of your bread, then I will wait for you outside afterwards.]

Mr Davids confirmed that the feeding scheme was a motivation for learners to attend school, as the meal they received at school was sometimes the only one of the day.

Mr Martins contributed by saying:

“Kom ek sê vir jou vir baie kinders en nou moet my kollegas my ook help...is dit vir 30% kinders die enigste maaltyd van die dag. So daai kind eet hierso en dan gaan hy huis toe en daar is niks by die huis nie. Dan wag hy maar net vir die volgende dag en so gaan dit maar aan, jy sit somtyds met ‘n kind wat jy kan sien is verskriklik honger. So dit het ‘n invloed op konsentrasie, ‘n invloed op die manier van werk. Ek wil ook sê die hoogtepunt van die voedingskema is vir ‘n kind, omdat hy van die huis af kom, dit help daai kind, dit dra daai kind.”

[Let me tell you for many children and now my colleagues must help me...for 30% of children it is the only meal that they will have that day. So that child eats here and then he goes home and there is nothing at home. Then he waits until the next day and so it goes, sometimes you have a child that is very hungry. It has an influence on concentration, an influence on the way he works. I also want to say that the feeding scheme is a highlight for a child, because he comes from home, it helps that child, it carries that child.]

Mrs Cornelius, a teacher in the Foundation phase, confirmed the statement by saying that her children ate slowly just to be full and they only got food at 08:30 in the morning. She, as a mother, knows that a child needed to be fed at least five times a day.

iii. Khanya Computer Laboratories

Another initiative taken by the WCED was the establishment of the Khanya Computer Laboratories. Mr Martin explained that according to the contract, the WCED provided the computers and programs but that the school remained responsible for maintaining the laboratories. He described it as a costly process.

When talking about the Khanya Laboratories Mrs Botha said that it was necessary for them to use it to achieve quality education:

“...by die skool as jy begin dan in vandag se dae speel tegnologie ’n groot rol, so jy kan nie net gebruik jou boek, handboek nie, daai nie...jy bring al daai tipe goedjies in jou, soos ons “lab”, ons “computer lab” hy staan nou daar soos ’n wit olifant, hoekom kan ons nie die kinders daar invat nie?”

[...at school, in these days technology plays a big role, so you just don't just use your book, textbook, all that...you bring in all the different things, like our lab, our computer lab, it's like a white elephant, why can't we take the children there?]

The teachers all confirmed that they had a problem with the maintenance of the computers. They explained that it required constant repairs and even when they did get technicians to fix it, all the systems were down again within a couple of days.

Ms February described it as:

“Ons het nou al hoeveel keer wat ons tegnisi wat inkom en dan werk dit weer vir tyd en dan kan niemand, nie eers ek kan daar inkom nie. So dis nogal ’n bietjie moeilik...mens is partykeer ’n bietjie frustrateerd...daar is sekere goed wat jy wil doen maar jy kan nie. Jy moet elke keer iemand van buite af kry.”

[We have the technicians come in so many times and then it works for a while and then no one, not even I can access it. So it is a little bit hard...sometimes you are a little bit frustrated...there are some things you want to do, but you can't. You must contact an outsider every time.]

iv. Support

Mr Davids clarified that the WCED lent support to the school by providing them with a learning support educator and providing teaching aids for the teachers in the classrooms. The learning support educator was present at the school two and a half days a week, because she worked between Sunnyside and another school.

Mrs Hendricks explained how they struggled without the extra support in the classroom:

“Kyk sy probeer help, maar dis so min, want dis die kind wat niks kan doen nie...hulle word heeltemal uitgesluit... daar is niks wat hulle kan doen om daai kind te help nie, want sy vat nie die kinders wat baie swak is nie, so daai kindertjies is heeltemal verlore. Ek dink dis nie genoeg nie. Soos hulle sê die kind wat dit regtig nodig het, daai kind moet jy in die klas ondersteun, maar met daai ekstra uur of ’n halfuur kon hy baie beter gevaar het... en sy vat net agt, agt kindertjies op ’n slag.”

[Look she tries to help, but it is not enough, because it is the child who cannot do anything, they are excluded. There is nothing you can do to help that child, because she does not take the children who struggle a lot, so those children are lost. I do not think it is enough. Like they say the child that really needs it, you must support him in the classroom, but with that extra hour or half hour he could have done so much better...and she only takes eight, eight children a period.]

Mr Martins added that as far as he knew he did not received any aids at all:

“Ek praat nou van apparaat ook né, as jy nou kyk na my sportapparate vir hierdie tydspek was daar apparate aan ons belowe, ons soek nou nog die apparaat, so dan moet ons weereens alternatiewe plekke nader, om vir ons sportapparate te bekom soos die Westelike Provinsie het vir ons balle, Westelike Provinsie het vir ons duiksakke gegee en “sheets”, maar aan die akademiese sy ek weet nog nie waar het ek apparaat gekry.”

[I am talking about aids now, if you look at my sport aids for this time frame, aids were promised, we are still looking for the aids, so then we have to find alternative places where we can find sport aids like the Western Province they gave balls, Western Province gave us tackling bags and sheets, but on the academic side, I don't know where I got aids.]

4.2.3.2 School

Mr Davids expressed the conviction that for him as principal it was important to create a positive atmosphere at school so that teachers would want to be there. He tried to create an atmosphere of cooperation:

“Ek wil hê hulle moet voel dat hulle hier wil wees. Wanneer hulle by die hek instap moet hulle nie voel dat, hulle is nie nou eintlik lus vir die storie nie, mens soek nie daardie tipe onderwysers nie.”

[I want teachers to want to be here. When they walk through our gates they must not feel that they don't really want to be here, you don't want those types of teachers.]

Furthermore, they set dates for all teachers to work together on their planning for the curriculum so that all the phases were integrated. The teachers highlighted the following themes concerning support and barriers they perceive at school: *financial input, infrastructure and administration.*

i. Financial input

All the teachers explained that because they were situated in a low-income area financial input was a major problem; because of the lack of finances, they experienced many barriers. These barriers included no school fees, big classes and limited resources.

- **No school fees**

Mr Davids said that even though their school fees were low, parents did not want to pay the school fees:

“Juffrou, dis nogal 'n stryd met ons ouers. Ons sit met die ding van, 'n klompie jaar terug het die president van onderwys gesê hulle wil onderrig verniet maak, en dit het by ons ouers vasgehaak en wat gebeur is ons skole in omliggende areas is 'no-fee schools' en hulle families bly hier in ons area. Nou vra hulle, maar hoekom moet ons skoolfonds betaal as so-en-so nie skoolfonds betaal nie. Nie net families nie, maar vriende wat weet van mekaar.”

[Miss it is a struggle with our parents. We have the problem that, a couple of years ago the president of education said that they wanted to make education free, and that stuck with the parents and what happens is that the surrounding communities' schools are no-fee schools and their families stay in our area. Now they ask, why should we pay school fees if so-and-so does not pay school fees. Not only families, but friends who know each other.]

Mr October explained that the parents felt that if their children were in the same financial situation as the children in the other school they should also be exempt from school fees.

In any case they felt that education was not something they should pay for:

“Hulle sien nie opvoeding...hulle sien opvoeding en 'n worsrolletjie nie in dieselfde sense nie, as jy 'n worsrolletjie kry dan betaal jy vir dit, maar hulle sien nie opvoeding in daai nie, hulle sien opvoeding as 'n reg vir hulle kind, hulle verstaan ook nie dat daar moet finansies wees om dit wel te kan doen nie.”

[They don't see education as...they don't see education and a hotdog roll in the same sense, if you want a hotdog roll, then you pay for it, but they don't see education as that, they see education as a right for their child, they don't understand that we need the finances to be able to do that.]

Mr Davids explained that they had applied to become a no-fee school, but that they unfortunately fell under a quintile 4 community⁴. He added that he wanted to apply for their quintile to be revised as they had major issues in terms of socio-economic barriers in their school community.

Mr Davids mentioned that although their school fees were low and they could therefore not offer teachers a major financial input, a quality education was still taught. He said that the parents who could afford the school fees would usually send their children to a “better” school.

“Die ouer wie heel kan bekostig om skoolfonds te betaal, hulle kinders is die ex-model C skole. Ek maak altyd die vergelyking tussen Pep Stores skool/winkel en Markhams. Jy kry dieselfde klere by Pep Stores teen 'n goedkoper prys en swakker gehalte, dan kry jy jou Markhams skool wat duurder is teen 'n beter gehalte. Skole werk mos nou ongelukkig nie so nie, net

⁴ Refer to Chapter 1, Section 1.6.3, as to how schools are divided amongst quintiles.

omdat jou skoolfonds laer is as skool x is, beteken dit nie jou gehalte van onderwys is swakker nie, maar die ouers dink nie in daai manier nie."

[The parents who can afford to pay school fees, their children are in the ex-model C schools. I always draw the comparison between a Pep Stores school/shop and Markhams. You buy the same clothes at Pep Stores at a cheaper price and bad quality, then you get your Markhams school, which is more expensive, at a better quality. Schools unfortunately don't work like that, just because your school fees are lower than school x, it doesn't mean that your quality of education is worse, but the parents don't think that way.]

