UNIVERSITY OF JOHANNESBURG

COPYRIGHT AND CITATION CONSIDERATIONS FOR THIS THESIS/ DISSERTATION

How to cite this thesis

University of Johannesburg

Faculty of Education

The role of an educational field excursion in the development of student teachers' social relationships with peers

Delia Arends

200615926

Dissertation submitted for degree

Masters in Education

at the

University of Johannesburg

Supervisor: Professor Nadine Petersen

Co-supervisor: Dr Sarita Ramsaroop

Date: January 2018

DECLARATION

I declare that this dissertation is my original and independent work, and that it has never been submitted to any other institution or faculty for degree purposes.

_____

Delia Arends

January 2018

DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to the memory of my dad, Saludo Sangrado Adams, and my brother Craig Adams whose support and encouragement over the years to follow my dreams inspired me to complete my degree. I miss you both dearly.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank the following people, without whom I would not have completed this dissertation:

- ➢ God for giving me the strength, knowledge, ability and opportunity to undertake this research study and to persevere and complete it. Without His blessings, this achievement would not have been possible.

- ➢ My supervisor, Prof Nadine Petersen, for patient guidance, encouragement and advice she has provided throughout my time as her student. I have been extremely fortunate to have a supervisor who cared so much about my work, and who responded to my questions and queries so unwearyingly.

- ➢ Dr Sarita Ramsaroop for her support, availability and constructive suggestions, which was a major contributing factor for the accomplishment of the work presented in this study.

- ➢ I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Prof Elizabeth Henning for her continuous support and motivation. Her guidance and advice helped me in all the time of research and writing of this dissertation.

- ➢ A special thanks to my dear friend Gadija Petker for her untiring support and guidance throughout my journey.

- ➢ To Nozipho Motolo, thank you for listening, offering me advice, and supporting me through this process.

- ➢ I owe a very special thanks to my husband, Herbert and my children Kelsi, Storm and Kehaan for their continued and unfailing love, support and understanding during my pursuit of my masters degree. They were my pillars of strength when I thought that it was impossible to continue and helped me to keep things in perspective.

- ➢ Thank you to my Mom, my sisters Dawn and Lorna and the rest of my family and friends who have always believed in me and encouraged me to complete my dissertation.

- ➢ My colleagues, whose encouragement and support I appreciate.

ABSTRACT

This study explores how an educational excursion, as a small-scale living and learning community promotes social integration in a customised First Year Experience (FYE) programme in the Faculty of Education at the University of Johannesburg. Most of the first year student teachers are first generation university learners and they have a need for a well-directed intervention to accelerate their process of enculturation into university life, socially, and in terms of the curriculum. This study focusses on how an educational field excursion influenced first year pre-service teachers' ability to develop social relationships with peers, and the values they attached to these connections for their integration into university. Additionally, the educational field excursion served as a unique opportunity for first year pre-service student teachers to form new social relationships with peers and to capture if these relationships formed endured over a period of time.

This study used multiple methods of data generation, including a biographical survey and questionnaire to capture students' first impressions of the excursion as a cohesive device, followed by dyadic interviews with a sample of students two and a half years later. Qualitative content analysis led to two main findings. First year student data reveals the many challenges they face and how they see the role of the excursion in helping them traverse their individual racial, cultural, and religious and language differences. The educational excursion seems to serve as a bridge that assisted students in finding points of commonality and overcoming challenges in their transition into university. Secondly, the relaxed social tone of the excursion and the nature of activities aided students' development and interaction and lead to investment in long lasting relationships. Students still reflect on its value for their social integration more than two years afterwards. The study concludes with recommendations for other First Year Experience Programmes at UJ.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF GRAPHS

LIST OF DIAGRAMMES

CHAPTER 1:
SETTING THE SCENE

1.1 Introduction

This study is located in a larger National Research Foundation Thuthuka[1] funded project researching how a first year experience (FYE) intervention, namely an educational excursion, could accelerate student teachers process of enculturation into university life. The Faculty of Education at the University of Johannesburg designed and implemented the excursion as intervention to address key social and pedagogical elements of professional learning in becoming a teacher (de Beer, Petersen & Krige, 2012). In addition, the excursion intended to help students' bridge the often-difficult transition from high school to university and to increase the creation of social networks as the basis of learning communities over the whole degree programme (Hunter, 2006). The focus of this particular study is understanding the role of an educational field excursion in the development of student teachers' social relationships with peers from the students' perspective.

In some USA-based research, there are advocates for FYE seminars/programmes as a way of promoting student retention (Jenkins-Guarnieri, Horne, Wallis, Rings & Vaughan, 2015) while others such as Miller and Lesik (2014) question its long-term efficacy. In South Africa, FYE seminars are increasingly seen as a way of promoting student retention and particularly in addressing first generation students' need to fit in. The low graduation output of South African universities has long been a cause for concern and is well documented (Van Zyl, 2012). National cohort studies paint a gloomy picture. Higher education participation rates remain low, in comparison to those of other countries (Berkovitz & O'Quinn, 2006). In 2007 Scott, Yeld and Henry, reported that only 30% of South African students enrolling in a three-year degree programme eventually graduate; this has not changed much over the last 10 years. From 2013, annual graduate reports by the Department of Higher education and training show that up to 47.9 % of students drop out of universities in South Africa while van Zyl (2012)

---

[1] The Thuthuka programme is a holistic programme designed to nurture young and promising African and Coloured learners from high school through to university in the field of Education. The programme assists African and Coloured academically strong learners, who are from families that cannot support them financially during tertiary education. "Thuthuka" is a Zulu verb, meaning, "to develop".

argues that the first year dropout rate is closer to 50-60%. Of the (limited numbers of) students who enter South African universities, less than 50% of the students in diplomas or degrees programmes graduate, and only one in three students of the intake into three-year degrees in contact institutions graduate, within four years. When factoring in race, the completion rates are even more concerning; white students on average have a 50% higher completion rate than non-white students. In a system that starts with an already low student intake it is particularly demoralising when less than half of them then graduate.

At the University of Johannesburg, some detailed studies on student dropout have been conducted over the last 10 years. For instance figures for the 2001 cohort indicate that of the 3006 students who registered for a general Bachelor's degree (of four years), 33% graduated in minimum time, rising to 59% by 2005 (after an additional two years). For the 2013 cohort (who graduated in 2016) the completion in minimum time is at 39.5%. The University of Johannesburg's cohort studies over the period 2009 to 2013 shows a promising upwards trend, with approximately four out of 10 students completing their degrees in minimum time. In this respect, the University of Johannesburg at 37.2% fares considerably better than the national sector average of 29% (van Zyl, 2010). However, the UJ's 2015 and 2016 first year dropout rates are still concerning at 18.6% and 16.7% respectively, with financial difficulties being high on the list of reasons why students do not return. In 2015 and 2016, the often violent, *#fees must fall* student protests was a stark reminder that South African first year students are under immense financial pressure to pay for their initial degrees and graduate in minimum time (usually between three and four years depending on the qualification type). In addition, although there has been an increase in the number of non-white students completing their studies the data still confirm substantial differences in graduation rates between various ethnic groups. In 2015, the University of Johannesburg's first time entering student survey questionnaire showed that 63.8% of students were first generation students (Teaching and Learning Report, 2015:32). For this university, the situation is compounded by numerous other challenges: operating on several campuses, the large classes, and the difficulties with addressing the academic literacy of a body of students who have English as a third and sometimes fourth language.

1.2 Background to the study and location within the literature

The educational excursion, which first started in 2007 (de Beer, Petersen & Dunbar-Krige, 2012), has evolved over the last nine years to comprise an intervention in which students and academic staff, accompanied by peer tutors, *live and learn* together for up to three days outside of the formal university environment. The intervention is aimed at supporting first year students in their transition into university by addressing the connections between their social-academic, and professional learning and building both social and curricula cohesion in the teacher education programmes. In the systematically structured excursion curriculum, students work in groups in mostly games-based formats covering topics such as energy conservation and HIV and AIDS (Petersen, de Beer & Dunbar-Krige, 2011), stereotyping, poverty and food security (Petersen, 2014), leadership, and pedagogies for teaching in schools with optimal diversity (de Beer & Henning, 2011). The excursion challenges students to face, head-on, the reality of becoming a teacher in a diverse and struggling society. The themes and activities of the excursion curriculum are integrated with particular modules in the teacher education curricula, so that the lecturers can 'pick up' on discussions when students return to the formal university classroom. For the duration of the intervention, students are deliberately grouped outside of their spontaneous ethnic, gender, and cultural peer grouping to form working entities that are optimally diverse. Students university course tutors accompany the lecturers and help with facilitation of activities and student support (Govender, 2014).

First year students are, culturally, in a "betwixt and between" (Turner, 1969) liminal space when they leave high school to enter a very different institution. In their rite of passage (van Gennep, 1909), this liminal period on the threshold of university life and young adulthood may define their future in many ways. It is thus important that this period be recognised as an important cultural transition during which students form new relationships, some of which can be social and learning relationships in an informally structured, small community of peers and others, where opportunities are created for them to live and learn more cohesively in a new educational space.

International research (Hunter, 2006) on first years at university highlights the difficulties students face during this transition, which often leads to poor retention or dropout. In South Africa, the situation is especially bleak for African students, who have higher attrition rates than other race groups. Many African students can be classified

as 'non-traditional students', or first generation students, that is, students who come from backgrounds where there is a very weak or non-existent link with higher education or who are the first-generation of students to enter higher education in their families. These first generation students have not traditionally been catered for in higher education contexts and they may be more likely to experience a 'culture clash' – a clash between their school learning cultures and the dominant institutional culture as well as home and community culture (Cavote & Kopera-Frye, 2007:479). Van Zyl (2010:35) has been leading research in this area at the University of Johannesburg and he uses Bourdieu's notions of "cultural capital" and "habitus" to argue that differences in cultural capital that students bring to their university education impacts directly on their success and/or failure. These include cultural resources such as previous education backgrounds, and familiarity with the cultural codes in the educational setting. Thus, students from families who have sufficient prior knowledge of the cultural codes of the academic environment are more likely to succeed than those from backgrounds that do not have the same storehouse of cultural codes to draw on.

Additionally, there is the problem of poor student outcomes. This is a "complex and multi-layered" concern and includes a number of influencing factors. For instance, Seligman and Gravett (2010) draw attention to students' problems with literacy and language, while Morrow (1994) points to students' lack of preparedness for how teaching and learning are organised, and the competence and qualifications of academic staff in meeting the learning needs of a diverse range of students. One key issue, which has emerged in this debate, is that improving graduate output is tied to measures to address student enculturation into the academic environment and the effectiveness of the educational process in higher education. It is in this respect that the educational excursion may serve as an opportunity for students to start and learn to build social networks, which its initiators argue is the platform for the establishment of long-term groupings that learn by being together. Here they were guided by the work of Braxton and McClendon (2001-2002) who contend that orientation programmes should develop multiple opportunities for first-year students to socially interact with their peers. The excursion is the Faculty of Education's (FoE) way of assisting first years from diverse social and cultural backgrounds to begin to traverse the difficulties of the transitional year. It also exposes students to a wider social and academic support network, in a relaxed and informal environment, that comprises their peers and

tutors as well as first year lecturers and other senior academic staff in their programme/s. This is in line with Tinto's (1993:147) argument that institutions should work towards forging personal bonds among and between students, faculty, and staff if they aim to improve student retention.

1.3   Purpose of the study

The main this research was to investigate how an educational field excursion influenced first year pre-service teachers' ability to develop social relationships with peers, and the values they attached to these connections for their integration into university. A secondary aim was to examine if and how the social relationships that were forged endured after the first year. In order to realize the aims of this research study, I set the following main aims:

- To capture the social challenges that first year pre-service teachers experienced when forging social relationships with peers at university;

- To report on how an educational field excursion served as a unique opportunity for first year pre-service student teachers to form new social relationships with peers;

- To capture if and how social relationships formed during the excursion endured (or not) over a period of time in the university context.

1.4   Designing a study to capture student experiences of their social integration

This study used a generic qualitative design (Merriam, 1998), while drawing on elements associated with longitudinal research (Ruspini, 2002; Saldana, 2003). A generic qualitative research design allowed me the flexibility to use a number of qualitative data collection and analysis tools to describe, interpret, and understand the experiences of participants. The following question guided my deliberations in this study:

How do student teachers describe the role of an educational excursion as catalyst for their social integration into university and how do they reflect on their experiences thereof two and a half years later?

The following sub-questions were set:

- What are the social challenges that first year pre-service student teachers experience with respect to forging social relationships with peers at university?

- How does the educational field excursion serve as an opportunity for first year pre-service student teachers to develop new social relationships with peers?

- What do pre-service teachers have to say about how their social relationships formed during the excursion have endured (or not) over time in the university context?

Data were generated in two phases over the period 2014 – 2016. In phase one, data came from two groups of students (n=227), in the Foundation phase and the Intermediate phase in 2014. I collected the data in the first few weeks of their university studies, using an open-ended biographical questionnaire to gather background information on students. Students then attended the three-day excursion. Once they had returned from the excursion, students completed a qualitative questionnaire, of which a number of items targeted elements related to social integration. Questions focused, for instance, on how they made friends on campus and with whom. Here I specifically asked students to identify the strategies and excursion activities that had the most impact on their ability to integrate socially. As students were asked to provide their student numbers it was relatively simple to keep track of them over time, e.g. which students had persisted up to third year. This enabled data collection in phase 2, which took place with a sample of students from the middle of their third year, in 2016. Using dyadic interviews, I interviewed a total of 12 students with a set of eleven open-ended questions (Morgan, Ataie, Carder & Hoffman, 2013). Qualitative content analysis was used to make sense of the various data sets, using a form of open coding (Charmaz, 2003; Merriam, 1998, Henning, Van Rensburg & Smit, 2004), before I compared key issues. Where there were differences, the data was scrutinised in order to get consensus. Thereafter the findings were consolidated to form the outcomes of this research.

1.5   Theoretical framework of the inquiry

In this research study, I used Tinto's (1975) longitudinal model of student retention and integrated this with arguments by Turner (1960; 1969) and van Gennep (1909). Tinto's

longitudinal model of student retention embodies three consecutive phases: namely the separation phase, the transition phase and the assimilation phase. These phases are similar to van Gennep's (1909) identification of three specific phases or stages that make up each rite of passage, namely separation, liminal period and reassimilation in the "liminality" of moving from one environment to another. I used both ideas to provide structure for my arguments about the factors that influence the transition of students into higher education and point out how individual student characteristics have the most direct influence on student success and persistence. These combined works provide a frame for investigating the education excursion as intervention for student enculturation and social integration.

1.6   The structure of the dissertation

The dissertation is organised in five chapters and I sequentially present a brief summary of the layout of each chapter below.

Chapter one

Chapter one, encompasses the background and motivation for the study. The research problem is introduced and contextualised. The chapter further outlines the theoretical framework and briefly discusses the data collection and analysis methods used in this study.

Chapter two

Chapter two provides discussions of the literature aspects relevant to the study. These include topics and discussions ranging from, for example, discussions *explaining student retention and dropout* to *the role of First Year Experience programmes at HEI institutions.* Additionally, I discuss factors that I believe influence the transition of students from high school to university and that ease the enculturation of first year students.

Chapter three

Chapter three provides an overview of the research design and methodology including a detailed description of the participants involved in the study. The data collection methods used and the process of data analysis also form part of this chapter. The process of analysis of the participant observation, photographs used, questionnaires and interviews are discussed at length. The chapter ends with a discussion on the validity and reliability of the data.

Chapter four

Chapter four describes the analysis of the data. In this chapter I explain the methods and processes used to identify categories and sub-categories that lead to the findings of this study.

Chapter five

In Chapter five I discuss the findings of this research. I include a summary of the final themes and the main pattern of the findings. The findings are presented and the relevant literature invoked to substantiate these findings. I then end off by outlining the limitations of the study and conclude with recommendations for further research.

1.7   Conclusion

In this chapter I have provided a background as to why the Faculty of Education initiated and implemented the educational excursion as part of the First Year Experience Programme. The research problem and motivation for the research study was presented against this background of the FYE programme and the systematically structured excursion curriculum. This chapter also specified the research questions and outlined the aims of the study. The theoretical framework for the literature study has also been delineated in order to provide an overview of the aspects that influence the transition of students into higher education. The next chapter explores the relationships between individual student characteristics and student success and persistence at university. I conclude the chapter by providing an overview of the five chapters that make up this research study. I will focus on these factors in detail in Chapter 2.

CHAPTER 2:
LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1   Introduction

This chapter outlines my arguments about what affects students' transition from high school to university, and how an educational excursion as part of a First Year Experience (FYE) programme, can assist in this transition. I use as organising framework for this chapter Tinto's (1975) longitudinal model of student retention and integrate this with arguments by Turner (1960; 1969) and van Gennep (1909). Tinto's longitudinal model of student retention embodies three consecutive phases: namely the separation phase, the transition phase and the assimilation phase. These phases are similar to van Gennep's (1909) identification of three specific phases or stages that make up each rite of passage in the liminality of moving from one environment to another, namely separation, the liminal period and reassimilation. I use both ideas to provide structure for my arguments about the factors that influence the transition of students into higher education and point out how individual student characteristics have the most direct influence on student success and persistence.

Secondly, I argue that the issues facing first year students in general are exacerbated for those who are classified as first generation students as there is both opportunity and risk attached to being the first member in a family to attend university. First generation students are typically those whose parents have not graduated with a baccalaureate degree (Thomas, Walker & Webb, 1998), while in South Africa it additionally refers to students who have had unequal historical access to university education, usually African and Coloured[2] students. I end this section with an argument for the value of First Year Experience (FYE) programmes at university, and make particular reference to an educational excursion as part hereof, as support for first year students during their liminal phase of transition from high school to university so that students are welcomed, supported, celebrated, and eventually assimilated into the campus community (Gardner, 1986).

---

[2] At the University of Johannesburg, students place themselves into one of the following categories when filling in the institutional registration form: White, Coloured, Indian and Black (referring to black Africans).

2.2 Using Tinto's three stage model to explain student retention and dropout

First year students' movement from high school to university usually involves a period of adaption to a new lifestyle, which can be a cause of great stress. It is therefore important for them to find a way of coping and for higher education institutions to find mechanisms for easing this passage so that students do not find this process so overwhelming that they drop out. Tinto (1975) argues that both students' social and academic integration depends on the number and quality of interactions they experience within the institutional context. He proposes a three-stage Interactionist model for explaining the transition of students and for outlining the factors that influence their retention and/or dropout. These are as follows:

- *Stage 1:* 'Separation' phase. In this phase, the student loosens bonds with the originating environment such as school, and starts the move towards the new environment (university). Individual student characteristics have the most direct influence on student success and persistence;

- *Stage 2:* 'Integration' phase. Here initial commitment to university and the objective of graduation affects the student's integration into the academic and social systems of higher education, and,

- *Stage 3:* 'Assimilation' phase. During this phase, students become assimilated when they have achieved full membership into the social and academic communities of the institution.

Tinto's stages are similar to Turner's (1960; 1969) description of moving "betwixt and between" two different spaces. The in-between phase is aptly captured by the term "liminality" which was first coined by van Gennep (1909) and popularised by sociologist Turner (1960). The term "liminality" refers simultaneously to one of a multi-step transition process achieved through a rite of passage, the place within which that transition takes place, and the state of being experienced by the person making the transition. Applied to this study, it is about first years moving from high school to university, where they enter a new space with different expectations, with different rules and where they will assume new roles.

In addition to providing some structure for thinking about the factors that influence the transition of students into higher education, Tinto's interactionist model also identifies five conditions for student retention: expectations, support, feedback, involvement and learning. In this section, I will start by discussing the tensions that first year university student's face upon entering university, how they typically respond to their newfound autonomy and how the development of new social relationships influences their adjustment to university life. Additionally I will argue that the measure of resilience students possess can influence their ability to overcome the many challenges that they are likely to experience in their new environment.

2.2.1   Stage 1: Separation phase – moving from school to university

While some students adjust reasonably well to the new university environment, for others the transition brings about, to some extent, personal stress and emotional instability. Here I turn to the idea of "liminality" to describe what happens when first year students have to journey through a rite of passage from their familiar high school system to an unfamiliar university environment. During this period of transition, students must learn to live and operate in a new liminal educational 'space' – they are "betwixt and between" these worlds. According to Bling (2003), the transition from the high school to university is known to shake social security, physical comfort and the ability to enjoy gratifying activities. This may require that students play the role of "shape-shifters" depending on which liminal space they inhabit at which particular moment in time (Palmer, Kane & Owens, 2009:37-54). There are a number of key factors that either enhance or impede students' transition from high school to university in the separation phase – these are captured in diagramme 2.1[3], which I have designed by drawing on the ideas of Tinto (1975). I will refer to these in my discussions.

---

[3] Diagramme 2.1: Diagrammes in this study are my own construction based on Tinto's (1975) longitudinal model of retention.
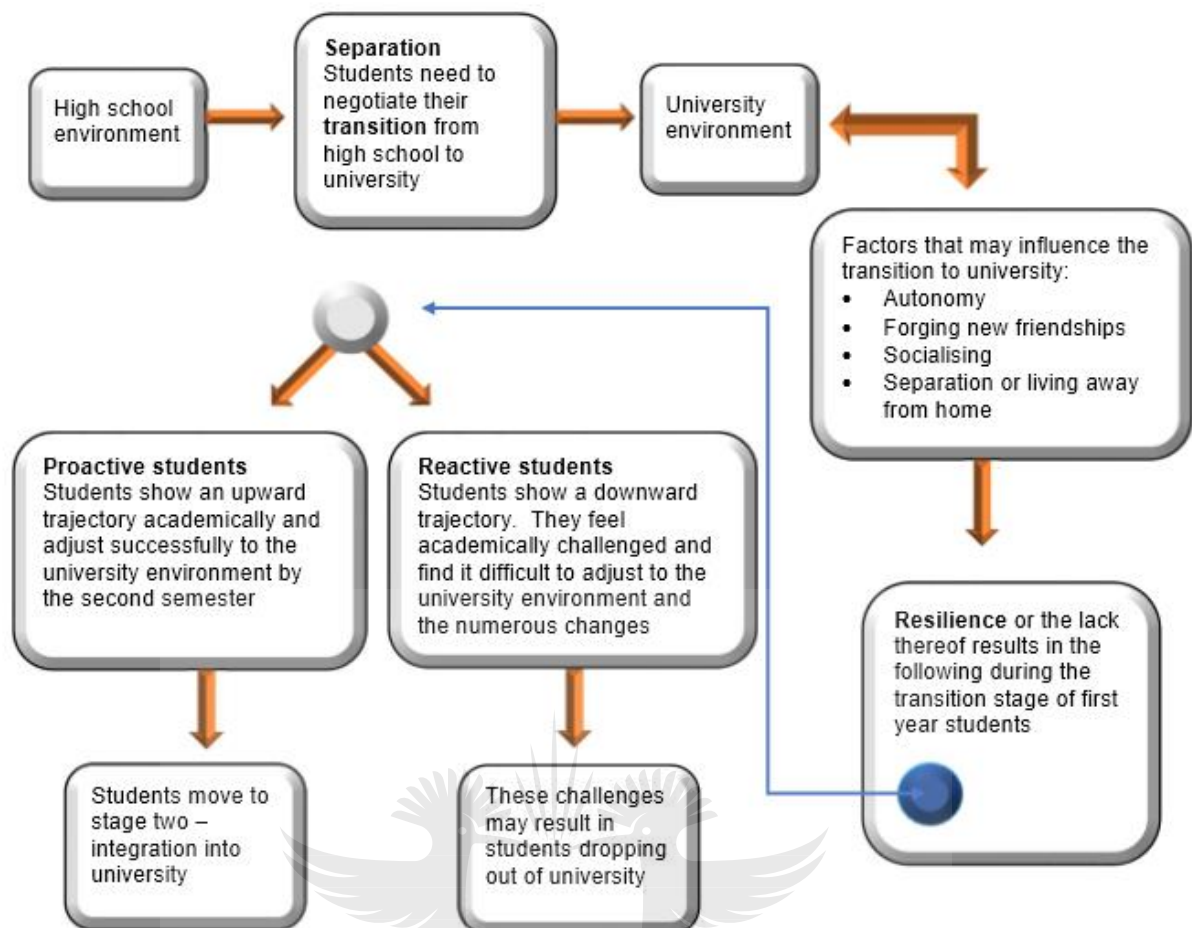
Diagramme 2.1:   First year university students – Separation from school environment and transition to university environment

The tension students' face is in traversing the difference between their habits from high school to the required habits for successful university study. Students need to learn how to negotiate this transition. In addition, as students come to university with various demographic attributes, such as race, ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status, skills and motivation, these factors also affect their transition.

First, students have to accept that there is a distinguishable difference between high school and the university environment in as far as learning and the habits for successful study are concerned. At university, first year students are expected to operate with a measure of autonomy that they had perhaps not experienced at high school. For the most part, they are considered to be young adults and thus often do not have the sustained and/or continued support of their parents (as they may have had at high school) in helping them to make responsible and informed decisions. Some students are likely to have the self-discipline to adjust in this environment without too much

difficulty, while many others may struggle (Fazey & Fazey, 2001). Often, for those that struggle, the social whirl of university life and relative freedom it encompasses, can cause great disorientation, and can even derail their studies.

During the separation stage of "liminality", (Turner 1960; 1969), first year students may feel disorientated because authority figures are not there to provide guidance – students will need to adjust to being independent and acting autonomously. University students have relative freedom in making choices and decisions, but newcomers may not realise the side effects of their choices. When students enter university they are taken out of their normal daily routines, and there is a general expectation that they will self-regulate, and be disciplined about their schedules, such as following their respective course timetables. Talbert (2008) argues that each first year student has to make decisions regarding what to do and when to do it, such as when to sleep and wake up. This is very different from school, where for example, students at school get a prescribed daily schedule with times of activities or lessons for the week. They also get reminders from teachers about tasks due, readings to be done, etc. This is completely different to university, where students get an individualised timetable based on the courses they have registered for and they have to organise their schedules accordingly. Each course also has its own additional requirements of tutorials and consultations with lecturers as well as its own assessment schedules. Individual students according to their set timetables must manage all of these; this may cause extreme disorientation. Cousin (2006:4) describes this phase as a state of comparative uncertainty, "in which the student may oscillate between old and emergent understandings".