- **Big classes**

Mr Davids pointed out that in their community, they did not deny any child access to their school and as a result, they had big classes. He said problems arose when the WCED did not provide them with enough teaching posts to make their classes any smaller. He explained that the number of posts available was directly linked to the number of learners in their school.

"Dit gaan nie oor hoeveel leerders daar per graad is nie, dit gaan oor hoeveel leerders daar in die skool is. Soms kry jy dit dat daar per graad minder leerders is, sê byvoorbeeld 75 en dan die volgende jaar is die graad 90 leerders, so hulle moet maar op verdeel word tussen die twee opvoeders."

[It is not about the number of learners per grade, it is about the number of learners attending school. Sometimes it happens that there are fewer learners per grade, for example 75 and then the following year the grade has 90 learners, so they have to be divided amongst the two educators.]

Mrs Hendricks explained that the number of learners in a class played an important role concerning quality education. In schools with fewer learners per class it was easier to identify learners who struggle with the concepts explained in class. She explained that they had about 40-45 learners in their classes and that the administrative load of marking books became overwhelming.

"...kwaliteitonderrig hang af van jou nasienwerk ook, want dan kan jy sien waar die kinders se probleme lê, want as jy nie gereeld gaan nasien nie gaan jy dit nie kan korrigeer nie. Dan kom as jy beginne nasien dan sien jy die intervensie, dan doen jy somer intervensie, want jou verbetering is jou intervensie. Waar jy die probleem onmiddellik kan aanspreek, maar as jy eers oor twee/drie dae begin merk, dan verloor jy daai momentum waar jy onmiddellik met die kind kan werk."

[Quality education also depends on your marking work, it is there you can see where the children's problems lie, because if you are not going to mark you cannot correct it. Then if you start marking, you can see your intervention, then you do your intervention, because correcting is your intervention. You can correct the problem immediately, but if you start marking in two/three days' time, then you lose that momentum, where you could have worked with the child immediately.]

Mrs Jacobs confirmed that this was a major problem even in the Intermediate and Senior phases. They had learners who struggled from Foundation phase and by the time they entered the higher grades those problems were merely carried over.

Mrs Africa added that it was especially important in the Foundation phase as they wanted to identify learners who struggled with the basic concepts. The teachers also mentioned that because the school had no extra funds it was impossible to appoint teachers in governing body posts, to make the classes smaller. They also mentioned that if they were to be absent, their classes were divided amongst each other and they then had even bigger classes.

ii. Limited resources

• Teaching Aids

Mrs Anthony mentioned although the WCED provided teaching aids, it was simply not adequate. All the teachers confirmed that, because of the lack of funds from the school they mostly had to take their own initiative and make most of their own aids:

"...kyk ons as ons gaan vra dan moet ons eers 'n tydjie wag tot daar geld is om dit vir ons aan te koop en dan somtyds dan lyk dit dan asof dit ook soos mis voor die son...dan word dit glad nie aangekoop nie en dan ons maak ons maar onse eie goedjies, ons doen ons onderwys daarmee, somtyds gaan baie geld uit jou sak uit omdat jy nou moet goed koop, want die ouer kan nie koop nie, om jou werk, om kwaliteitonderwys te bied, moet jy ook mos nou uitstaan, om dit op standaard te hou."

[Look if we ask, then we have to wait a while, until there is money to buy it and then sometimes our requests just disappear like mist in the morning sun...then

it is not purchased at all, so we make our own things and we teach with it. Sometimes we pay a lot of money out of our own pockets, because you have to buy things, the parent cannot buy, to be able to do your work, to provide quality education, you have to shine, to maintain a standard.]

Ms February said the schools in the community worked on a share system and that some of their aids were provided by non-governmental organisations (NGO's). She said that in order to provide a quality education one had to adjust to what the school was able to provide and be an innovative teacher to be able to achieve what was expected of you.

Mr October explained that even if they would like resources from home the parents were unable to provide it. He used the following example to explain:

“Ek het byvoorbeeld nou gedoen...in wetenskap het ons gedoen... elektrisiteit...waar ons nou die geleidingsdrade gehad het en al wat ek van hulle wou hê...ons het apparaat gekry van die departement af, maar die probleem is toe was daar nou nie batterye nie...die dubbel A en toe het ek nou eenvoudig gevra... ‘Luister, bring vir my van die huis, kyk vir my of jy vir my ‘n batterysel kan saambring’...dan kan ek nou die eksperimentjie met hulle in die klas mos nou doen. Dit het my drie dae gevat en daar het niks uitgekom nie. As jy vir 45 kinders moet voorsien in jou klas, raak dit ‘n duur storie.”

[For example I did...I did electricity in the science class...where we had conducting wires and all that I wanted from them...we received aids from the department, but the problem was that I did not receive batteries...the double A and I simply asked... ‘Listen please see if you can bring me batteries from home’... then I can do the experiment with them in class. It took me three days and I received nothing. If you have to provide for 45 children in your classroom, it starts to become expensive.]

- **Textbooks and workbooks**

Mrs Daniels explained that the WCED had supplied a workbook for each child, but unfortunately not a textbook for every child. She added that it was up to the teachers to make copies of the pages, so that every child had the exercise. She explained that this was needed to provide quality education:

“Juffrou, ons wil baie graag hê elke kind moet sy eie hê en dis baie moeilik vir ons, maar ons is baie innoverend, ons maak ons eie apparaat om ons eie kwaliteitonderrig te gee.”

[Miss, we would like every child to have their own and it is very difficult for us, but we are very innovative, we make our own aids to provide quality education.]

- **Infrastructure**

Mr October said that a small thing like the infrastructure also had an impact on the quality of education they were able to provide at school:

“Ek meen nou ’n simpel ding...dit klink nou simpel...hierdie dit het so gereën...die afgelope week né...ek meen nou die kinders ruil van klas tot klas... in die reën en die stoepe is nie toe nie. So dit reën nat, jy as opvoeder beweeg op die stoepe jy kry ook nat...dis ’n simpel ding...maar dit is nou alles wat vir jou kan negatief maak teenoor die ‘teaching’, maar tog is dit omstandighede waaraan ons gewoon is waarmee ons moet saamleef en jy moet maar aangaan met die onderrig, maar dis maar baie keer goedjies wat nie eers raak gesien word nie, hulle aanvaar maar net...”

[I mean a stupid thing...it sounds stupid...it rained so hard...the previous week...I mean the children swop from class to class...in the rain and the verandas aren't closed. So it is wet, you as educator walk on the verandas, you also get wet...it's a stupid thing...but that is what makes you negative about teaching, but it is circumstances that we are used to and that we have to live with and you have to go on with teaching, sometimes it is something they do not see, they just accept...]

4.2.3.3 Community and social factors

Mr Davids emphasised that the support they received from their community was very limited. He explained that they experienced many barriers in their community with regards to uneducated, unemployed, young and uninvolved parents or otherwise parents who worked till very late.

Mrs Daniels perceptions are that not all parents were literate and unable to help their children. The teachers all explained that they had tried to put interventions in place to assist the parents to help their children. Ms February explained the interventions she had tried:

“...die kinders wat ons nou in die klas het, se ouers is nie noodwendig geletterd nie en met die gevolg is die ouer weet nie noodwendig as jy ’n opdrag huis toe stuur hoe om die kind te help nie. Baie keer kom ouers na jou toe en sê maar dit wat ons op skool geleer het is nie noodwendig dieselfde nie, dan sê ons vir hulle

maar kom skool toe, jy gee vir hulle spesifieke dae, jy kom skool toe en ek sal vir jou help om jou kind te help, maar niemand kom nie.”

[...the children that we have in the classes, their parents are not necessarily literate and if you send an assignment home the parent does not necessarily know how to do it. A lot of time the parents tell you that that is not the way they did it at school, then we tell them come to school, you give them specific days, you can come to school and I will help you to help your child, but no one comes.]

Mr October agreed that it was sometimes very frustrating, because they wanted to talk to parents about their children, but they did not bother to show up. He added that the parents that one wanted present were never there.

Mr Martins felt that most of the problems were due to parents who work late.

Mrs Hendricks confirmed this by explaining incomplete homework:

“...ouers moet gaan werk, saans laat werk, om 'n takie te voltooi kan ons nie altyd die ouers daarby inbring nie, verstaan jy, veral onse lae-inkomste. Hulle moet gaan werk en soos die kind sê ...my ma sê sy werk vanaand dan kan sy wat kan sy nou maak? Sy moet gaan werk om haar kinders te versorg.”

[...parents have to work late in the evening, to complete a task we cannot ask the parents, do you understand, especially our low-incomes. They have to go to work and as the child says...my mom says she's working tonight and what can she do then? She has to work to take care of her children.]

The teachers mentioned that most of the discipline problems in their school were due to the young age of mothers; on average 20-25 years, and that these mothers left the children in the care of their grandparents. They explained that the grandparents did not know how to help the children with their education.

Mrs Africa gave the following example:

“Ek het 'n oupa gehad by my, want die kind kon nie die werk verstaan nie. Toe laat ek die oupa sit. Toe sê ek vir hom, oupa nou sit daar ek gaan vir oupa nou verduidelik hoe gaan ek nou maak. En oupa kon nie verstaan nie, toe probeer ek nou weer vir oupa op 'n ander manier te verduidelik en toe sê hy 'oh juffrou nou verstaan ek', en toe dink ek 'ai siestog kyk hoe maak ek nou'.”