For other students, it may be like falling into an abyss where they feel completely overwhelmed. In such cases, students either drop out or opt for solace in the university's social life (Agherdien, 2015). While this can provide a source of comfort, if students pay too much attention to the social life of the university setting they may neglect their studies setting them back academically. This is especially disastrous for those who come from high schools with very strict rules. For such students, who are often unaccustomed to imposing their own measures of self-regulation, or who display low executive functioning, the freedom to make their own decisions may in fact lead to difficulties. From my own observation of first years and from anecdotal evidence from academic staff who work in university residences and from some research in South

African student residences (Agherdien, 2015), many first years habitually party and get to their residences very late in the evening, neglect their coursework and are ill prepared for classes, tests and assessments. All of these can result in poor academic progress. Tranter (2003), who argues that this is one cause of student dropout, highlights the dangers of over-socialising. I therefore concur with Agherdien and Petersen (2016), who argue that first year students are at the very bottom of the social and academic structure at university and most likely still need some decisions to be made for them.

On the other hand, learning to manage their time and make responsible choices while still fitting in time for socialisation is a normal part of students' transition during the initial period at university. There are studies that have shown that some students experience a decline in social and emotional adjustment during this transition period (Larose, Bernier & Tarabulsy, 2005). Students need to form a sense of their student identity (Huon & Sankey, 2002) and learn to act autonomously as university students (Fazey & Fazey, 2001) or they will experience disorientation and loss of personal identity (Scanlon, Rowling & Weber, 2005). As young people who are growing into their professional lives a concern may be that, these students may have only an unenlightened 'knowledge of' the new university milieu. In addition, drawing on knowledge of past learning contexts does not always assist students negotiate their new identities. For first year students, identity results from interactions in which they pick up cues regarding the horizons of possibility for identity formation in the university transition. Scanlon, Rowling and Weber (2005) maintains that the context and process of the formation of student identity is the nexus of situated interactions with lecturers and other students.

Secondly, there is evidence that first year students express almost as much anxiety about finding supportive friends as they do about learning to manage their time and thriving academically (Mudhovozi, 2012). Terenzini, Rendon, Millar, Upcraft, Gregg, Jalomo, and Allison (1994) argue that establishing effective interpersonal relationships is an important element in university success. According to Newcomb, Bukowski, and Pattee (1993) young people who have difficulties in developing or maintaining friendships are more likely to exhibit higher levels of loneliness and depression, report low academic achievement and high unemployment later in life. It seems as if all first year students, regardless of background and experience, must develop a social

support system with their fellow students. In order to accomplish this they must find friends and participate in activities that involve teamwork and good social skills.

Third, students living away from home and entering university, although excited, are often nervous about embarking on their new journey. For those who move into student housing or residences, the dread of leaving the comfort of their own homes and an established social support base to operate in an unfamiliar milieu can be quite daunting (Poyrazli & Lopez, 2007). After the initial few weeks of excitement in a new environment, students may be beset by feelings of homesickness and abandonment. Homesickness has been described as a form of separation anxiety by Brewin, Furnham and Howes (1989) and is accompanied by a longing or desire for familiar environments (Van Tilburg, Vingerhoets & Van Heck, 1997). Students, who are homesick, yearn to be with their family and friends particularly around significant dates such as birthdays or holidays. Homesickness or adjustment problems can alter many areas of a student's life (Van Tilburg, Vingerhoets & Van Heck, 1997). It affects their emotions, academic performance and their ability to engage with and forge new relationships with peers. I am of the view that the emotional side effects of feeling homesick such as a sense of loneliness, sadness, confusion, fear, and preoccupation with thoughts about home, results in some students experiencing greater difficulty acclimatising to their new environment.

Such feelings are often more pronounced for individuals who are anxiously attached and those who perceive themselves to be highly reliant on others (Brewin, Furnham & Howes, 1989). Research into this issue in higher education provides evidence that homesickness is associated with increased cognitive failure, poor concentration, late work, and a decrease in work quality (Archer, Ireland, Amos, Broad & Currid, 1998) depression, anxiety and somatic changes (Stroebe, van Vliet, Hewstone & Willis, 2002), as well as reduced satisfaction with the current environment (Stokols, Schumaker & Martinez,1983). For international students, the shock of moving into an entirely different culture is particularly difficult. Studies in the United States have shown that the culture shock of adapting to not only a new academic environment but also a new culture or society with its associated issues can be too much for first years to manage (Chapdelaine & Alexitch, 2004; Poyrazli & Lopez, 2007; Ward, Bochner & Furnham, 2001). In order to fit in, students need to read the culture of the new setting

and seek out culturally appropriate ways of participating according to the peer group and/or others, (Latham & Green, 2003).

The culture shock for first generation students in particular, is profound. Many enter with backgrounds that have not prepared them for further study, financial insecurity, inadequate study skills and a lack of social skills that often compromises their ability to adjust as stated by Pascarella, Pierson, Wolniak and Terenzini (2004:277). These students are less likely to be involved in extra-curricular activities, forge friendships with other students, or seek support from their lecturers. They may be uncertain of their cultural identity and find it challenging to adapt. According to Dennis, Phinney and Chuateco (2005) first generation students tend to socialise less and make fewer social connections than other university students. They require friends or peers who will provide them with the resources to help them cope with the pressure of university life as well as support from students who come from familiar backgrounds. This network forms a type of 'home base' where students can connect and share experiences and navigate an often strange and bewildering university culture. However, if the whole network is the same, students may miss out on learning new strategies for coping at university and this can negatively impact both their academic and social integration. In fact, students with the greatest cultural differences and less social interaction experienced a stronger culture shock and more homesickness. Thus, the greater the differences between the home culture and the host culture, the more homesick students may become (Eurelings-Bontekoe, Brouwers & Verschuur, 2000; Yeh & Inose, 2003). As a result of such drawbacks homesick students may not revel in the university experience as much as they thought they would and they may yearn to return home as quickly as they can; this leads directly to student dropout.

The last factor is the varying resilience levels of students at the start of university. Resilience is an important factor not only for transition into university, but also for persistence at university, and then for the transition from university into the world of work. According to Freiberg (1994) resilience is the ability to be proactive rather than reactive, and to react flexibly to complex situations. Resilience is a complex concept; it is also difficult to explain how varying measures of resilience shape the way people think of problems, coping and interventions. Vosloo and Blignaut's (2010) paper titled, "From Hero to Zero … and back?" undertaken with mostly financially-disadvantaged,

high-achieving school learners, supported by the Sasol Inzalo Foundation[4] in Science and Engineering degree programmes at nine South African universities, reflect a number of challenges.

In my research, students describe feeling confused, and struggling with challenges such as managing the autonomy of being a university student, having to let go of their established relationships with school friends, forging a new network of friends, and generally feeling that life seems unfair, especially when they do not cope academically. This often affects the kind of student who excels at school level and then finds university a struggle. In the Inzalo study, the majority of students, despite attaining excellent academic results in the National Senior Certificate [5] examinations, reported that they felt off balance and unable to cope with the demands of university-level Science and Mathematics courses. These high achieving school learners often expect (sometimes unrealistically) that they would automatically excel at university. However when students fail for the first time they experience an identity crisis, particularly when they have to report this failure to sponsors or parents (Vosloo and Blignaut, 2010). One particularly poignant story was captured in the paper – a student recalled how she felt her self-confidence dissipating during the first months at university. She revealed that as a result, she began to doubt her abilities as well as her choice of an engineering degree. Striplin (1999) argues that for students such as these, overcoming personal challenges is crucial to a successful transfer to university.

In responding to these kinds of stories, the Sasol coordinators enrolled the students in a type of first year experience seminar in which they were supported in group work format to find their own solutions to the issues they were facing. In compelling the students to face their issues, and providing support in the process, the student who was affected by a loss of self-confidence managed to find a way of restoring her sense of self. This was similar for most of the students in the cohort, with later stories revealing an upwards trajectory (Vosloo and Blignaut, 2010). Some of the change came about when students began to excel academically and when they began to

---

[4] In 2010, Sasol Inzalo Foundation (SaIF) Bursary Programme welcomed its first group of 97 Engineering and Science bursary recipients. SaIF was established as part of South Africa's single biggest black economic empowerment (BEE) equity transaction. The bursary programme concentrates not only on financial support but also emphasises research and support - research into the school - university gap, how to close it in the long term, and how to support students across the gap.
[5] The National Senior Certificate examinations or NSC is a high school diploma and is the main school-leaving certificate in South Africa. This certificate is commonly known as the matriculation (matric) certificate or grade 12.

believe that they had learned how to deal with failure constructively. Vosloo and Blignaut (2010) argues that once students develop resilience they then re-emerge as the "heroes" of this journey. In their view, students, who worked hard to control their emotions and their situations, find their balance re-instated. The message I take from this South African research, with economically disadvantaged students, is that building resilience can assist in the transition to university. According to Peng (1994) and Hunter and Chandler (1999), resilience allows people to flourish in their careers and at university, despite being exposed to stressful environments. Many researchers see resilience as something to be fostered by community, families, universities and student peer groups (Wang, Haertel & Walberg, 1994; Hunter & Chandler, 1999). I turn to a more in depth discussion of the issue of resilience a little later in the discussion.

However, for first generation students developing resilience can be rather difficult as the required support mechanisms in the home and community environment may not exist. For such students, an opportunity for tertiary education is often a deliberate attempt to improve their social, economic and professional standing in life. As the first members of their families to register at university, there is both opportunity and risk attached (Bui, 2002). On the side of risk, university is a departure from established family traditions and practices as students co me to university with very little knowledge, language, values, experiences and practices of university culture as these are usually passed down from family members who have had this experience. A study on how co-curricular involvement can assist first generation students with success, by Pascarella et al (2004:277), showed that these students may be less prepared than students whose parents are highly educated. As a result, they are less likely to make informed choices about institutions and other related matters that potentially maximize educational progression and benefits. These students too, often have family and background characteristics that are associated with danger of attrition. These factors make the lives of this group of students doubly difficult because they are not only the first in their families to enter university but they also do not enter university on equal terms with other students. As a result, they are more likely to drop out before the completion of their studies (Tinto, 1993).

In the context of this study, resilience can be considered a significant part of a first year student's preparedness and adjustment in a new environment. As a psychological tool, it helps students deal with anxiety, fear and stressful events. First year students are in

a process of variable psychological resilience in separating from their familiar home and school environments and crossing the threshold into the university environment. For these first year student's, psychological resilience is achieved when they are able to rise above difficult experiences during the separation phase with ease. This may only take place when students are able to balance negative emotions with positive ones.

One assisting factor in this process is when students are able to forge new supportive and caring relationships. Much is dependent on individual student qualities and characteristics but also takes cognisance of the work plans and steps they take to develop a positive self-concept and to capitalise on individual strengths and abilities. Turner (2001) holds the view that a resilient student possesses the following qualities: a sense of humour; a sense of direction and mission; good verbal and communication skills; adaptive distancing; self-efficacy; and possession of a talent or skill. Students are considered to be 'at risk' when these protective qualities weaken, thus compromising their levels of resilience. Students with resilience make use of structures to support themselves, such as turning to someone for guidance, which helps them persevere in times of distress (Carlson, Gurwitch, Molitor, O'Neill, Palomares & Sammons, 2003).

Another factor that is frequently linked to resilience is hardiness. Hardiness has been used to describe a personality trait that allows individuals to remain healthy in spite of significant stress in life. Kobasa (1979:2) defines an event as stressful if it "causes change in demands and readjustment of an average person's normal routine". Resilient university students that are also hardy are able to maintain a sense of control in their new environment, show commitment to their education and are able to deal with challenges. Students that have a hardy personality are not only capable of managing stressful situations but see demanding situations as having potential for personal growth and achievement. Kobasa, Maddi, and Kahn (1982:168-177) asserts that, this way of thinking and acting leads to "transformational coping" which in turn leads to a positive outcome.

2.2.2 Stage 2: Integration phase – a movement towards becoming part of the university (or not)

During the integration phase students become part of the new university environment and their initial goals and institutional commitments are the most important influences

---

on their integration into the academic world and social systems of the institution. This second stage, also called the "transition" stage by Turner (1981:159), is initially the time that students spend confused, or feeling lost or sometimes even in despair at university. During this transitory phase, many turning points shape, alter or accentuate the way in which students make meaningful connections with their new university environment. Therefore, the way in which students react to the academic, social, personal and lifestyle challenges that the university presents, plays a pivotal role in whether they move on to the next phase successfully.

At some point in this stage, students begin to adjust to their new environment by finding coping mechanisms, such as learning to balance their academic responsibilities with their personal lifestyles. Students also acquire adaptive behaviours in areas such as time management, establishing new relationships at university, changing their study habits and rearranging their priorities. They may move then through this transitional stage with more awareness so that they discover meaning and value in their new roles at university. In some cases they may even develop a better sense of who they are as individuals. Van Zyl (2012) notes that if a student is fully integrated in the social and academic systems of an institution, then in all probability that student will have more optimistic perceptions of the social and academic dimensions of the institutional environment. The student will also be more likely to join in social activities, and function at a higher level of academic achievement, than less fully integrated students. There are however a number of factors that affect students successful integration into university. In this section, I will discuss how factors such as language, racism, students' financial situation/s and their levels of satisfaction with their university experience influence their integration.