[A grandfather came to see me because the child could not understand the work. So I let the grandfather sit down and said 'I will explain to you how it works'. And the grandfather could not understand, so I tried another way to explain and he eventually said: 'Ah! Now I understand!' and I thought 'shame look what I just did'.]

Mrs Hendricks said most parents were not involved. She attributed it to poverty, as they could not afford to provide for their children; parents who abuse substances; single parents; fathers in jail and fathers involved in gangs. She mentioned what influences that had on a particular learner in her classroom:

"Bendes is ook, maar ook 'n invloed. Hier is 'n seun in my klas sy pa is 'n 'gangster', so hy hoor die skollietaal by die huis en dan bring hy dit hier by die skool aan. Juffrou, ek duld dit nie in my klas nie, werkloosheid, dwelm- en alkoholmisbruik."

[Gangs are also a big influence. There is a boy in my class, whose dad is a gangster. So he hears the way they speak at home and he speaks it at school. Miss, I do not tolerate it in my class, unemployment, drug and substance abuse.]

Mrs Daniels explained that due to parents who are uninvolved, the children in the community had to take responsibility for themselves. That resulted in children who were hungry and unwashed. She explained that in the past they had taken the responsibility as teachers to take care of these children (teachers used to wash children in their classroom), but due to the Human Rights Act they were no longer able to do so.

"...dan tas jy die kind se menswaardigheid aan."
[...you scar the child's human dignity]

Mrs Cornelius, a Gr R teacher, confirmed that even the children in her class were left to their own devices and expected to take care of themselves:

"En juffrou in my klas laat die ouers ook die kinders alleen. In my klas so klein soos wat hulle daar is juffrou, moet hulle na hulleself kyk. Die oupa is te oud om na die kinders te kyk, want die oupa kan nie lekker hoor nie, hy kan nie lekker sien nie, en die kind moet hom self was, en hulle kom vuil by die skool. My kinders gaan slaap sonder kos juffrou en daar is nie krag vir die hele week nie."

[And miss, even in my class the parents leave the children by themselves. In my class they are so small and yet they have to take care of themselves. The grandfather is too old to take care of them, he cannot hear properly, he cannot see, the children must wash themselves and they come to school dirty. My children go to bed hungry and there is no electricity for the whole week.]

Mrs Smith mentioned that substance abuse in their community also had a big impact on their learners:

“Ons noem hulle Maandag se kinders...of hulle is nie in die skool nie, of hulle is deurmekaar...As gevolg van drankmisbruik oor die naweek van baklei en al daai goed so op 'n Maandag is die kinders se gedagtes nie altyd saam met ons nie...spesifiek iets, iets dramaties wat by die huis gebeur het, wat jy nie noodwendig van bewus is nie, nou sit daai kind in die klas, jy kan sien daai kind is ver weg.”

[We call them Monday's children...they are not in school or they are confused, because of substance abuse over the weekend, because of fights and on Mondays these children's thoughts are not with us...specifically when something dramatic happened at home, that you are not necessarily aware of, and now that child sits in your class, and you can see that child is far away.]

Mrs Jacobs explained that it even had a major influence on what she taught; she explained that if she asked the learners to perform a role-play in the classroom it was always about the environmental influences in the community and never a play about daily activities. She said that in fact the psycho-social problems prevalent in the community were such an integral part of the children's daily activities, that it became their reality.

4.2.4 Roles of teachers

Mr Davids explained that in their school community the teachers fulfilled many roles:

“Wel hulle is die mummies en daddies, maatskaplike werksters, predikant, sielkundiges vir die ouers en die kinders. Ons onderwysers is al lank by ons en hulle is bevoegd om in hierdie tipe omgewings te werk, mens moet somtyds op die tone trap om seker te maak al die kinders is hier.”

[Well they are the mommies and the daddies, social workers, pastor, psychologists for the parents and the children. Our teachers have been with us for a long time and they are equipped to work in these types of environments, sometimes you have to step on toes to make sure that the children are here.]

Mrs Africa stressed that her role of mother was very important in the school as she had been working with most children since the first grade:

“..’n ma, dit kom baie sterk deur. Van hierdie Graad sewe leerders luister nou nog net na my, want ek is die sterkste mafiguur wat hulle gehad het in graad een. Hulle luister eerder na my as wat hulle na hulle ouers luister. Jy is maar verpleegster, jy luister na die kinders, predikant, welsynswerker. Die ding is, Juffrou, die ouers is glad nie hier nie, hulle wil jou nie eers help in die klasse nie. Jy is maar alles. Ons voed hulle op oor alles. Om hulleself te was, wat hulle moet eet, ek lees elke oggend vir hulle uit die Bybel. Ek voed die ouers ook maar op.”

[..a mother, it reflects strongly. These Grade seven learners even now only listen to me, because I am the strongest mother figure that they had in Grade one. They would rather listen to me than to their parents. You are a nurse; you listen to the children; pastor and social worker. The thing is, Miss, the parents are not here at all, they do not even want to help you in class. You are everything. We educate them about everything. To wash themselves, what they must eat, I read the Bible to them every morning. I even educate the parents.]

Mrs Hendricks added that all these roles had an influence on quality education, because it was necessary to have all the basic things in place in order for a child to learn properly. She said that as a teacher one had to take on different roles to contribute to the best education you could offer your children.

Ms February said she motivated her learners by telling them:

“...net omdat jou ma en pa so is, beteken nie dit jy moet ook so wees nie. Ek sê altyd vir my kinders ‘don’t use your circumstances as an excuse’. Jy kan jou opvoeding gebruik om uit hierdie omstandighede te kom. Ek dink ons moet besef hoe ons die kinders beïnvloed en daardie omstandighede vir hulle beter maak.”

[...just because your mom and dad are like that, it does not mean that you have to be the same. I always say to my children ‘don’t use your circumstances as an excuse’. You can use your education to get out of these circumstances. We should realise how we influence these children and how we improve their circumstances.]

4.2.5 Positive aspects of working in a low-income school

Mr October accentuated that although a school like Sunnydale faced many barriers, there were also many positives. Mr Martins and Ms February expressed their passion for working with these children:

M: Die positiwiteit daarvan is om die kind te onderrig...daai weetgierigheid...een kind se weetgierigheid tussen 'n klas van 40 is genoeg stimulasie, 'n aanhou vir my en 'n vreugdevolle werk vir my en ook die kinders te leer

F: en ook dan kinders wat ten spyte van hulle omstandighede wat bo dit styg ek dink dis vir my die pluspunt...jy weet 'n kind sukkel by die huis maar ten spyte van dit alles, hulle maak dit die moeite werd...

M: Ja, ek dink ook so dat ons in ons warboel van akademiese oordrag in kennis, het ons as onderwysers baie empatie ook met ons kinders, ons sien baie dinge raak ook waar ons, 'n kind wil ook net al hoor jy net, hy wil nie iets sê nie, al hoor hy net die antwoord van die onderwyser dis al genoeg vir hom, so ons vind genot in ons kinders en help ook om die liefde te toon.

[M: The positive about teaching a child...that curiosity...one child's curiosity in a class of 40, is enough stimulation, something that keeps me going and a joyful work for me and to teach the children.

F: And then also children that rise above their circumstances, I think for me that is the highlight. You know a child struggles at home, but in spite of everything, they make it worth it.

M: Yes I think that in the stress of all the academic transfer of knowledge, that we as teachers have a lot of empathy with our children, we see a lot of things and the child only wants to be heard and say something and if he just gets response from the teacher it is enough for him. So we find joy in our children and to give them love.]

Mr Davids explained that he was very proud to be the principal of Sunnydale. He had been the principal for 28 years and he still wanted to be at the school every day. He said what made him proud was that despite their financial difficulties their children still achieved on academic, cultural and sport levels.

4.3 CONCLUSION

This section aimed to discuss data collected through focus group and individual interviews. Data was analysed according to the themes that arose during the interviews. These themes include: *Teacher/Principal perceptions of quality education, influences on quality education, roles of teachers and the positive aspects of working in a low-income school.* The data is further discussed in Chapter 5 as well as the reflections of the researcher.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION, DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION TO FINDINGS; RECOMMENDATIONS; LIMITATIONS AND STRENGTHS OF THE STUDY

5.1 INTRODUCTION

A qualitative interpretivist study within the theoretical frameworks of social constructionism and a social justice approach guided the research.

Discussion of the research will be therefore be presented according to these frameworks. The purpose of the discussion was to summarise the research findings and place these findings within the context of existing literature. The research was undertaken to explore how teachers understood the concept of quality education through their lived experiences at a low-income school. This exploration took into account what teachers viewed as contributing to or hindering a quality education, both at personal and interpersonal levels in the school. It also looked at how the school system, the WCED and the social environment contributed to positive or negative outcomes regarding quality.

In order to answer the research question two focus group discussions were held with teachers from the Foundation and Intermediate phases at the low-income school. In addition, five individual interviews were conducted for a more in-depth understanding.

Furthermore, this chapter offers a conclusion to the findings, recommendations based on the discussion of the findings, it mentions the limitations and strengths of the study and contains suggestions for future research.