An important consideration is that students' achievement of their goals of, for instance, completing a degree at university, may well be determined by their level of commitment to the university itself. In turn, the student's level of commitment is affected by their individual attributes, such as commitment and goal orientation. Thus, the student's integration and the completion of a degree are largely dependent on the attributes that best fit with what is required at university. In addition, students' attitudes and satisfaction with their experiences also play an integral role in deciding whether they will persist with their studies or dropout. Diagramme 2.2 captures the key factors that I will make reference to in my discussions in this section.
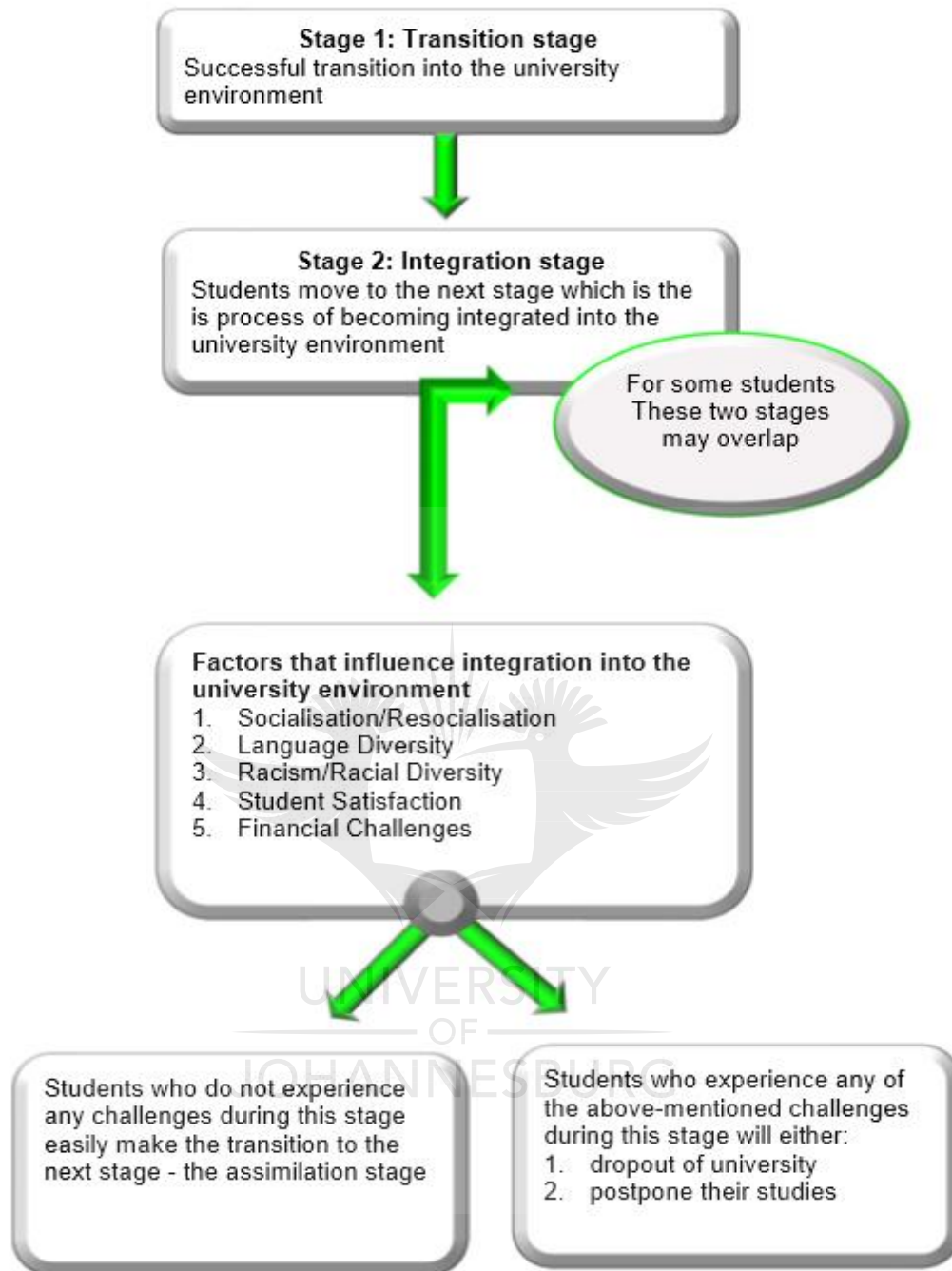
Diagramme 2.2:   *First year university students – Integration of students into their university environment*

First, part of successful integration into the university environment entails socialising, by learning to operate as a member of a group of peers and of an academic discipline/ disciplinary community. According to Kuh and Love (2000), the social integration of a student can be determined by investigating the sense of belonging the student feels with a group or groups of people within the institution. However, university campuses comprise many varied social groups. On a very basic level of establishing social

relationships, the process of socialisation may thus involve finding like-minded individuals with whom to develop bonds and forge friendships. Most often, students choose friends whose personalities are similar to theirs. The notion of 'friendship' is described in terms of its qualities and functions (Newcomb & Bagwell, 1996; Parker & Asher, 1993). Friendships can, for example, provide a source of companionship and entertainment, help in solving problems, and provide personal emotional support. When students struggle to socialise in general, forging friendships is a challenge. Even though all individuals bring their unique selves into any social interaction, part of entering a new group involves learning its norms, rituals, routines, and rules, often referred to in the literature as socialisation. It is a term that is used in many contexts including becoming part of ethnic, cultural and religious communities. The important outcome of socialisation is evident in an individual's personality, which refers to the fairly stable patterns of thought, feeling and action characteristics of human beings (Carver, Sutton & Scheier 2000).

In the context of university studies, Pascarella and Terenzini (1991) explain that socialisation involves a process of taking on some of the new values, attitudes, beliefs and perspectives to which students are exposed to in their new environment. Thus, in order for new students to enter this community and adjust to become part of it, they have to go through a process of re-socialisation. Re-socialisation necessitates that students mentally and emotionally retrain themselves so that they can operate in the new environment. For the students this means discarding former behaviour patterns and accepting new ones. For example, students would have to go through a process of learning new norms, values, attitudes, behaviours and rules. It also means learning new discourses and tools to allow them to operate in this environment. This means that students would have to discard the old school rules and policies so that they can adjust and follow new rules. Re-socialisation can be an intense experience for first year students as it necessitates an abrupt break from their past, as well as an intense need to learn a number of new things in a very short period. In the process, students are exposed to norms and values that may be radically different to what they are accustomed (Pascarella and Terenzini, 1991). In addition, part of re-socialisation will come from students interacting with their peers, faculty and staff. It is therefore imperative that students journey through this process of re-socialisation in order to feel that they 'belong' in their new environment as it forms an important part of their integration into university as first years.

A second factor that influences students' integration into university is language. Imberti (2007) defines language as a system of conceptual symbols that allows individuals to communicate. Through the medium of language, students are able to express emotions, share feelings, tell stories, and convey complex messages and knowledge. It is also a mechanism for students to relate and understand each other and provides students with a significant frame of reference and a relational context that sustains their identities.

At most South African universities, the student body is relatively diverse and students bring their own language/s backgrounds and competence with them into university studies; this can be a resource or an impediment. Burger, (2007) argues that a student's competence in a dominant language, such as English (used in most SA universities), is a resource which expedites or impedes a student's ease of interaction within an institution. Competence in a particular language may therefore be advantageous to students in terms of academic advancement. Fundamentally, language may also be an identity marker for students because it encourages a sense of belonging or exclusion in relation to an institution. The language that students speak often determines whom they interact with on a social level and it plays a significant role in determining how students organise themselves in the university environment. Different languages also affect the formation of intercultural friendships and may help or hinder group work activities (Petker & Petersen, 2014). For instance, students who are not competent users of English may view their oral communication skills as a serious impediment and they may be hesitant to communicate and participate in class discussions. Such students often feel self-conscious in conversations with students or lecturers and this can result in anxiety, shame and feelings of inferiority. It is on these levels that the educational excursion plays an integral role in assisting students to organise themselves at university. Students first start off with group activities that are aimed at forging friendships and interacting with students that they would not usually interact with and then discovering alternate ways of communication.

On another level, according to Dlomo (2003:20), language is often linked to culture and this introduces another factor that may influence student relationships: cultural diversity. South Africa is known for its cultural diversity and Du Toit (2004) reminds us that in multicultural societies communication is key to stimulating peaceful coexistence. Meier (2007:660) concurs and argues that people communicate within and between

cultures by means of language, which is therefore central to their social relationships. In Campbell's (2004: 62) view misunderstandings between people from different cultures tend to arise from their use of language or inability to communicate efficiently and effectively with each other. In the university environment, language is the main tool for communication and it can therefore serve either as a catalyst or as a deterrent for the development of friendships.

A third factor, namely racism, also influences first year student's ability to engage with other students and forge new relationships. In settings, such as South Africa, with its institutionalised history of racism it is incumbent upon researchers and university personnel to be vigilant about how this impacts student integration. Racism is not inherent in people, but is learned behaviour, predominantly from family, peers and even socialising agents such as the media in the social environment. If first year students are exposed to either implicit or explicit forms of racism this may add additional stress and challenge, and result in greater apprehension for interacting with other students. In many instances on university campuses, racism is apparent, such as the use of racial innuendos, graffiti or even violence at universities (Moja, 2008).

The resulting effects of racism is that students from minority groups or historically marginalised racial groups may perceive themselves as less worthy or less intelligent than others. This may result in them feeling inhibited from socialising and communicating within culturally diverse settings and affects their ability to become integrated into the university environment. In turn, this could disrupt academic progress and social integration, making students even more isolated from participating in campus activities (de Beer, Smith & Jansen, 2009). In research conducted by the National Association of School Psychologists (2012), on racism, prejudice and discrimination, Ong, Phinney and Dennis (2006) claim that students subjected to racism, prejudice, and discrimination are more resilient when they experience high expectations, have firm support from parents, school, and community, and have a strong sense of ethnic identity. In a similar study, by Antonio (2016) on the influence of friendship groups on intellectual self-confidence and educational aspirations in college, it was found that, frequent interracial interaction in university was associated with increases in cultural awareness and a greater commitment to racial understanding amongst peers. Astin (1993a, 1993b) further claims that higher levels of academic development and complacency within the university correlates with more frequent

engagement across race. Interracial engagement amongst students is more likely to be beneficial in restricting prejudice and increasing cross-cultural understanding. Thus, if opportunities are deliberately created for students to mix with students from other races and cultures with support from university structures they are more likely to persist with their studies.

Fourth, is the issue of first year students' satisfaction with their university experience. This issue can be viewed from the perspective of a strong or weak fit between the student's needs, preference personalities and abilities and how responsive the university environment is to these. Student satisfaction with university studies directly influences student performance and persistence and thus cannot be ignored by university staff. Astin (1993a) points out that, satisfied students are more likely to continue in their studies and are more likely to succeed academically. He also argues that high student satisfaction helps in attracting and retaining high achievers to a university, which in turn increases the reputation and standing of an institution.

The last contributing factor that influences first year university students' integration into university is finance. In the USA, a national survey by the American College Health Association (American College Health Association, 2013:5), shows that 35 percent of students reported that their finances were "traumatic" or "very difficult" to handle. The students who participated in this survey frequently alluded to the fact that their financial worries affected their academic performance at university. These students chose not to participate in many of the campus activities because of a lack of money. Instead, they spent their free time investigating possibilities for part time work to alleviate the pressure. They also believed that their financial concerns interfered with their academic performance. For other students in the American College Health Association (American College Health Association, 2013:5) study, the high impact of the financial stress was a strong factor in their considerations of dropping out in first year.

In a poorly resourced country like South Africa, the situation is much worse. Jones, Coetzee, Bailey and Wickham, (2008) who studied South Africa's legacy of under-resourced schools and under-qualified teachers, particularly in historically disadvantaged black and rural communities, states that inadequate financial resources constitute one of the most important reasons cited for students dropping out of university. In another study by Sekhukhune (2008), the results show that poor students from low-income households do not have enough funds to afford food and pay for their

university fees which impacts negatively on their academic performance. Despite the existence of a National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS), funds are extremely limited and not all students receive support. If students are unable to pay for university fees, afford a decent place to live and have sufficient funding to feed themselves, their very basic needs remain unmet and create unnecessary psychological stress. As a result, students become more preoccupied with finding ways of addressing and meeting their other financial needs such as living, accommodation, resources for assignments and registration fees[6].

At the university where I work, I have also seen how the (un) availability of academic resources such as texts, prescribed books and access to the internet affect students' academic progress. In an article written in the University World News by Macgregor in 2007 on the rate of student drop-out in South Africa, it was discovered that 40% of South African students drop-out of university in their first year. Financial difficulties among the country's large pool of poor black students are, unsurprising, largely since first generation students from low-income, less educated families are the most likely to drop out. Students from low-income families, have no choice but to take on part-time jobs to try and meet both their educational and daily survival responsibilities. According to the Income and Expenditure Survey (2010/2011), a low-income family is classified as a family or a household, who has an annual income of between R1 and R19 200. The average annual household income for poor households was R25 348, which is substantially higher than the maximum household income of R19 200 (using the upper bound of poverty line) for the low-income category. It would therefore be practical to classify households in this category of income as poor households (Income and Expenditure Survey, 2010/2011).

Many first generation students not only come from households with low incomes which impacts their retention at university, but also have family backgrounds that could be seen as a stumbling block to integration. First generation students commonly emanate from working class families. This means that their parents are most likely employed as

---

[6] In December 2017 the South African President announced that higher education would be free for all poor students but did not give an indication to universities or other constituencies of how this would be financed from the national budget. The pronouncement was also in opposition to recommendations by the Hefer Commission who indicated that free higher education to all students who are unable to finance their own education, whether in need or not, is not possible. It remains to be seen how this announcement will impact the functioning of universities and the expectations of poor students (Chabalala, 2017).

factory workers, tradesman, clerks and store workers. This would determine the amount of money that their parents would earn, and what is available to support university studies for their children. Many then postpone entering university and find jobs for a year or two in order to save money for tuition fees. This means that such students are often older and then even less likely to fit in socially with a younger generation of students. Their age and experiences may however be advantageous in that they are likely to have habits that are more serious and be more likely to seek assistance from lecturers and other support staff as argued by Ryan and Deci (2000).

However, an economically impoverished parental background may present additional constraints for students impacting them in different ways. One is in terms of not being able to physically get themselves to university regularly and thus missing classes. Two is that financially-needy students often have to take on jobs in order to pay for their education (Warburton, Bugarin & Nunez, 2001) thereby having to balance work demands and university studies. Many will also struggle with living costs with the additional issue of finding affordable accommodation playing a key role. Many struggling students cannot afford residence fees. This may lead to students living in more affordable off-campus accommodation or living with extended family. The downside of cheap off-campus accommodation, is that it may not be suitably geared towards promoting academic study. It may also be far away from campus resulting in increased or unreliable transport costs and/or limiting student's time on campus. Such factors may lessen students' full involvement in the university experience such as studying in groups with peers and interacting and socialising with other students on campus. In addition, this minimises their participation in extracurricular activities or access to university support services.

An added stress which is associated with feelings of guilt is when students cannot contribute financially to their homes because of their new commitment to higher education (CNN, 2003). Gibbons and Shoffner (2004) argue that some first generation students have reported that they feel as though they may be burdening their families with additional costs to enable them to attend university. First generation students from socially-disadvantaged backgrounds may also feel embarrassment over their socio-economic position or the lack of further education of their family members. This leads to awkwardness amongst their peers at university, particularly if their friends have a long line of family members attending university. Coping mechanisms may include

pretending that their family members are more educated and more financially privileged than they really are. An added strain on first generation students is that the parents, siblings and friends of these students who have no experience of university or the rewards thereof may be non-supportive of efforts to study or experience other facets of university life.

For many students financial challenges taken in tandem with the need to achieve good academic results are strains that can cause demotivation and result in student dropout. Many students do not reach the stage of becoming fully integrated into the university environment because of these hurdles.

2.2.3   Stage 3: Assimilation phase – are students now part of the university?

Students only become assimilated when they have achieved full membership into the social and academic communities of the institution. In the next section, I discuss how different levels of students' self-efficacy influences their overall identity, as well as their ability to become assimilated into the new university environment. I also address other factors such as academic expectations, dealing with autonomy at university and the impact of first year's language abilities on their assimilation into university.

Below is a diagramme representing the processes and the factors that influence the first year university student's separation from their familiar school environment until they reach the stage of commitment to the institution or the university.

SEPARATION STAGE

Students need to negotiate their transition from high school to university

Factors that may influence the transition to university
- Autonomy
- Forging new friendships
- Socialising
- Separation or living away from home

- **Reactive students**
- Students show a downward trajectory. They feel academically challenged and find it difficult to adjust to the university environment and the numerous changes during the second semester. These challenges may result in students dropping out of university.

Proactive students
Students show an upward trajectory academically and adjust successfully to the university environment by the second semester

INTEGRATION STAGE

Successful transition into the university environment. Students move to the next stage which is the is process of becoming integrated into the university environment

Factors that influence integration into the university environment
- Socialisation/Resocialisation
- Language Diversity
- Racism/Racial Diversity
- Student Satisfaction
- Financial Challenges

Students who experience any of the above-mentioned challenges during this stage will either:
- dropout of university or
- postpone their studies

Students who do not experience any challenges during this stage easily make the transition to the next stage - the *assimilation stage*

ASSIMILATION STAGE

Students advance to assimilation when they have fully adapted into the social and academic communities of the institution.

Factors that influence successful assimilation of first year student's university students
- Self-efficacy
- Academic expectations

Diagramme 2.3: First year university students – Separation from school environment and commitment to the institution

Self-efficacy represents a person's belief that he or she can perform a particular task successfully. It is also defined as 'people's beliefs about their capabilities to produce designated levels of performance that exercise influence over events that affect their lives' (Bandura, 1994:71). Self-efficacy thus reflects the levels of confidence of

students' to exert control over their motivation, behaviour, and social environment. A student's efficacy beliefs will influence how he/she feels, thinks and motivates him/herself. It has consistently been found to be a good predictor of academic achievement, study strategies, and persistence in the face of difficulty (Cavallo, Rozman & Potter, 2004; Pajares, 2002), and of choice of academic major and career (Hackett, 1995).

In Bandura's study of self-efficacy, "The exercise of control" (1997) he identifies four foundations of self-efficacy that I find useful for this study: mastery experience, vicarious experience, verbal (or social) persuasion, and, physiological and affective states. Mastery experiences refer to situations in which students master a task, which in turn influences their belief in their capability to achieve their potential (Cervone, 2000; McInerney & McInerney, 2002; Palmer, 2006). For example, this could include tasks such as solving problems, leading to the student being able to solve more challenging problems, or understanding new concepts and/or how concepts are linked. Within this self-motivated awareness a student's self-efficacy can be influenced and changed by feedback.

The second element, vicarious experiences, such as the observation of others, can influence the way in which students judge their own personal capabilities. In particular, when one observes a peer of similar ability mastering a task, this reinforces the belief that one can also perform the same task, for example, when a student sees how his or her peer masters the skill of answering multi-choice assessments in a given module on the computer.

Verbal or social persuasions through messages from others, such as family, teachers, and peers (Zeldin, Britner & Pajares, 2008) are also important. When positive appraisal based on actual performance is provided, emphasising that the student is making progress (McInerney & McInerney, 2002; Palmer, 2006), it can boost their self-belief in personal achievement potential. Thus, when students get feedback as soon as possible after completion of their learning tasks or assessments from their lecturers they are more active participants in the learning process. Students also need to see that the comments that they receive from their lecturers can be incorporated into their subsequent performance and may influence the quality of their future learning.

The final source of self-efficacy is the physiological and emotional state of students. In stressful situations, students often exhibit signs of distress such as shakes, aches and pains, fatigue, fear and nausea. These types of responses may alter the self-efficacy of students particularly during their first year. Students often experience bouts of nervousness, especially before they need to present something to fellow students or for instance before writing a test, which can lead to low self-efficacy. If students interpret this as a sign of inability, it can lead to a decrease in their self-efficacy. On the other hand, a student with a high self-efficacy would interpret such physiological signs as normal and unrelated to ability. These four foundations of self-efficacy combine in different ways to produce the overall identity of a student. When I use the term 'self-efficacy' I will be using it to describe the student's perception of his/her own ability to reach a goal while at the same time discovering his/her self-worth at university while taking cognisance of the four elements elaborated on above.

Self-efficacy has been related to persistence, tenacity, and achievement in educational settings (Bandura, 1986; Schunk, 1981; Zimmerman, 1989). A vital part of first year students' assimilation into the university environment is for them to develop a healthy internal resistance to change in order to avoid being greatly affected by temporary variances in their academic performance. This is directly linked to students' self-efficacy. Student's self-efficacy is most affected during periods of assessments such as assignments, quizzes, group presentations and during high stakes assessments. Students are also most inclined to get more anxious over higher stake tests, such as end of semester examinations (Zoller & Ben-Chaim, 1989). Assessments provide students with a great deal of comparative information about their academic performance and their capabilities, particularly when measured against that of peers. These continuous comparative evaluations carry strong efficacy implications and may result in some students becoming vulnerable to achievement anxiety. Thus, when students' with low self-efficacy experience poor academic performance their self-efficacy can drop further. As Meece, Wigfield and Eccles (1990) showed, past academic successes and failures can lead to anxiety through their effects on perceived self-efficacy. If failures weaken students' sense of self-efficacy, they become anxious about their academic demands, but if their perceived efficacy is unshaken by failures they remain committed. Students therefore require several rounds of supportive feedback from both peers and lecturers before a stable and well-calibrated self-efficacy

is established (Cervone & Palmer, 1990). They also need to be taught how to respond to negative feedback in order to decrease their risk of failure.

The academic expectations of first year university students is another factor that may greatly influence their assimilation into the university environment. Students are required to adapt to numerous academic changes at university. Key among these are the fact that learning is autonomous and students have to be resilient and proactive regarding their work. Many students are ill-prepared for these changes, partly because university and high school have different standards and expectations (Venezia, Kirst & Antonio, 2003). Failure to understand the different expectations in the two settings can impact on students' academic motivation and achievement (Kern, Fagley & Miller, 1998).

In a comparison of first year students, social and academic expectations with their experiences at the middle and end of their first year of university in the USA, Smith and Wertlieb (2005) found that there was a significant misalignment between students' academic and social expectations and their first-year experiences. While students looked forward to this new independence, it is unlikely that they appreciate the gravity of the curricular choices in their academic arena. For example, the level of mathematics courses taken in eighth and ninth grade rank among the strongest predictors of university attendance and completion (Ingels, Curtin, Owings, Kaufman, Alt & Chen, 2002). Additionally, they reported that neither academic or social expectations, nor first-year experiences, were good predictors of first-year academic achievement.

However, there is some research highlighting the correlation between entering student expectations and academic success. According to Weissberg, Owen, Jenkins, and Harburg (2003) in studies enhancing the predictability of academic performance and retention with students in an urban commuter university or college, those who entered with unrealistically high expectations were academically less successful than students with lower, but more accurate grade expectations. Students, who had more accurate grade expectations, tend to exert more effort into their academic work, studied more, and attended class more regularly than students with unrealistic expectations (Weissberg, Owen, Jenkins & Harburg, 2003).

In South Africa, the greater majority of students are reportedly under-prepared for the academic demands placed upon them by the university. One of the main factors for

South African student's under-preparedness is highlighted by Holder, Jones, Robinson and Krass (1999) who argue that students often lack the skills required for academic success. Important aspects to look at are whether the students are under prepared because of the quality of teachers at the schools or because there are still gaps in the teaching system that originate from the pre-apartheid era.

Education in South Africa, and more specifically tertiary education, continues to face challenges that are often blamed on an inadequate schooling base. Sutherland (2009:4) states that the South African government has addressed the inequalities perpetuated during the apartheid era and continues to work on closing the gap that was created. However, Govender (2013) argues that in spite of substantial government economic support for education reform, glaring gaps left by 40 years of apartheid education still riddle South Africa's education system at every level. Govender (2013) further goes on to say that in primary and secondary education, South African learners underperform even relative to peer countries. In addition, even top students or top performers educated in a deeply dysfunctional primary and secondary education system often arrive at university with massive academic deficits. According to Van Rooy and Coetzee-Van Rooy (2015), language is one of the most important issues contributing to the poor academic performance of students at South African universities. I believe that overcoming language barriers as well as reading for learning plays an important role in bridging the gap in an academic context (Palani, 2012:91). Arkarsu and Harputlu (2014:61) aptly define reading as 'a complex information processing skill in which the readers interact with the text in order to create meaningful discourse'. According to Tien (2015) if students read extensively it will not only enhance their reading skills but will also increase their acquisition of knowledge. Reading is therefore an indispensable skill that is also fundamentally interconnected to the process of education and to students achieving educational success.

The lack of reading and language comprehension skills of South African students has also been alluded to by Morrow (2007) who argues that first generation students who are not fully acquainted with the grammar and rules of articulation of their areas of study have restricted "epistemological access". Morrow describes 'epistemological access' as the gateway to the forms and conventions of knowledge in higher education. Student's poor language or grammatical abilities is often attributed to their poor high school education, and insufficient preparation for university-level study. There is thus

a gap between what students have learned and the way they have been taught at high school, and the knowledge and learning methods required to perform well academically at university. One way in which this may manifest itself is in a lack of English language level proficiency or English comprehension (i.e., Naidoo, 2008), inadequate learning methods or in a lack of time management. According to Seligman (2008) who studied the connection between student academic literacy and academic achievement, many students have engaged minimally with academic language before they enter university. The consequences hereof are that students have not developed the ability to communicate clearly in writing, struggle to think critically and therefore lack the skills required to complete academic tasks.

The combined frames provided by Tinto's (1987) longitudinal model of student departure and van Gennep (1909) and Turners (1969) ideas of '"liminality' have provided structure to the first parts of my arguments about students movement from home and school life to university life and the struggles they experience in this transition. I now turn to a discussion of the role of First Year Experience programmes and how these can arguably be said to assist students with the transition from high school to university and in easing the liminality of first year students.

2.3 The role of First Year Experience programmes at HEI

The earliest First Year Experience programme can be traced to Thomas Jones in 1970 at the University of South Carolina and arose in response to student unrest about riots against the Vietnam War, other perceived social injustices, and local campus issues. The First Year Experience programme was initiated to build trust, understanding, and open lines of communication between students, faculty, staff, and administrators. Thomas Jones saw the First Year Experience programme, which is now called the University 101 Programme (2012), as a means to bond students so that they could become deeply rooted to their institution and at the same time make a great change in the way that undergraduate students were taught. In its present format, the purpose of University 101 is described as a programme to foster a sense of belonging, promote engagement in the curricular and co-curricular life of the University, articulate to students the expectations of the university and its faculty, help students develop and apply critical thinking skills, and help students clarify their purpose, meaning, and direction. According to Jewler (1989: 201) "University 101 subscribes to the belief that

development is not a one-dimensional affair but must reach far beyond the intellect and into emotional, spiritual, occupational, physical and social areas".