5.2 QUALITY EDUCATION THROUGH THE LENSES OF SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIONISM AND A SOCIAL JUSTICE APPROACH

Through the meta-theoretical framework of social constructionism, the research aimed to explore the knowledge that was constructed by teachers through their social environment (Burr, 2003; Donald, et al, 2010; Gergen, 2001) and how these contextual factors influenced quality education. Furthermore, social constructionism suggests that people are active agents in their own development (Pelech & Pieper, 2010) and as indicated in the research findings, teachers were in fact key agents to change within their context. This was shown in the way teachers brainstormed to work around contextual factors that had a direct influence on learning, i.e. changes in the food tenders, while still accommodating most learners who were not fed at home. Additionally, teachers were aware of departmental, curriculum and learner requirements and were in fact able to adjust their teaching methods to take all of these factors into account.

Through a social constructionist lens the researcher was able to take all aspects of the social environment into account and it enabled the researcher to better understand which social processes had the most influence on quality education received at Sunnydale primary school (Burr, 1995; 2003; Wortham & Jackson, 2008). The findings and literature indicated that although formal learning was necessary for quality education to take place, teachers took great care to ensure that all learners' basic needs were met for optimal learning (Fosnot & Perry, 2005; Gergen, 2001; Wortham & Jackson, 2009).

Furthermore, through social constructionism, the researcher was able to identify which teacher characteristics influenced quality education, constructed by the psychological, cultural and social elements of the community (Donald et al, 2010; Pelech & Pieper, 2010; Wortham & Jackson, 2008). The research findings thus described what teachers

experienced in terms of learner characteristics and what influence it had relative to what was expected of the school curriculum and the community context (Burr, 1995; Wortham & Jackson, 2008).

By using a social justice approach, the researcher was able to allow the voices of previously marginalized communities to be heard (Keddie, 2012b). Although the area where Sunnydale Primary School is located forms only a small part of such marginalized communities, many of the barriers identified in this study have been identified in similar contexts (Miller & Elman, 2013; Rowe, 2003; Sayed & Ahmed, 2011). Thus, the way the research findings are presented is in keeping with a social justice approach, and ensures that participants' voices are present at all times. A social justice approach, according to Fraser, needs to have participatory parity which includes three components; redistribution, recognition and representation (Bozalek & Carolissen, 2012; Tikly & Barrett, 2011). The data will be discussed in terms of this theoretical foundation.

5.3 TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF QUALITY EDUCATION

Nancy Fraser's three-part model assigns great importance to redistribution. Hence quality education depends, amongst other things, on the access schools have to resources (Delors et al, 1996; Tikly & Barrett, 2011). Furthermore, it indicates what influence fair distribution of resources can have on the quality of education received at a school (Lingard & Keddie, 2013). Teachers identified redistribution as the biggest issue in their school community.

Very few parents actually pay school fees, severely restricting Sunnydale Primary School's financial resources. School fees are typically not paid due to poverty, parents' awareness of other schools in the area that are exempt from school fees and ultimately a lack of

parental involvement in their children's education. Numerous barriers thus occur due to lack of finances in the school. The parents expect education to be available to their children, but insist on the provision of no-fee schools for their low-income area. This is also a goal that the EFA (Education For All) wishes to achieve (DoBE, 2010; Spaul, 2013).

Teachers emphasised the importance of resources to deliver a quality education. They explained that to provide a quality education they had to have all relevant teaching aids and materials (Sayed & Ahmed, 2011). It was stated that with the necessary aids every child could be helped to better understand the concepts taught. The teachers explained that especially in their context resources were limited (Sayed & Ahmed, 2011; Spaul, 2011), but with innovative teaching (Polidano, Hanel, & Buddlemeyer, 2013) it was possible to achieve standards set by the curriculum.

As a support measure, the WCED provided Sunnydale Primary School with the Khanya computer laboratories and a learning support educator. Although the Khanya computer laboratories are fully equipped, the school is responsible for the maintenance and lacks the necessary funds. Unfortunately, the technical support provided by the WCED is not efficient. The WCED also provides low-income schools with learning support educators, but due to a lack of finances, the educator serves two schools during the week, leaving little time to focus on those learners who desperately need the learning support.

Teachers experienced many barriers with regards to distribution of resources, as outlined in Nancy Fraser's model (Tikly & Barrett, 2011). In order to achieve quality education all necessary infrastructure and learning materials should be provided by the WCED (Delors et. al, 1996; UNESCO, 2000). The teachers of Sunnydale described how they often got wet during winter, as there was insufficient infrastructure to protect them against the elements.

Furthermore, as the relevant teaching aids were not supplied for all the subjects, teachers were compelled to be innovative and provide their own materials. More than that, not every child had a full set of textbooks to optimise learning. Teachers were disadvantaged in this regard, as making their own teaching aids was not cost-effective. Because it was also time-consuming, it deprived learners of quality teaching time.

Through recognition, the second component of Fraser's three-part model of social justice, teachers should focus on curriculum development and good pedagogy in order to accommodate all learners in school and to address all needs that may arise. The teachers were able to adjust their pedagogy to accommodate barriers perceived and provide a quality education taking specifically inclusion of learners' cultural contexts and traditions into account (Tikly & Barrett, 2011).

The teachers at Sunnydale Primary School indicated that a quality education necessitated thorough planning. In order to accommodate all learners in their classroom they offered activities that suited their learners' competency levels. They indicated that when all planning was done correctly, they could also address the barriers perceived by the learners within the community. This is in line with literature that indicates in order to provide a quality education children's basic needs have to be met first (Rowe, 2003).

The teachers further agreed that it was necessary to follow the guidelines of the curriculum, but within the context that suited the learner, to be able to provide a quality education. They understood that quality education was not only based on academic achievement (Rowe, 2003), but that it should provide learners with essential life skills that is needed to achieve further success. They highlighted that the concepts that were taught had to be understood completely, before they were able to move on to new concepts, even when the time frame of the curriculum did not allow it.

The principal also indicated that quality education had to be inclusive and relevant to all. He also felt the need to teach a curriculum that was relevant to competency levels and contexts. Furthermore, he believed that creating a positive teaching environment (UNESCO, 2000) had an influence on the quality of education taught at his school. He also emphasised the fact that all aspects of the school, curriculum and community had to be taken into account (Miller & Elman, 2013) to provide an education that was most relevant to his learners.

The teachers recognised barriers, with regards to the community, that had an effect on the quality of education received at their school (Keddie, 2012a; Nussbaum, 2006; Sayed & Ahmed, 2011). They pointed out that the support they received from the community is very limited. They attributed this to uneducated, unemployed and uninvolved parents or alternatively parents who had late working hours (Damber, Samuelsson, & Taube, 2012; Miller & Elman, 2013; Tomul & Savasci, 2012).

Most of the parents in the community also attended Sunnydale Primary School. Consequently, the teachers were aware of the long-term psychosocial barriers within these families and the effects on the current generation. Many of the parents in the community entrust the care of their children to the grandparents. The teachers found that many of the grandparents who take care of the children, were in fact illiterate and unable to help the learners with schoolwork. The teachers also acknowledged that even some of the parents in the community were illiterate (Sayed & Motala, 2012). Despite numerous interventions by the teachers to address these barriers, the community had little interest in parental guidance.

It was found that most of the parents who were actually employed, had late working hours or night shifts and could not be at school during working hours. Many of these parents

arrived home late and still had to attend to household duties with hardly enough time to invest in their children's schoolwork. The parents were unable to avoid this barrier as the community struggled with issues of poverty and the inability to provide for their families (Damber, Samuelsson, & Taube, 2012; Miller & Elman, 2013; Tomul & Savasci, 2012).

Additional issues identified by the teachers in their community were single parent households; substance abuse by parents; fathers in jail and gang involvement. The teachers felt that those barriers had a major impact on behavioural issues and that the learners were a product of their community (Sayed & Ahmed, 2011). Most of the children in the community were left to take care of themselves, resulting in neglect with regards to nutrition and health care.

As a result of these influences in the community, the children fell behind before they even entered the classroom (Lee & Burkham, 2002). These factors usually accounted for a high dropout rate as learners perceived academic success to be beyond their reach (Polidano, Hanel, & Buddlemeyer, 2013).

The last component of Nancy Fraser's model requires a need for representation to achieve social justice. To achieve representation it is necessary to have the teachers and learners involved in the decisions that influence or affect quality education (Bozalek & Carolissen, 2012).

The teachers made it clear that quality education required cooperation from fellow teachers, the community and all institutions. The teachers found this to be especially important, because all of them had worked with the learners during some stage of their careers. Teachers concurred that when they all contributed, it helped to create a plan of action that was sustainable within their community.

Furthermore, the teachers were able to identify the barriers that prevented learners from having a voice and taking part in society (Tikly & Barrett, 2011). Fraser deems it as important to have adequate representation of learners' and teachers' voices in structures within organisations like schools.

5.4 INFLUENCES ON QUALITY EDUCATION

As the research indicated in Chapter 4, the institutions that had the most influence on quality education were the WCED and the school. The discussion allowed a reflection on how these institutions had influence.