By 1982, the University of South Carolina's programme became an exemplar of First Year Experience models that informed those of other colleges and universities across America. Foundational to these early First Year Experience programmes, and to later versions in other settings, is the key objective of promoting students' engagement with the faculty, lecturers, tutors and peers, in an effort to assist students during their liminal phase of transition from high school to university. For the objectives to be realised and for a First Year Experience programme or project to be successful, Pitkethly and Prosser (2001:185 -198) assert that a set of principles must be set that will "tease out" the challenges that universities face with first year students. Once the principles for the First Year Experience programme are established, then universities can continue in their development and implementation of the programme. These principles should be contingent on, first acculturating students with their new university environment, which includes the physical environment, academic culture of the university as well as the support services available on the campus. Second, they need to foster within students a sense of purpose and direction regarding the courses they are studying, including the assessment tasks and familiarity with teaching methods and ways of learning required at university. Third, it is expected that they will encourage students' to forge relationships with the university faculty staff, tutors and their peers to support them in their persistence with their studies. Last, these principles target the context of the experience, so that students develop an awareness and knowledge of the diverse spectrum of students within their university.

In order for a First Year Experience programme to be successfully conducted, Barefoot, Fidler, Gardner and Roberts (1999), stress that universities must bear in mind that the programme is larger than a single seminar course and represents a planned and comprehensive programme. The First Year Experience programme should consist of different components working together to increase academic performance. A successful programme should also provide a far-reaching learning experience to increase student persistence, should assist them in the transition to university, facilitate a sense of commitment and community to the university, and increase the personal development of students. There is a valid argument inherent in this approach: the earlier first year academic and adjustment difficulties are identified, the better the

opportunities for intervention and student integration in the new university environment. Additionally, well-structured First Year Experience programmes should be stimulating for students, with clear support from lecturers (and tutors) to fully exploit the personal and academic potential of first years. Like Upcraft, Gardner and Barefoot (2004), I argue that in order to facilitate a First Year Experience programme, universities must create the experiences necessary for students to find the proper balance between challenge and support for students. In practice, this could mean that academic advising as well as social activities are included in student orientation. For instance using small group sessions with peer role-play can teach students about the campus community and safety while at the same time encouraging socialisation. I believe that when balance is achieved between challenging and supporting students academically and socially, students will be in a better position to proceed through the liminality of their transition.

Other countries too have invested in FYE programmes for the benefits that accrue to first year through these programmes. For example, in Australia, the University of Sydney's Institute for Teaching and Learning established a First Year Experience programme in 1999 in order to investigate the experiences of students in their first year, as well as to provide a staff development programme to address student needs. The institution was motivated by the need to address the increasingly diverse first year student body. Additionally, the institution found that the academic staffs' expectations of new students' abilities and knowledge were unrealistic, which lead to some students discontinuing their studies. The organisers believed that if the institution provided academic and social support, first year students would develop a sense of purpose in their abilities. Also, course leaders in this programme argued that students feel alienated if the processes for acculturation into the institution are inadequate, if students feel uncomfortable, unsupported and unable to progress, and if they do not feel lost, depressed and intimidated by the institution. According to Baik, Naylor and Arkoudis (2015), much has improved in the first year experience of students over the past two decades at Australian universities as students are more engaged with their studies and more content with the choice of subjects offered at their institutions. Students are also significantly more satisfied with the quality of teaching and have far better interactions with their lecturers. Baik, Naylor and Arkoudis (2015) point out that trends are positive signs of the effect of university efforts to improve the experience of first year students.

South African HEIs have also increasingly begun to invest in First Year Experience programmes because of the following statistics. The South African Green Paper for post-school education and training (2012:41) communicates its concern as follows:

> *South African universities are characterised by relatively low success rates: 74% in 2010, compared to a desired national norm of 80%. This results in a graduation rate of 15% – well below the national norm of 25% for students in three-year degree programmes in contact education. In contact universities, well under a third of students complete their courses in regulation time and one in three graduates within four years. Improvement of throughput rates must be the top strategic priority of university education.*

According to Dampier (2015) in an internal study at the University of Johannesburg, reasons cited by students included financial difficulties, poor preparation for higher education, academic difficulties and personal reasons. In addition, students who leave higher education during their first year are not very likely to return or remain in the system. The majority of them leave without a qualification, leading to massive financial, personal and national loss. Motsabi and van Zyl (2017) mentioned the above challenges as some of the reasons why the University of Johannesburg (UJ) launched its institutional First Year Experience (FYE) initiative.

In 2015 the University of Johannesburg, First Year Experience, which is a leader in the field of first-year transitions, spread its wings into the national arena. The FYE office was involved in establishing and assisting higher education institutions (HEIs) in the formation and understanding of their own first-year experience initiatives. Institutions such as, Vaal University of Technology (VUT), Mangosuthu University of Technology (MUT) and University of Venda invited UJ staff to assist them in establishing the formation of their own first-year experience initiatives.

The progress of these initiatives has culminated in the establishment of the South African National Resource Centre for the First Year Experience and Students in Transition (SANRC). SANRC is the first such National Resource centre outside the United States of America. Dr Jennifer Keup, the Director of The National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience and Students in Transition, was one of the keynote speakers at the UJ conference in 2015. According to Keup (2015) transition programmes have historically been specialised in that they have focused mainly on

providing a particular service, located within a particular faculty, and aimed at a particular group of students. For instance, those in a particular programme of study who were academically underprepared. Additionally, they are usually temporally bound, such as a first-year seminar. Also, students are passed from one transition programme to the next like a baton in a relay race (Keup, 2015). Dr Keup's role is to provide leadership for all operational, strategic, and scholarly activities of the Center (SANRC) in pursuit of its mission to support and advance efforts to improve student learning and transitions into and through higher education (Keup, 2015).The University of Johannesburg's FYE programme operates as an intervention strategy to ease the difficulties experienced by students.

2.4   Educational excursions promoting student socialisation

In the Faculty of Education, an educational excursion programme was conceptualised in 2007, and forms part of UJs larger FYE initiative. The excursion may be viewed as part of the extended orientation initiative for the education students since it occurs after the university's official two-week orientation period. In the excursion setting staff and students, work together to establish learning communities within which students can begin to interact with their lecturers, tutors and peers. As Govender (2014) argues, first year students cannot be expected to make the conceptual leap required at higher education level without serious intervention from the institution - they have an obligation to improve the educational experiences of first-year university students.

There is not much literature on educational excursions in teacher education or in higher education in general, but there is literature on field trips or excursions in university or college biology and ecology courses. According to Tan (2005) in, 'Ideas of teaching: how to conduct field trips', excursions can be used to compliment materials taught or be a primary activity during a semester from previous coursework. Tan (2005) further goes on to state that many students see excursions as the highlight of their university experience and that other students simply enjoy travelling to different sites. In Lei's (2010) article, 'Field trips in college biology and ecology courses: revisiting benefits and drawbacks,' he contends that one of the benefits of field trips or excursions are that they serve as an important teaching tool since they are a viable method of extending the traditional classroom environment to outdoors. A teacher or a lecturer may test some of the biological and ecological hypotheses and theories discussed in the class or the laboratory, by introducing appropriate field research methods to

learners or students. In turn, they will learn how to operate certain field instruments and equipment, and when to use which field methods with a proper explanation. Additionally, Lei (2010) asserts that excursions benefits the student in the following ways; it enhances synthesis of information, cognitive reasoning ability, and self-confidence, self-efficacy, and research collaboration skills. A student's self-confidence and self-efficacy may also be elevated because he or she is an important member of a research team, making a significant contribution. Excursions are also a valuable experience in that students can observe a natural setting first-hand, making learning more interesting and enjoyable, providing opportunities for students to gain field research experiences, learning through active participation (hands-on experience), and exploring practical or pressing biological and ecological issues onsite (Tan, 2005).

In the disciplinary field of geography, fieldwork is widely regarded as an essential part of undergraduate education, and lecturers generally agree that it represents one of the most effective and enjoyable forms of teaching and learning for both staff and students (Lonergan & Andresen, 1988). Lonergan and Andresen (1988:64) define `the field' as any place where supervised learning can take place via first-hand experience, outside the constraints of the four-wall classroom setting. In staff-led project work, students are more dependent on their lecturers, who decides on a project design, who and how the activities are allocated so that there is more control over the students participating in the projects (Cloke, Kirby & Park, 1981). For geography fieldwork, this can be a useful introduction to participatory fieldwork, and is a common format during the first year (Mellor, 1991). According to Lonergan and Andresen (1988) these type of field trips in geography are beneficial to the students because it not only encourages socialisation and personal development of the students, but also enhances their enthusiasm for study. Additionally it promotes the development of social integration of the student cohort.

In the Faculty of Education, at the University of Johannesburg, the excursion also plays a pivotal role with regard to the enculturation of education students. The study by de Beer, Petersen and Dunbar-Krige (2012), based on exploring the value of an educational excursion for pre-service teachers, was focussed on the following: the importance of social interaction during the excursion and how it afforded students the opportunity how to live and learn together and to work co-operatively in a natural setting. At UJ, just like at many other South African universities first year education

courses consists of large classes of 400 or more students. These students tend to sub-divide themselves into discreet smaller groups along the lines of language and race with, for example, white, English-speaking students clustering together and African, Zulu-speaking students congregating separately from African, Xhosa-speaking students (de Beer & Henning, 2011). This is not optimal for student socialisation and learning about diversity and alternate viewpoints (Petersen, De Beer & Dunbar-Krige 2011). It is also not favourable for teaching students about the realities of multicultural and multilingual classrooms, which are typical of the South African school context. De Beer et al (2011) therefore included the excursion as part of the curriculum package for the first year students and deliberately designed it to address the problematic aspects described above. The excursion is aimed at improving the challenges that first year education student's experience. They further assert that the excursion presents a complimentary (augmenting) pedagogy and 'learning space' to that of the formal classroom of the university. In addition, the uniqueness of the excursion as a learning 'space' offers opportunities for pre-service teacher education students to confront their learned biases and prejudices as part of their professional development. The excursion now forms part of one first year education module (in each of the four programmes that the faculty offers) that focuses on the professional development of teachers (de Beer et al, 2012:92).

Just as in the case with the field trips or excursions of the students at university or college studying biology and/or ecology courses, and the geography students who found that fieldwork was beneficial, there has also been very positive feedback on the educational field excursion at UJ captured in a number of student dissertations/ theses and in research papers. According to De Beer et al (2011) the educational excursion was beneficial for the first year students, first because of the excursion curriculum and pedagogy that includes orientation-type activities which assists students in becoming socially and academically integrated. Students work together in small groups on activities such as "energy conservation, HIV/AIDS, stereotyping, poverty and food security, leadership, and pedagogies for teaching in schools with optimal diversity" (de Beer & Henning, 2011:2). An additional benefit of the educational excursion for the first year pre-service students, is that the group activities and continuous interactions gives the students an opportunity to cultivate friendships that may not have developed in the formal environment on campus. De Beer and Henning (2011:4) argue that even students who have been isolated until the excursion will be given ample opportunities

to establish bonds with a significant other individual or community at the educational excursion. When students are able to transfer the learning communities that are formed during the educational excursion back to the formal environment then the feeling of "not belonging" diminishes for these students.

Second, the first year students who felt unimportant in the hierarchical layers in the university community both in terms of their relationships with academic staff but also with regard to other senior student's, perceptions are changed – the authors found that many students realise that they are very important. Third, De Beer et al (2011) assert that the excursion is valuable because students learnt how to negotiate rules of interaction in a culturally diverse grouping. This assisted in developing a better understanding of cultural diversity amongst students. As students live in large communal dormitories with other students from different cultural groups they learn how to negotiate rules to facilitate collegiality within a community of practice. During the excursion, however, more informal language and different semiotic tools such as games, simulations and social-educational activities dominate the interactions (Petersen, de Beer & Dunbar-Krige, 2011). It is therefore evident that field trips and excursions do not only provide a different milieu for first year's personal and professional development but it also holds much promise for teacher education. de Beer et al (2011) argue that placing students in the excursion environment, characterised by uncertainty, discomfort and situations in which students have to 'think on their feet' constitutes an authentic learning environment to prepare them for coping with complexity. Additionally, in this environment, students are asked to learn by engaging in activities that require lateral and critical thinking, innovation and problem solving, without the strict monitoring and evaluation characteristic of activities associated with a formal learning environment.

In another study on the excursion, Govender (2014) investigated the tutor's roles on the formation of learning communities. Here the focus was on how tutors enabled the transfer of social and academic cohesion formed during the educational excursion to the formal environment. Govender (2014) found that tutors played an important role in promoting learning by scaffolding student interaction during activities, by aiding interaction through facilitating activities in small groups since they are closer to the student experience. As a result, the social and academic cohesion developed at the excursion was easily transferred to the formal learning environment. Additionally, the

tutors' experiences with the students' struggles during the excursion allowed them to support students more effectively at university.

During the third phase, incorporation, students can now put into practice what they have learnt at the educational excursion during the First Year Experience programme, to assist them in becoming fully committed to the university. This phase should be easier since they would now have a better support system from their lecturers, tutors and with new friends.

2.5   Conclusion

The first six months of university is the most challenging period for many students and may result in them feeling overwhelmed by the new responsibilities and expectations in their new environment. An educational field excursion as part of a First Year Experience (FYE) programme, at the University of Johannesburg in particular, is an effective way to support first year students during their liminal phase of transition from high school to university. The first year students are taken in, reassured, recognised and eventually assimilated into the campus community. This chapter discussed Tinto's longitudinal model of student retention, which epitomised the separation phase, the transition phase and the assimilation phase. In conjunction with the phases that make up each rite of passage in the liminality of moving from one environment to another, namely separation, the liminal period and reassimilation I discussed the benefit that an educational field excursion has for the first year students in becoming incorporated into the university environment.