5.4.1 The Western Cape Education District (WCED)

As discussed in Chapter 2 the WCED put many interventions in place, in order to create opportunities for quality education, the question however was if these interventions were sustainable in these communities. Therefore, the barriers were identified through the research findings within the community and how the WCED addressed these barriers.

Firstly, the WCED implemented a feeding scheme to keep learners well-nourished and motivated (Education Ministry-Western Cape, 2012; UNESCO, 2000). Although the feeding scheme was implemented at Sunnydale Primary School, the tender of the catering company that provided the schools with food was recently lost. This meant that the WCED had to provide schools with food on their own account, resulting in schools receiving less food than previously. The teachers ensured that they do still feed all the learners that previously received food by providing all the learners with some food. They further emphasised that the feeding scheme was a necessity as it provided the learners with

better concentration skills and a motivation to attend school. They indicated that if the learners were not fed at school they had problems with concentration and behaviour.

Secondly, the WCED implemented training and support for teachers in the new CAPS curriculum that focused on reading and writing skills (Education Ministry Western Cape, 2012); accurate assessment of knowledge skills, attitudes and values (UNESCO, 2000). The teachers found the training relevant, especially training that involved content knowledge. However, the teachers felt that workshops had to be based on the barriers that they experienced in the classroom. The principal mentioned that the workshops he had found most relevant were those based on administrative issues in the school.

Thus, based on Nancy Fraser's notion of recognition it is imperative that the WCED recognise and meet the needs of teachers and school leadership to improve the quality of education offered.

5.4.2 School

The school cannot appoint extra teachers in governing body posts, due to insufficient funds. Yet it has to provide access to all learners in the area with the result that classes are inordinately big. The WCED is unable to provide enough posts (Meier, 2005) to ensure smaller classes, thus teachers have up to 45 learners in their classrooms (Meier, 2005; Miller & Elman, 2013).

Such a large number of learners per class means that teachers are unable to attend to all the academic needs of every child and consequently children get lost in the system. The learners never receive the intended support and fail to develop to their full potential. This also causes a high workload among teachers (Meier, 2005; Miller & Elman, 2013) and the

inability to identify learning barriers quickly enough. Literature indicates that the institutions do not provide teachers with the adequate skills to maintain such big classes (Miller & Elman, 2013; Rowe, 2003).

5.5 TEACHER CHARACTERISTICS

As teachers are considered the key agents towards change in quality education (Delors et al, 1996; Sayed & Ahmed, 2011; UNESCO, 2000), it is important to note which characteristics of the teachers at Sunnydale enabled them to provide a quality education. It should also be highlighted through Nancy Fraser's notion of representation that teachers' voices and characteristics should be considered in view of the fact that most decisions made by the WCED influence or affect them (Bozalek & Carolissen, 2012).

As literature indicates change should happen within the classroom (Hoy et al, 2000; Nicoll, 2013) and this can only be achieved when teachers are aware of on their own teaching abilities. They should accordingly adjust their teaching methods to accommodate the learning styles and context of the learners (Hoy, Bayne-Jardine, & Wood, 2000). The teachers have the ability to bring change to the community when reaching out to individuals in their classroom (Erasmus, 2012; Meier, 2005). The teachers at Sunnydale are faced with numerous barriers. The way in which they address these problems are considered important characteristics required to provide a quality education.

Furthermore, it is indicated that skilled teachers should be able to adapt their teaching methods to accommodate barriers perceived in the community as well as differences in cognitive levels, knowledge and interests of learners (Damber, Samuelsson, & Taube, 2012). Sunnydale Primary School ensures that part of their planning accommodates learners who experience barriers to learning related to academic as well as social factors.

As teachers experience the contextual factors surrounding learners on a daily basis, they should be able to suggest a curriculum and pedagogy more suitable to the contexts and circumstances of the learners (Sayed & Motala, 2012).

Teachers should be equipped with a curriculum that is more relevant to their particular circumstances as well as improved resources infrastructure (UNESCO, 2000). In order to provide quality education that is best suited to their learners, teachers should accept their social responsibilities and become involved in the decisions that affect their professional lives and teaching environments (Miller & Elman, 2013; UNESCO, 2000).

The role of the teacher is thus not only one of educator, but of a person who offers support, creates a sense of security and community and instills self-worth in a child that will promote success. To facilitate learning they should be able to teach learners to succeed even while faced with difficult tasks (Erasmus, 2012; Tatar & Da'as, 2012).

The teachers of Sunnydale take on many roles. The female teachers mostly take on the role of mother. As there are many children who suffer from neglect in terms of healthcare, the teachers take the responsibility to wash the learners when necessary. However, according to the Human Rights Act they are no longer allowed to do this, even though it afforded the child some human dignity. This is an apparent contradiction between enforcing human rights and a child receiving adequate care in the interests of health.

Furthermore, teachers are expected to take on the role of parent and maintain discipline at school. In most respects the children listen to their teachers rather than their parents. Teachers are further regarded as social workers, pastors, psychologists and mediators not only for the children, but for their parents too.

The teachers felt that it was necessary to fulfil all of these roles as it contributed to quality education. They argued that if they did not take on these roles the basic needs of learners could not be met (Rowe, 2003) and learners would be unable to participate in quality education. Taking on these roles inspired learners to rise above their circumstances and achieve more than what was expected of them.

5.6 CONCLUSION OF FINDINGS

The focus group discussion allowed the participants to explain how they understood quality education at Sunnydale Primary School. They described their experiences of teaching at a low-income school and which factors had the most influence on the quality of education that they provided.

Through the lens of social constructionism, the researcher was able to identify the community as the factor that brought the greatest influence to bear on quality education at Sunnydale Primary School. While family and friends had a direct influence on the learners and the location of the school indirectly influenced quality education (Hanson et al, 2011).

In order to accommodate the barriers that affect quality education at Sunnydale Primary School, teachers are required to be innovative. It is expected of them to plan accordingly; create ways to work in the face of limited resources and fulfil many roles within the community. Nancy Fraser describes this as recognising the barriers in the community and addressing them accordingly (Nussbaum, 2006). The teachers are in fact key agents in this regard as they become lifelong learners. They reflect on what is important for learners and they work as a dedicated team in their school environment (Erasmus, 2012).

Quality education should not only be viewed in terms of academic achievement (Rowe, 2003). Numerous factors should be taken into account to be able to produce a quality education at low-income schools.

The research findings also brought to light the important role of parental involvement in quality education, and how teachers must fulfil these roles to achieve the standards set by the education department.

From a social justice perspective, the researcher was able to facilitate teachers' voices to be heard. This provided them with the opportunity to convey their experiences of teaching at a low-income school. Representing teachers' experiences should be considered a way to best understand the context of a low-income school and to develop a curriculum that is most relevant to this context.

The research revealed that there was a big difference between what is set out by policy and what is achievable in the classroom. Nancy Fraser indicates that for social justice to be present there should be adequate representation, especially by members of the community involved (Keddie, 2012b; Tikly & Barrett, 2011). Teachers should therefore have more influence with regards to policies and workshops instituted by the WCED.

5.7 RECOMMENDATIONS

In this section, recommendations are made on the grounds of the needs expressed by participating teachers and the researcher's own reflection on the research findings.

5.7.1 It is recommended that teachers should be provided with contextually relevant workshops to equip them with the skills to address barriers with regards to quality

education. These skills include ways to adjust the curriculum to best suit the contexts of the learners and adequate training for teachers to maintain big classes.

Moreover, teachers who have shown success in these areas should be able to share their skills with others and provide practical ways to deal with this barrier.

5.7.2 Additionally, relevant assistance should be provided to teachers with regards to the educational support and teaching aids at the school. Although these resources are already in place, it is currently insufficient.

5.7.3 Furthermore, the community should be provided with parental guidance workshops to ensure that parents are aware of the contribution they make to their children's education and the best ways to help their children with schoolwork.

5.8 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The scope of the study was limited to two groups of teachers at a single school low-income community. Although it is beneficial to use a small group for a focus discussion the data is limited to the case study and cannot be necessarily generalized.

Due to the limited scope of the study, that which can be perceived as limitations, are also possibly strengths as they may indicate future directions for research. Teachers at Sunnydale showed exceptionally high morale and motivation to teach. Whereas the teacher morale may not be similar in other contexts. This is a positive factor for this school as a high morale inspires teachers to offer a quality education (Miller & Elman, 2013). In order to support the impact teacher morale has on quality education in this specific community context, a comparative study could be made between similar contexts.

5.9 STRENGTHS OF THE STUDY

The research process took place in a natural setting. Owing to the pre-existence of familiar relationships and group dynamics between the teachers, the group discussions relied on the values of trust and unity. Thus, it allowed for a detailed description of the research questions and identification of barriers experienced throughout the whole school. It also brought about unison between the different phases taught at the school.

Furthermore, the discussion allowed teachers to reflect on their teaching careers and identify positive aspects of teaching at a low-income school. Although it was not indicated in the interview guide, the teachers reminded the researcher that it was most rewarding to help learners rise above their circumstances through quality education.

5.10 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

It emerged during the research that parents were uninvolved in the process of their children's education. Thus, even though teachers speculated about reasons for the parents' lack of involvement there is a need for research to understand the real reasons behind the apparent lack of parental involvement.

I would suggest a participatory action research in the community to identify and explore solutions to the barriers that parents may perceive towards their children's education and to create sustainable interventions that might encourage them to be more active.