CHAPTER 3:

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The main aim of this study was to investigate how an educational excursion assisted pre-service teachers in forging new relationships at university. I also looked closely at the social challenges that first year pre-service student teachers experienced in their entry period to university. This study can be classified as a generic qualitative study (Merriam, 1998), as I was interested in "understanding the meaning people have constructed" or how they make sense of their worlds and the experiences they have in the world (Merriam, 1998:6). I generated data using qualitative methods such as participant observation, photographs, questionnaires and dyadic interviews and employed inductive analysis of data (Caelli, Ray & Mill, 2003), in the tradition of grounded theory research (Strauss & Corbin, 1999; Charmaz, 2002, Henning, Van Rensburg, & Smit, 2004).

In this chapter, I will expound on why I chose a generic qualitative study research design for this investigation and how it assisted me in addressing the research questions set in Chapter 1. I describe the data collection methods used and how these methods addressed the research question of this study. Thereafter, I motivate for and discuss the methods of data analysis. Additionally I explain the steps I followed to conduct an ethical study and how I tried to increase the validity and reliability of this research.

The following question guided my deliberations in this study:

How do student teachers describe the role of an educational excursion as catalyst for their social integration into university and how do they reflect on their experiences thereof two and a half years later?

The following sub-questions were set:

- What are the social challenges that first year pre-service student teachers experience with respect to forging social relationships with peers at university?

- How does the educational field excursion serve as an opportunity for first year pre-service student teachers to develop new social relationships with peers?

- What do pre-service teachers have to say about how their social relationships formed during the excursion have endured (or not) over time in the university context?

3.2 Research Design: Crafting an Investigation into Student Enculturation into University

As indicated in chapter one, this inquiry is a subsection of a larger NRF Thuthuka research project at the University of Johannesburg. As part of my research design and methodology, I was guided by my aim of investigating the role of an educational excursion in promoting social interaction between first year pre-service teachers, and then examining the nature and duration of these relationships. In addition, how these relationships have endured (or not) over a two and a half year period from the perspective of a sample of the students themselves. This aim informed the choice of research design as a generic qualitative study (Merriam, 1998); it also informed the methods of data collection and analysis methods I employed.

According to Merriam (1998:44), a research design is a plan or map for the process of finding solutions to a particular research problem. As I was interested in investigating how an educational field excursion influences first year preservice teachers' ability to develop social relationships with peers, and the value they attach to these connections for their integration into university, I needed to find this out from first year students themselves. This meant that I would work in a natural setting, build a complex holistic picture, analyse words and report on the detailed views of informants (Creswell, 1994). Here I was led by Merriam's (1998) description of how generic qualitative studies are used in the field of education, as a common form of qualitative research, since they characteristically draw from concepts, models, and theories in educational development, which provide the frameworks for studies. In this generic qualitative study, I will draw on the concepts from the theoretical framework and the study of the literature in addressing the research questions and in working with the empirical data.

My unit of analysis in this study kept me focused on obtaining the views of participants and interpreting and recounting the meanings they gave to their construction of reality

(Merriam, 1998:6). This approach is in keeping with the view of Caelli et al (2003) who describe generic qualitative studies as those that endeavour to discover and understand a phenomenon, a process, or the perspectives of the participants involved in the study. Qualitative research, in general is also multi-method in focus, involving an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. As a researcher, who had a partly insider view (as I work in a research centre in the faculty) and an outsider position (I am not directly involved in the teacher education programme), I was in the position of being able to investigate an issue in teacher education while having a relatively informed 'distance' from it at the same time.

Employing a generic qualitative research design allowed me to read widely into the data collected, and with the guidance of my supervisors, I was able to carefully "think-through" the investigative process (Chamberlain, 2000). This particular research design enabled a close focus on 'understanding' what first year students experience during their development of social relationships with peers, the value they attach to these connections for their integration into university and whether or not this has continued over time. I concur with Denzin and Lincoln (2000), who believes that in qualitative research, no study is ever complete without employing many perspectives and hearing many voices, before achieving a deeper understanding of the social experience. Qualitative methods are thus used in research that is designed to provide an in depth description of a specific programme, practice, or setting and make use of a variety of empirical resources – case studies, personal experience, introspective life stories, interviews, observations, and historical, interactional, and visual texts. These methods enable one to collect data that describe routine and problematic moments and meanings in individuals' lives (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994:2). Data collection in qualitative research also usually requires the researcher to capture people's words and actions (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994). As previously mentioned, the focus of my research study includes 'understanding' what first year students experience during their development of social relationships with peers, also the value they attach to these connections for their integration into university.

According to Merriam (1998), in the field of education, generic qualitative studies are among the most common forms of qualitative research, since they characteristically

draw from concepts, models, and theories in educational development, which provide the frameworks for studies.

3.3   Choosing a sample of participants: searching for the general and then for specific 'information rich' cases

Sampling progressed in two phases which I describe below.

3.3.1   Sampling in phase 1: getting a perspective from first year Childhood teacher education students on the Soweto campus

As I was interested in investigating the experiences of first year students in teacher education my sampling choices were directed by the logistical arrangements of the Achterbergh educational field excursion. Thus, as the students attended the excursion in groups of 180 (together with first years in the senior and further education and training phases from the second campus on Auckland Park[7]), I was able to sample intact groups of first years in the foundation phase programme (n=105) and in the intermediate phase programme (n=122). The venue for the excursion is at the Achterbergh campground and accommodates groups of 20 –180. Students sleep in dormitory-style rooms that accommodate 6 to 8 students, with male and female students in separate buildings. The campground is large, surrounded by luscious trees and hilltops. The scenic setting is not only inviting but also calming. The campground is large which makes this location conducive for group activities and team building exercises. Groups that consist of 10 to 12 students can comfortably work without worrying about the noise level or generally disturbing the next group.

Consequently, in the first stage of the data collection, the participants in this study consisted of 227 first year pre-service education students from the two primary school teacher education programmes on the Soweto campus (SWC). Students on the SWC are enrolled in the foundation phase or the intermediate phase teacher education programmes. I chose to study the pre-service education students at the Soweto campus (SWC), firstly because of my familiarity of this campus and its students and because of the history of students in these two programmes as measured in UJ

---

[7] Auckland Park Campus: The Faculty of Education is split over two campuses. The Intermediate Phase (IP) and the Foundation Phase students (FP) are based on the Soweto campus. The Senior Phase and Further education and Training students (FET) are based on the Auckland Park campus. Due to logistical issues the FET students attended the same excursion but had a different programme. They were therefore not part of this research study.

surveys. Annual university-wide surveys reveal that many of the SWC students come from educationally disadvantaged backgrounds and have been traditionally under-represented in higher education. Many of these students are also the first in their families to attend university, are recent immigrants, from low socio-economic backgrounds, or students who have graduated from high schools that were unable to prepare them adequately for university (van Zyl, 2012). Students from backgrounds such as these would be more likely to be challenged in terms of their social integration and academic success at university according to Handel and Herrera (2003).

3.3.2   Sampling in phase 2: selecting "information rich" cases for dyadic interviews

In the second stage of data collection, the intact programme groups enabled purposeful sampling of "information rich" cases (Merriam, 1998:61), two and a half years after initial data was collected. Merriam (1998:61) describes purposeful sampling as being based on the assumption that the researcher wants to discover, understand, and gain insight into the phenomenon being studied, and therefore must select a sample from which the most can be learned. The students chosen (n=12) in the second phase I considered most suitable for addressing the sub research questions guiding this investigation. There was also an element of convenience as I work on the Soweto campus. Thus, as I come into regular contact with these students in the university corridors, I became a 'trusted insider', that students would agree to be interviewed by and it made the scheduling of interviews easier. Since I interacted with these students on a regular basis, I was well known to the teacher education student community and therefore, I was accustomed to their social rules and culture. As a result, the students were comfortable regarding the interviews and sharing information with me.

3.4   Data collection – choosing methods to elicit student views

The key words associated with qualitative methods include complexity, contextual, exploration, discovery, and inductive logic. The investigation of how a group of first years' experience a programme aimed at assisting them with their enculturation into university and gaining insight into how this has continued (or not) over time. Qualitative methods are used in research that is designed to provide an in depth description of a specific programme, practice, or setting and make use of a variety of empirical resources – case studies, personal experience, introspective life stories, interviews,

observations, and historical, interactional, and visual texts. These methods enable one to collect data that describe routine and problematic moments and meanings in individuals' lives (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994:2). Data collection in qualitative research also usually requires the researcher to capture people's words and actions (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994).

In determining the methods, I would use to generate data for this study I was guided by my overall research orientation, the design of the study and the questions I posed at the beginning of this investigation. Here the work of authors such as Creswell (2007:146) were useful. He proposes that data collection is a series of interrelated activities aimed at gathering good information to answer emerging research questions. I also kept in mind the theoretical framework of Tinto (1993), and the interactionist nature of the model he developed, and I would therefore be able to collect information that would allow me to address my research questions in two phases. The first part of my data was collected through observations, photographs and questionnaires at the end of the educational field excursion itself. The second part of my data collection was from dyadic interviews two and a half years after the excursion. I will now describe each of these in turn, and discuss the rationale for their choice.

3.4.1 Observation field notes: searching for clues about how first years interact at the excursion

I started with observations in order to take note of participants' behaviour in the setting of the educational excursion. The period of observation spanned three days with the excursion-specific programme (see CD insert), which included plenary sessions and group activities. What was important for me as researcher, was to have "prolonged, personal contact with events in a natural setting" (Chatman, 1984:426) in an unobtrusive manner, at the same time seeking to "gain at least a comfortable degree of rapport, even intimacy, with the people, situation, and settings of research" (Jorgensen, 1989:21). Through observations, I was able to gain some idea of the nature of the interactions between the participants in group work and in lecturer-led discussions and activities in the programme. For group work, students were divided into diverse groups, within their phases, of 10-12; this was a deliberate attempt on the part of the lecturers to encourage interaction amongst the students.

It was particularly during the group sessions that I was able to note how and with whom students interacted. I moved from one group to the next while still keeping a low profile

amongst the participants. In this way, I maintained a measure of objectivity through maintaining some distance while still managing to establish a sense of rapport with the students (Bernard, 1994) so that they would act naturally. Schmuck (1997) argues that observations provide researchers with ways to check for nonverbal expression of feelings, as well as to determine who interacts with whom, and to grasp how participants communicate with each other. I made observation notes using the guidelines suggested by Meriam (1998:97-98). These guidelines suggest including a description of where the educational field excursion took place and the observable characteristics of the participants (students). I also noted how different students participated in the various activities at the excursion, to what extent, and included snippets of student's informal conversations and interactions with members of their group.

In particular, I noted how being in the natural environment affected students interactions, for instance students spread out on the terrain and congregated under the trees for discussion activities, which allowed them to maximize opportunities to enjoy the picturesque outdoors, and how the male students easily communicated when they played soccer against each other during their free time. I particularly paid attention to how the diversity of language and race influenced group members' interactions. I for instance listened for evidence of students' struggles (or ease) expressing themselves in English, how they listened (or not) when someone was speaking and what the nature of their body language was. Paying attention to the type of nonverbal expression such as body language and facial expressions of the students was very useful because it made me more aware of their level of (dis)comfort. Through the students' non-verbal communication, I also felt that I was able to observe whether (or not) the students were developing a sense of trust, and feeling of union amongst themselves. Throughout my observation, I bore in mind Gorman and Clayton's (2005:40) view that, observation studies "involve the systematic recording of observable phenomena or behaviour in a natural setting".

3.4.2   Photographs as confirmation of observational field notes

A second method I employed was taking photographs to capture snapshots of particular activities and transition points over the duration of the educational field excursion as an addendum to my observational field notes. Harper (2005) argues that photographic data may be richer than the written word because it captures information

about a specific context, process, event or people. Others who work in the field of education research such as Pink, (2004) and Prosser and Schwartz, (1998), also support this view. I focused on taking photographs of the students while they were socialising with each in their natural setting at the excursion. I then also took photographs of the students during their group activities. In this way, I was able to capture in print my observational impressions of how the students were interacting with each other. I was careful to take the photographs in an unobtrusive manner and in order to maintain a measure of objectivity and keep low profile, I did not ask the students to pose for or stage participation in the photographs of their activities. The reason why I did not ask the students to participate in taking photographs was so that their interaction in the group activities was not hampered. As an observer, the camera became an important means of entering the student community at the educational field excursion; it provided another lens or viewpoint for observing student interaction. Some of these photographs are included for reference as (addendum E).

3.4.3   Using questionnaires to capture students specific background information and experience

On the last day of the excursion, I distributed a two-part questionnaire to students. Using student numbers as identifiers for follow up only for t.   Part A consisted of questions aimed at getting an understanding of the background information of students. It thus included questions about their social, cultural and economic backgrounds. According to UNESCO's International Institute for Educational Planning (2005), the most frequently used demographic questions focus on gender, age, ethnic background and home language. I included these and posed questions on the socio-economic, religious or cultural background of the students as I felt it would assist me in understanding the students' backgrounds more fully, especially in relation to their transition to university studies. Furthermore, including a question on family and cultural characteristics aimed at giving me a clearer picture of the distribution of the race groups among the 227 students in my research study. This, coupled with the question on the home languages of students helped me understand how language intersected with their or caused communication barriers for students when they first started at university. To my mind, the different languages may have affected their ability to forge friendships at university and at the educational field excursion at first. The question on students areas of origin (rural or an urban area) would assist me in identifying whether

this taken in combination with other factors could be a possible hindrance to their integration at an urban university.