As identified in the limitations of the study a comparative study could be undertaken to study the effect of teacher morale on quality education.

5.11 CONCLUDING REFLECTIONS

In the course of the first year of my Master's degree, I recognized specific barriers in education concerning social justice, inclusion and quality in education. In 2012 I started working in a low-income community in a similar context, and through the literature, I could identify these barriers in the community.

I encounter these barriers every day within the schools where I work. Despite their best endeavours to comply with set school policies, they simply do not have adequate resources to achieve these goals successfully. As an educator I feel therefore that it is my role to help these marginalized communities to implement achievable goals.

During the research process, it was difficult for me not to have preconceived ideas about the barriers in these communities as I work in a similar context every day. Although I already had set ideas about what could be expected at Sunnydale Primary School, I was surprised to learn about the different roles that the teachers take on to achieve a quality of education that is far more important than what is required of teachers in more affluent schools.

It was a privilege to work with the teachers of Sunnydale and to learn from them more than is suggested by the literature.

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ADDENDUM A

**Letter granting ethical clearance for the study from
Stellenbosch University**



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jou kennisvenoot • your knowledge partner

Approval Notice New Application

20-May-2013
Smit, Carien C

Proposal #: DESC_Smit2013

Title: Teachers' Perceptions of Quality Education in a Low-Income Primary School

Dear Ms Carien Smit,

Your DESC approved **New Application** received on **08-May-2013**, was reviewed by members of the **Research Ethics Committee: Human Research (Humanities)** via Expedited review procedures on **17-May-2013** and was approved.

Please note the following information about your approved research proposal:

Proposal Approval Period: **17-May-2013 -16-May-2014**

Please take note of the general Investigator Responsibilities attached to this letter. You may commence with your research after complying fully with these guidelines.

Please remember to use your **proposal number (DESC_Smit2013)** on any documents or correspondence with the REC concerning your research proposal.

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.

Also 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).

This committee abides by the ethical norms and principles for research, established by the Declaration of Helsinki and the Guidelines for Ethical Research: Principles Structures and Processes 2004 (Department of Health). Annually a number of projects may be selected randomly for an external audit.

National Health Research Ethics Committee (NHREC) registration number REC-050411-032.

We wish you the best as you conduct your research.

If you have any questions or need further help, please contact the REC office at 0218839027.

Included Documents:

Interview Schedule
Informed consent
Permission letter
REC Application
Research proposal
DESC form

Sincerely,

Susara Oberholzer
REC Coordinator
Research Ethics Committee: Human Research (Humanities)

ADDENDUM B

Permission to conduct the study from the
Western Cape Education Department



Directorate: Research

Audrey.wyngaard2@pgwc.gov.za

tel: +27 021 467 9272

Fax: 0865902282

Private Bag x9114, Cape Town, 8000

wced.wcape.gov.za

REFERENCE: 20130418-9749

ENQUIRIES: Dr A T Wyngaard

Miss Carien Smit
PO Box 6741
Welgemoed
7538

Dear Miss Carien Smit

RESEARCH PROPOSAL: TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF QUALITY EDUCATION IN A LOW-INCOME PRIMARY SCHOOL: A CASE STUDY

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. Approval for projects should be conveyed to the District Director of the schools where the project will be conducted.
5. Educators' programmes are not to be interrupted.
6. The Study is to be conducted from **15 July 2013 till 15 September 2013**
7. No research can be conducted during the fourth term as schools are preparing and finalizing syllabi for examinations (October to December).
8. 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?
9. A photocopy of this letter is submitted to the principal where the intended research is to be conducted.
10. Your research will be limited to the list of schools as forwarded to the Western Cape Education Department.
11. A brief summary of the content, findings and recommendations is provided to the Director: Research Services.
12. 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: Dr Audrey T Wyngaard

Directorate: Research

DATE: 19 April 2013

Lower Parliament Street, Cape Town, 8001
tel: +27 21 467 9272 fax: 0865902282
Safe Schools: 0800 45 46 47

Private Bag X9114, Cape Town, 8000
Employment and salary enquiries: 0861 92 33 22
www.westerncape.gov.za

ADDENDUM C

Letter of school consent

PRIMÊRE SKOOL

PRIMARY SCHOOL



TEL (021)

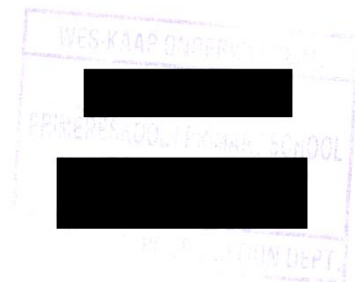
FAX. (021)

Vir wie dit mag aangaan

Hiermee gee ek, [REDACTED], skriftelike toestemming dat Carien Smit haar voorgestelde navorsing (Teachers' Perceptions of Quality Education in a Low Income Primary Schools: A Case Study) by [REDACTED] mag uitvoer vir die tydperk van 15 Julie – 15 September 2013.

Vriendelike Groete

Prinsipaal



ADDENDUM D

**Informed consent form as provided
to the research participants**



UNIVERSITEIT • STELLENBOSCH • UNIVERSITY
jou kennisvenoot • your knowledge partner

STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Teachers' Perceptions of Quality Education in a Low-Income Primary School

You are asked to participate in a research study conducted by Carien Smit, a Masters Student, from the Department of Educational Psychology at Stellenbosch University. The results from this study will enable me to complete my thesis which is a requirement to attain this degree. You were selected as a possible participant in this study because you are a teacher at a primary school located in a low-income area.

1. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of the study is to explore how teachers understand and practice the concept of quality of education through their lived experiences at a low-income school.

2. PROCEDURES

If you volunteer to participate in this study, we would ask you to do the following things:

- Read the consent to participate in the study.
- Understand that your participation in this study is voluntary.
- Participants may withdraw from the study at any time.
- Participants' names and that of the school will not be mentioned.
- Hence, direct quotes in the final document will be used anonymously, for ethical concern.
- There are no risks or benefits by participating in the study.
- The tape that will be used to record the interviews will only be accessible to the researcher and her supervisor.
- Summary of the research and recommendations will be made available to the school principal and the teachers who participated.

I am inviting you to participate in a group and individual interview. The process will take a total of approximately 5 hours of your time spread over a period of 3-6 weeks. Firstly, the researcher will carry out the group interviews and then conduct interviews with selected individuals. The group interviews will take place over two afternoons. Your phase will only be involved in one group interview between 45-60 minutes. The selected individuals will only be involved in one interview between 15-20 minutes.

To not interrupt the school time-table, the interviews will be scheduled by appointment and be located at the school.

3. POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

There are no foreseeable risks, discomforts, or inconveniences that this study presents.

4. POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO SUBJECTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY

This study may benefit both participants and none participants to better understand quality of education within low-income schools. It is important to voice the experiences of teachers with regards to quality education as they are the key agents towards change in South African Education.

5. PAYMENT FOR PARTICIPATION

There will be no payment for participation.

6. CONFIDENTIALITY

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. Confidentiality will be maintained by means of storing the data securely on the researcher's personal computer where it will be encrypted with a password. The researcher and her supervisors are the only people who will have access to the data. The data obtained during the study will be recorded on a digital voice recorder and will then be transcribed verbatim by the researcher. You will have access to the digital recordings of the process so that you may verify or change anything that you said. These recordings and transcriptions will be kept for 5 years and then they will be destroyed. The names and identifying details of the participating teachers and the school will not be used in the resulting thesis or any publication.

7. PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

You can choose whether to be in this study or not. If you volunteer to be in this study, you may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. You may also refuse to participate in any aspect of the process, and still remain in the study. The researcher may withdraw you from this research if circumstances arise which warrant her doing so.

8. IDENTIFICATION OF INVESTIGATORS

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

Carien Smit (Researcher)

0794918702

cariensmit87@gmail.com

Prof Ronelle Carolissen (Supervisor)

021-8082306/8

rlc2@sun.ac.za

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 Mrs Maléne Fouché (mfouche@sun.ac.za; 021 808 4622) at the Division for Research Development, Stellenbosch University.

SIGNATURE OF RESEARCH SUBJECT OR LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE

The information above was described to me by Carien Smit in Afrikaans 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

Signature of Subject

Date

SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR

I declare that I explained the information given in this document to _____.
He/she was encouraged and given ample time to ask me any questions. This conversation was conducted in Afrikaans.

Signature of Investigator

Date

ADDENDUM E

Research schedule

SUMMARY OF AUDIT TRAIL – CHRONOLOGY OF RESEARCH PROCESS	
DATE	ACTION
16 April 2013	Thesis proposal submitted to Department of Educational Psychology
16 April 2013	Application for Western Cape Education Department (WCED) permission to conduct research was submitted
19 April 2013	Permission to conduct research was obtained from WCED
20 April 2013	letter of consent received from principal
6 May 2013	Ethical clearance application submitted to Ethics Committee of Stellenbosch University
20 May 2013	Ethical clearance was received from Ethics Committee
16 July 2013	Meeting with prospective participants – all teachers attended a short presentation after school
2 August 2013	First focus group discussion :Foundation Phase
16 August 2013	Second focus group discussion: Intermediate Phase
30 August 2013	Individual interviews: Mr Davids, Mrs Africa, Mrs Hendricks, Ms February, Mr Martins
11 October 2013	Report back to teachers

ADDENDUM F

Focus group interview guide

Interview Guide: Teachers' Perceptions of Quality Education in a Low-Income Primary School

Focus group with teachers

Thank you for agreeing and taking time to do this interview. The purpose of this interview is for me to understand the experiences teachers have with regards to quality education in low-income schools. My name is Carien Smit, most of you probably remember me as I previously worked at this school. The aim of the research is to explore how you as teachers understand the concept of quality of education by telling me about your experiences within the school. This exploration will take into account what teachers view as contributing to or hindering a quality education, both at personal and interpersonal levels in the school but also how the school system, the WCED and the social environment contribute to positive or negative outcomes regarding quality. Your input will be of great benefit for the study as it will help me to understand how you perceive quality education in schools and how we can contribute to improve it.

- Firstly, I would like to ask you how you understand the idea of quality education within the school?
- What do you think helps schools to provide a quality education?
 - What support is offered in the classroom for teachers?
 - What support is offered to learners in the classroom?
 - What support does the WCED offer to learners to promote learning?
 - What support is provided by the community to promote learning?
- What do you think prevents this school from providing a quality education? (Probe: What prevents learners from receiving and teachers from engaging in quality education?)
 - Learner characteristics that influence the quality of education?
 - Teacher's beliefs and behaviours?
- What WCED interventions and training do you have for the school?
 - Are the interventions achievable and sustainable in the school community?
 - What do you think of the additional teacher training that the WCED offers?

ADDENDUM G

Individual interview guide

Interview Guide: Teachers' Perceptions of Quality Education in a Low-Income Primary School

INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS WITH TEACHERS

1. Since we did the group interview, did any further issues arise that you think you should have mentioned?
2. Were there any issues that were raised in the group that surprised you?
3. Why do you think that there is no support from the parents in the community?
4. How would you explain your role as teacher at this school?
5. Do you think it contributes to the quality of education received?

ADDENDUM H

Portion of transcription from focus group interviews

FOCUS GROUP TRANSCRIPTION: FOUNDATION PHASE

1: Sommige ouers...

2: Nee sommige ouers ondersteun.

OV: Hoe sal hulle ondersteun?

1: Hulle is betrokke, hulle help met die huiswerk en betaal skoolfonds.

OV: Is hulle? En wat van daai ouers wat nie kan skoolfonds betaal nie, wat nie kan help met hulle kinders nie? Wat word van hulle? Is daar 'n ander manier om hulle skoolfonds te betaal?

4: Niks nie juffrou, juffrou weet in my klas is daar omtrent 13 kinders wat nie SASSA kinders is nie en van die 13 kinders is daar 2 ouers wat hulle skoolfonds betaal, verder het niemand nog betaal nie.

OV: Is dit dan ook daai ouers wat hulle help in die klaskamer?

4: Ja daai tweetjies, help die ouers heeltemal, so as daai kind moet verder gaan, sal die ouers liever die kind uit die skool uithaal en in 'n privaat of 'n Model-C skool sit. Verstaan jy?

OV: So daar is maar min ondersteuning van die ouers met ander woorde?

2: Ja baie van onse ouer se kinders is welsyn kinders, SASA né, die meeste en daai geldjie wat hulle kry. Ek het een ouer in my klas wat wel, daai Elmien Venter⁵, daai vrou bring, sy betaal haar kinders, alhoewel hulle kwytgeskeld is op skoolfonds, betaal sy van daai SASA geld hulle "schoolfees", wel dis een uit die hele 25, een ouer wat daai verantwoordelikheid neem en dan is dit ook weinig ouer wat vir ons leermateriaal skool toe stuur, as hulle net vir ons iets kan gee dat ons daarmee kan werk, maar dis min min...

OV: maar is dit omdat die ouers nie belangstel nie of het hulle net nie die fondse daarvoor nie.

1: Baie van hulle is werkloos, baie-baie. En baie van onse kinders is ouma-kindere. Baie baie is ouma-kindere.

⁵ Name has been changed.

FOCUS GROUP TRANSCRIPTION: INTERMEDIATE PHASE

8: Ja wat hulle kan bekostig...

OV: So daar is nie baie "variety" nie?

8: Nee glad nie variteit nie...

OV: My ander vraag is dan hoe ondersteun die WKOD julle dan by die skool, is daar ondersteuning van die WKOD of watter tipe ondersteuning kry julle van die WKOD?

8: Van jou distrik af as mens vir iemand vra gee gou vir my raad en gee gou vir my leiding dan is dit nogal wat dit aanbetref nie 'n probleem nie, maar dan jy het ook al dan deur die jare geleer met watter vakadviseurs jy kan saam werk so jy gaan nie net vir enige iemand vra nie, want enige iemand nie almal het daai, hoe kan ek sê menseverhoudings wat jy gemaklik mee is om te vra nie, so dit is partykeer vir my nogal 'n bietjie van 'n "person" verskil...

7: Ek praat nou van apparaat ook né, as jy nou kyk na my sportapparate vir hierdie tydsaspek was daar aparate aan ons belowe, ons soek nou nog die apparaat, so dan moet ons weereens alternatiewe plekke nader, om vir ons sportapparate te bekom soos die Westelike Provinsie het vir ons balle, Westelike Provinsie het vir ons duiksakke gegee en "sheets", maar aan die akademiese sy ek weet nog nie waar het ek apparaat gekry...

9: Op die akademiese sy het hulle mos nou voorsien soos 'n vak soos wetenskap en tegnologie, wiskunde het hulle wel apparaat voorsien, maar dit was ook 'n heel tydjie terug ook gewees so...plakkate en dit voorsien...

7: Ja plakkate...

OV: So daardie tipe goed?

9: Ja veral met die CAPS het daarmee verband ook...

OV: Okay, want dit is mos maar nou die nuwe goed wat hulle doen...

10: Ja, maar met die lewensvaardigheid absoluut niks...

9: Ja...

ADDENDUM I

Portion of the transcription from individual interviews

Juffrou Hendricks

C: Vandat ons ons laaste groep gehad het, was daar nog goed wat juffrou aan gedink het wat bydrae tot kwaliteitonderrig?

H: Wel die ouer betrokkenheid ten opsigte van die huiswerk en leer. As die ouer nie verstaan nie is hulle meer as welkom om skool toe te kom en hulle weet dit, maar hulle kom nie. Met die nuwe onderwysstelsel weet ouers nie meer wat is reg of verkeerd nie. Hulle dink omdat dit anders is, kan hulle nie hulle kind help nie, maar ons sal hulle mos help. En nou kry ons die probleem dat die kind se vir die ouer nee dis verkeerd dit word nie so gedoen en dan sê die ouer maar ek verstaan nie hoe om my kind te help nie. Ons kry maar ook nie ondersteuning wanneer die kind ondersteuning kort nie, ons praat nie nou van skolasties nie, maar vir ander ondersteuning ook soos om dokter toe te gaan vir hiperaktiwiteit en nou onderpresteer hulle. Die ouers is maar meestal in “denial” oor die kind se probleem hulle besef eers te laat wanneer die kind hulp kort. Hulle verstaan nie dat hulle die kind help nie. En verder is dit maar net die appaarte juffrou ek koop my eie potlode en inkleurpotlode en ek maak alles self. Dit help dat almal lekker kan saamwerk.

C: Was daar iets in die personeel kamer gesê waarmee juffrou nie saam gestem het nie?

H: Nee ons almal voel dieselfde. Ons praat gedurig met mekaar oor die probleme wat ons ervaar. Met Sunnydale werk dit so hulle begin hier onder by ons en dan gaan hulle reg deur na die Intermediêre Fase so op een of ander tydperk het ons almal met dieselfde kinders gewerk en ons is bekend met hulle probleem. Verder die kinders wat nou in ons klas is hulle ouers was ook gewoonlik in ons klas so ons ken hulle huislike omstandighede goed. Jason West⁶'s se ma was in my klas, hy het gedragsprobleme, maar hy luister nie na sy ma nie, sy was ook in my klas, hy luister net na sy ouma want hy is 'n ouma kind. Dissipline begin by die huis juffrou, mens kan nie nou met hom wil raas nie op die ou einde kom dit op my af om die kind te dissiplineer. Ons moet dit by ouerbetrokkenheid in kom dat daar dissipline in die huis geleer word sodat dit makliker is vir ons in die klas

C: Juffrou handhaaf nie net die dissipline in die klas nie, watter ander rolle speel juffrou in die klas?

⁶ Name has been changed.

ADDENDUM J

Examples of analysis of an individual interview (similar process followed for focus group interviews)

Themes	Text: Mrs Hendricks: Thematic Analysis
Quality Education	En verder is dit maar net die apparte juffrou ek koop my eie potlode en inkleurpotlode en ek maak alles self. Dit help dat almal lekker kan saamwerk
Support/Barriers school	
Support/Barriers Community	<p>Wel die ouer betrokkenheid ten opsigte van die huiswerk en leer. As die ouer nie verstaan nie is hulle meer as welkom om skool toe te kom en hulle weet dit, maar hulle kom nie. Met die nuwe onderwysstelsel weet ouers nie meer wat is reg of verkeerd nie. Hulle dink omdat dit anders is, kan hulle nie hulle kind help nie, maar ons sal hulle mos help. En nou kry ons die probleem dat die kind se vir die ouer nee dis verkeerd dit word nie so gedoen en dan sê die ouer maar ek verstaan nie hoe om my kind te help nie. Ons kry maar ook nie ondersteuning wanneer die kind ondersteuning kort nie, ons praat nie nou van skolasties nie, maar vir ander ondersteuning ook soos om dokter toe te gaan vir hiperaktiwiteit en nou onderpresteer hulle. Die ouers is maar meestal in "denial" oor die kind se probleem hulle besef eers te laat wanneer die kind hulp kort. Hulle verstaan nie dat hulle die kind help nie.</p>
Support/Barriers WCED	
Social factors/Learner Characteristics	<p>Jason West 's se ma was in my klas, hy het gedragsprobleme, maar hy luister nie na sy ma nie, sy was ook in my klas, hy luister net na sy oma want hy is 'n oma kind. Dissipline begin by die huis juffrou, mens kan nie nou met hom wil raas nie op die ou einde kom dit op my af om die kind te dissiplineer. Ons moet dit by ouerbetrokkenheid in kom dat daar dissipline in die huis geleer word sodat dit makliker is vir ons in die klas die ou einde kom dit op my af om die kind te dissiplineer. Ons moet dit by ouerbetrokkenheid in kom dat daar dissipline in die huis geleer word sodat dit makliker is vir ons in die klas</p>

Positives	<p>Nee ons almal voel dieselfde. Ons praat gedurig met mekaar oor die probleme wat ons ervaar. Met Sunnydale werk dit so hulle begin hier onder by ons en dan gaan hulle reg deur na die Intermediêre Fase so op een of ander tydperk het ons almal met dieselfde kinders gewerk en ons is bekend met hulle probleem. Verder die kinders wat nou in ons klas is hulle ouers was ook gewoonlik in ons klas so ons ken hulle huislike omstandighede goed.</p>
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ADDENDUM K

Themes arising from focus group interviews

FOUNDATION PHASE	INTERMEDIATE PHASE
QUALITY EDUCATION	QUALITY EDUCATION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning • Teaching according to competency level • Available resources • Size of class (being able to teach individually; seeing barriers earlier) • Co-operation between teachers • Support from teachers • Innovative teaching • Share system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is expected of the curriculum • According to the learners' competency level • Goal orientated planning • Teaching in context (prior-knowledge) • Innovative teaching • Teacher evidence i.e. progress of learners • "Don't skim" – In-depth teaching
SUPPORT/BARRIERS SCHOOL	SUPPORT/BARRIERS SCHOOL
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited resources • No financial input, because of lack of finances i.e. No school fees • Financial input from teachers • Teacher absenteeism • Big classes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of financial input i.e. no school fees • Financial input from teachers • Limited resources • Infrastructure • Plan of action for feeding scheme
SUPPORT/BARRIERS COMMUNITY	SUPPORT/BARRIERS COMMUNITY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Illiterate parents • Lack of participation • Young parents • Poor community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharing of resources (schools and NGO's) • Lack of parental participation (no fees i.e. no fee schools; no support; "seen as a charity"; no resources) • Illiterate parents • No financial support • Poor community

SUPPORT/BARRIERS WCED	SUPPORT/BARRIERS WCED
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshops • Limited resources • Lack of support i.e. learning support • Extra support: assistant • Lack of posts • Feeding scheme (lost tender; less food; less children) • Khanya lab (not working) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advisory input • Limited resources • Required to meet standards but lack of resources • Khanya lab (not working) • Feeding scheme (tender lost; less food; still same children – motivation to attend school) • Lack of posts • Workshops (curriculum based; other)
SOCIAL FACTORS /LEARNER CHARACTERISTICS	SOCIAL FACTORS /LEARNER CHARACTERISTICS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hungry children • Environment influences i.e. gangs, substance abuse • Lack of parental care (left to care for themselves; unwashed; lack of support; no routine) <p>Effects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of concentration • Bullies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hungry children • Substance abuse • Single parents • Young parents • Poverty <p>Effects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of concentration • Early experimentation • Lack of respect • Influences in school activities i.e. role-play

POSITIVES	POSITIVES
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Children willing to learn• Children rising above their circumstances• School activities: sport, cultural, concerts, events• Empathy for learners• Parents involved• Role models, extra effort

ADDENDUM L

Themes arising from principal interview

MR DAVIDS	
QUALITY EDUCATION	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusive education • Learner attendance • Parent involvement • Planning • Giving more than is expected of you • Holistic approach • Culture and sport • Spending enough time on concepts that children struggle with and achieve a balance • Innovative teachers/passionate teachers 	
SUPPORT/BARRIERS SCHOOL	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating a positive school atmosphere for teachers, so that teachers want to be there • Organizing planning dates for planning to be coherent • Co-operation between teachers • Cannot contribute financially (i.e. lack of school fees). 	
SUPPORT/BARRIERS COMMUNITY	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Illiterate parents • Lack of participation • Parents feel inadequate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young parents • Poor community
REASONS FOR LACK OF PARENTAL PARTICIPATION	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community culture of just receiving and never giving back, they feel that schools should educated their children and they don't have to give an input even when paying school fees (President's promise) • Long working hours • School wants to contribute to rebuilding the community 	

SUPPORT/BARRIERS WCED
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshops • Principal conferences (Discipline in schools, managing the school governing body) • Lack of posts contributing to oversized classes • Resources (limited) • Teacher's mostly buy own resources or create • Feeding scheme (Tender lost, less food)
SCHOOL ACCESS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take in all learners from the schooling area • Contributes to large classes, no finances to appoint governing body posts to reduce class sizes. • Posts linked to school's amount of learners and not to grade's amount of learners
SOCIAL FACTORS /LEARNER CHARACTERISTICS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hungry children • Environment influences i.e. substance abuse, unemployment • Lack of parental care (left to care for themselves; unwashed; lack of support; no routine)
POSITIVES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very proud of school achievements academically, sport, showing that learners can rise above their circumstances. • Does not want to retire
ROLES OF TEACHERS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mother, father, social worker, preacher, psychologists for parents and children. • Teachers are able to work in these circumstances because they have the experience
NO-FEE SCHOOLS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applied but did not get granted as it was seen as part of an area that is of average income, but it is not the case. Falls under quintile 4, but department wants to reassess quintile. • Pep stores and Markhams quote

ADDENDUM M

Themes arising from individual interviews

MRS AFRICA	MRS HENDRICKS
FURTHER CONTRIBUTIONS ABOUT QUALITY EDUCATION	FURTHER CONTRIBUTIONS ABOUT QUALITY EDUCATION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assistants, because of oversized classes • Buddy-system • Administration overload 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parental involvement (i.e. in terms of learning support) • Resources • Good relationships between teachers
REASONS WHY PARENTS AREN'T INVOLVED	REASONS WHY PARENTS AREN'T INVOLVED
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young parents • Late working hours 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grandmother involvement • Lack of discipline • Unemployment • Lack of knowledge • Feelings of inadequacy
ROLES OF THE TEACHER	ROLES OF THE TEACHER
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mother • Nurse • Preacher • Psychologist • Social worker 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mother • Nurse • Mediator • Teach respect and discipline • A friend
HOW ROLE CONTRIBUTES TO QUALITY IN EDUCATION	HOW ROLE CONTRIBUTES TO QUALITY IN EDUCATION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishing the fundamentals will help a child achieve and show him that he can rise above his circumstances. Put first things first 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A teacher should be able to create a secure environment for the learner when all these things are in place it is a setting for optimal learning. • Your circumstances should not be an excuse.

SOCIAL FACTORS AT HOME	SOCIAL FACTORS AT HOME
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Late working hours• Lack of parental care	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Parents in jail• Gangs• Unemployment• Poverty

MS FEBRUARY	MR MARTINS
FURTHER CONTRIBUTIONS ABOUT QUALITY EDUCATION	FURTHER CONTRIBUTIONS ABOUT QUALITY EDUCATION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A good relationship between teachers • Co-operation between teachers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uninvolved parents
REASONS WHY PARENTS AREN'T INVOLVED	REASONS WHY PARENTS AREN'T INVOLVED
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Late working hours • Illiterate cannot help children 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Illiterate • Cannot help children
ROLES OF THE TEACHER	ROLES OF THE TEACHER
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social worker • Psychologist • Preacher • You take over the role as parent • Mediator 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social worker • Mediator • Father • Sport's coach
HOW ROLE CONTRIBUTES TO QUALITY IN EDUCATION	HOW ROLE CONTRIBUTES TO QUALITY IN EDUCATION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Serves as a basis to learn better, helps children to understand that you cannot use your circumstances as an excuse. • " Use education to get out of your circumstances" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creates a safe environment for children • Children are able to trust educator and optimal learning takes place. • Betters child self-confidence, which in turn will make child want to rise above circumstances • You can make or break a child
SOCIAL FACTORS AT HOME	SOCIAL FACTORS AT HOME
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unemployment • Substance abuse • Lack of involvement • Poverty 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young parents • Bad influences at home (substance abuse) • Grandmother children