In the next phase, I obtained data from the second part of the questionnaire, which included open-ended questions related to the excursion's role in the development of students' social relationships with peers and the challenges that they face in this process. According to Bulmer, (2004), Creswell, (2003); and McGuirk and O'Neill, (2005) good questionnaire design is crucial in order to generate data conducive to the goals of the research. Each question needed to be worded in such a manner that it would be precise and unambiguous to ensure that the participants interpret its meaning easily and accurately (Payne, 1951). The benefits for open-ended questioning include freedom and spontaneity of answers, the opportunity to probe and its usefulness for testing hypotheses about ideas or awareness (Oppenheim, 1992).

In designing the questionnaire (addendum C) I paid particular attention to logical sequencing of the questions so that there was a smooth transition from one topic to the next (Sarantakos, 2005) while still allowing participants the freedom to express their views spontaneously in response to the questions. Thus, Questions 1 to 4 was aimed at giving me an indication as to whether the students were emotionally prepared for the transition from high school to the new university environment. These questions would also give me some indication of whether students felt totally disorientated and alone during this phase of their journey at university. Questions 5 to 7 asked students about the development of friendships when they first started at university, and what their major challenges were. Questions 8 to 11 focused on whether or not the students were able to initiate friendships at the educational excursion. They were also asked to express their views on whether or not developing new friendships were challenging and the reasons why. The responses from the students assisted me in understanding the value of the educational field excursion, as part of the First Year Experience programme for the students. Questions 12 to 13 referred specifically to which excursion activities promoted the most interaction amongst the students and which activities the students felt encouraged the forging of friendships. They were asked to give reasons for their answers. These questions necessitated that the students share their experiences of these aspects in written format.

3.4.4 Dyadic interviews: searching for indicators of enduring friendships and social interaction over time

Last, I obtained data through semi-structured dyadic interviews conducted two and a half years after their first interactions with other students at the excursion. Interviews are useful because of their value in generating a deeper understanding of human experience (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982). According to Eisikovitz and Koren (2010) for a group to be called a dyad incorporates the experience of a "'we' relationship", formed through having shared time and space together. This type of interview was deliberately chosen as it allowed me to understand students' attitudes, feelings, beliefs, experiences and reactions in a way that would not be feasible using other methods (Morgan & Kreuger, 1993). I chose to use dyadic interviews based on my reading of the research literature in this field and from my experiences as a research participant in a second project where I saw its value; here students encouraged each other to recognise or remember aspects about their learning in a teaching school. Individual interviews allowed participants to share information they might have withheld in a more public context; however, dyadic interviews allowed participants to stimulate ideas that might not have been either recognized or remembered (Morgan, 1996).

Compared to focus groups that usually rely on 'ad hoc' groups of people that might not previously know each other (Morgan, 1996; Hydén & Bülow, 2003), dyadic interviewing is directed at naturally occurring pairs. As opposed to focus groups, where the researcher, in dyad interviews, determines the topic of the interview the interviewer asks questions directed at the dyad, as a pair. This allowed me, as the researcher to gain insight into the participant's understandings, and allows the participants to represent themselves not just as individuals but also as concurrent participants in a relationship (Morris, 2001). In other words, the researcher can capture individual views as well as shared perceptions of common experiences, for example regarding experiences at the educational field excursion and the challenging experienced when trying to develop friendships (Bennet & McAvity, 1994). These aspects of the dyadic interviews drew optimally on any pre-existing relationship between the students and took on an added layer of significance in the dyadic interview situation. It also enabled me to understand the dyad's "joint" view of the topic/s of conversation. From the perspective of the research literature Morgan, Ataie, Carder and Hoffman (2013) argue that dyadic interviews are valuable because they provide a measure of depth and detail available in individual interviews at the same time that they provide the interaction

present in focus groups. Morgan, Eliot, Lowe and Gorman (2016:1) in their article, "Dyadic interviews as a tool for qualitative evaluation", affirm that given an appropriate match between the participants themselves, as well as between the participants and the topic, dyadic interviews can be a very effective approach to gathering high quality data. They also point out the following strengths of using dyadic interviews in research studies:

- they provide an easily accessible opportunity to share experiences and reflections;
- they create a high level of comfort and openness;
- they produce data at an in-depth level; and
- they generate conversations that cover a wide variety of topics.

A purposeful sample of 12 students, making up six dyads (n=12) were interviewed. These comprised six students from the Foundation Phase group and six students from the Intermediate Phase. Here I looked for "information rich cases" (Merriam, 1998:61) based on the criteria described in Section 4.4.4 (Using interviews to capture endurance of friendships from the excursion). I did not prescribe the pairs but asked one student and requested that they choose a peer or partner with who they developed a friendship from the time of the camp.

In preparation, I first set up questions for the interviews that were guided by my overarching research question and informed by the preliminary analysis of the biographical data and excursion experience noted by the students in the open-ended questionnaire. I prepared eleven questions for the dyadic interview sessions, which targeted the following aspects:

1. The student's experiences during their first two weeks at university and the nature of their challenges in forming friendships while adjusting to an unfamiliar environment.
2. What their experience of communicating with other students of a different race/ cultural/ ethnic group was, and if this affected how they treated or in turn were treated by other students.
3. Whether or how language posed a barrier, in particular with students from different cultures, and how this affected their forging of friendships.

The rest of the questions were aimed at soliciting answers from the student's as they looked back on their experiences at the educational field excursion and reflected in dialogue with a peer about the role of the excursion in the development of new friendships. I took my lead from the initial questions in the first year survey and followed up two and a half years later with which activities at the excursion encouraged the most interaction between students and why they thought so. I also wanted to know if the students faced any other challenges at the excursion, always keeping the unit of analysis, naming the forging of friendships, uppermost. My last interview question was particularly aimed at gaining an understanding of whether or not any friendships that may have been initiated at the educational excursion had endured when the students returned to their formal university environment.

During the interviews, I asked each student in the pair, only one question at a time. This allowed time for each student to answer the question and for his or her answers to be considered by the other. As the interviewer, I encouraged and elicited responses with non-committal body language, such as nodding, or murmuring "uh-huh" and so on. Each of the interviews lasted between one and a half hours to two hours.

3.5 Data analysis – working in grounded theory mode

The data analysis methods were derived from the procedures commonly used in grounded theory analysis (Charmaz, 2006). This process is described by Charmaz (2003; 2006) and by Henning et al (2004) and the reasoning for this type of approach is that the analyst works directly from the data and remains 'close' (Merriam, 1999) enough to the participants to present their views and their position. Because the observation notes and the photographs showed up information that captured the students in real time, as closely as possible, I worked, to some extent, as an ethnographer does who conducts participatory observation (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983). Although I was not studying a 'culture' of student 'excursioning', I did observe them and picked up patterns and groupings that presented their experience.

Hence I began the analytical work with an "open-ended" and "open-minded" understanding of the setting, and therefore it involved a systematic process of letting the data guide me as a novice researcher, rather than guiding the data by preset assumptions, (Charmaz, 2006: 93-95) as much as possible. A deeper understanding of the setting meant that as a researcher I had to see the world as the participants do,

from the 'inside', in order to understand their views or at least to interpret their actions. Thus, when I analysed the data, I kept in mind that I should try and 'see' their actions as closely as possible from their positioning and their 'footing' (Ribiero, 2006).

For analysis, I also had to ensure that I had collected sufficient quality data, having utilised the techniques of participant observation, photographs of the participants, questionnaires and dyad interviews. These qualitative data sources were all analysed inductively, following (broadly) the process suggested by Strauss and Corbin (1999) in their model of grounded theory analysis. The method is summarised as a type of content analysis by Henning et al (2004:127). This process requires a researcher to remain close to the data and to code units of meaning (which are first segmented to form such semantic units) descriptively and in a second level of analysis to collapse these into categories that conceptualize the codes more abstractly. In grounded theory these processes are known as 'open coding' and 'axial coding' – meaning that the researcher groups the codes around a central 'axis' (a category of meaning). Subsequent to this stage of analysis follows the task, which is generally known as 'thematising' (Merriam, 1998) – grouping the categories with a central theme, which can, coherently – link to other themes in a pattern. This I regarded as a measure to ensure reliability in the analysis process (see figure 3.1).

PHASE 1 OF DATA COLLECTION PROCESS

Observation

- Primary observation and field note taking of 227 participants
- Observed students activities at the educational field excursion
- Made notes of students utterances
- Collected demographic information:
  → *Language Preferences*
  → *Cultural & Social backgrounds*
  → *Religious Background*

Photographs

- Took photographs - over the three days during the excursion.
- Photographs – evidence of what took place at the excursion

Questionnaires

Data analysis process

- Worked inductively with data.
- Analysed the individual utterances made by participants
- Made connections between the utterances
- Coded segments of meaning as I interpreted the utterances of the participants
- Assigned them into conceptual categories
- From categories – grouped those that fitted together – linked them thematically
- Worked with each subset, combined their codes, categories and themes

Linking data to questionnaires

- Observation of participants at the education field excursion had to be accurate
- Observations – were conceptually linked to the data from the questionnaires
- These included:
  - Daily activities of participants (including the spontaneously occurring interactions)
  - Interactions during mealtimes and free time
  - Student's behaviour
  - Where the students were positioned in relationship to one another, as well as their conversational partners

Figure 3.1:   The process of data analysis – Phase 1

To begin with, I had to ensure the data was of good quality for optimal analysis. It had to have sufficient background data on all the participants to provide demographic

context. This included the participant's religious, cultural or socio-economic circumstances and their preferred language use. I also had to ensure that I observed the flow of the student's interactions and behaviour at the educational field excursion accurately, so that my observation could be conceptually linked to the data from the questionnaires. Some aspects that were pertinent in this respect were the nature of the daily activities including the spontaneously occurring interactions during mealtimes and free time, the students' behaviour and reactions during the curriculum activities, what was said (or not) in their conversations and where the students were positioned in relation to one another. Their social and physical proximity and their conversational partners were noted in 'rich descriptions' (Henning et al, 2004). I worked inductively with the data, meaning that I coded segments of meaning as I had interpreted them individually, working with each subset of data individually first and then combining what I had found when I collated the data sets with their codes, categories and themes.

The first set of data I worked with was my field notes which were collected over the three days of the field excursion. During this time, I observed the participants so that I could make copious notes, at the same time gaining a deeper understanding of the experiences as the participants conversed and completed tasks and performed activities. The cohort of 227 first year teacher education students' views, as expressed in the group activities and discussions proved to be a rich source of data. The analysis also showed that there was much coherence in the data to systematically analyse individual utterances and make connections between these and then move onto assigning conceptual categories to those that fit together before linking these thematically. The photographs I took over the three days during the excursion assisted in showing concrete details of the events that took place.

The second phase of the data that I collected took place after two and a half years – this was in the form of dyadic interviews. The processing of this data from the interviews is indicated in figure 3.2 below.

```
                    ┌─────────────┐
                    │  Interviews │
                    └─────────────┘
                            ↓
┌───────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│ Dyad interviews – two and a half years later. Used │
│ a purposeful sample of six student dyads (n=12)     │
└───────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                            ↓
┌───────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│ Listened to recording of interviews               │
└───────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                            ↓
┌───────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│ Transcribed the interviews verbatim – read through │
│ transcriptions several times to obtain an overall  │
│ of impression the text                             │
└───────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                            ↓
┌───────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│ Looked for units of meaning that could stand on    │
│ their own – taken from utterances                  │
└───────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                            ↓
┌───────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│ Created several codes – then clustered them into   │
│ smaller units                                      │
└───────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                            ↓
┌───────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│ Placed smaller units into emerging categories –    │
│ developed rules of inclusion                       │
└───────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                            ↓
┌───────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│ Provisional categories – that were further refined │
│ by finding the links between the provisional       │
│ categories                                         │
└───────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                            ↓
┌───────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│ Formulated sub-categories in my findings – then    │
│ linked themes that were related to each other      │
└───────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                            ↓
┌───────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│ Compared and contracted various themes - referred  │
│ to my research questions. Applied the same         │
│ procedure to all the transcripts                   │
└───────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
```

PHASE 2 OF DATA COLLECTION PROCESS

Figure 3.2:   Data analysis process – Phase 2

The dyadic interviews were transcribed and analysed using the constant comparative method of analysis as suggested by Maykut and Morehouse (1994:126). This entailed

using methods of content analysis in a grounded theory mode of working (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994:193) which means that people's words and actions are examined and that data analysis is an ongoing inductive activity. Throughout this process, I compared and contrasted the various provisional coding categories and revised sub-categories in a continuous process of abstraction.

3.6 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations should be prioritized by any researcher during an inquiry. This is done to protect all participants involved in the study and to ensure that there is no form of exploitation resulting from their participation. Ethical clearance for the greater project was already in place but an individual ethics application for this study was submitted to the Faculty of Education Ethics Committee.

A primary consideration in this study was to conduct my research in an ethical manner. In designing the study, I had already thought through issues of ethics and ensured that both the research design and the methods associated with it met the required ethics criteria of the faculty in which I am studying. Thus, a research proposal was first submitted to the Faculty of Education Higher Degree's Committee for approval of the study. Thereafter an ethics application was submitted to the department in which my supervisor works and once I had been given clearance to proceed the ethics application served at the Faculty of Education's Ethics committee. The following principles were considered in the ethics process: (a) I needed to obtain informed consent from the potential research participants; (b) it was my responsibility as the researcher to minimise the risk of harm to participants; (c) I had to protect the anonymity and confidentiality of the potential participants (d) I had to avoid using deceptive practices and (e) give participants the right to withdraw from my research.

Once this clearance was in order I attended the educational field excursion in order to proceed with the collection of my first phase of data collection. My ethical clearance is attached in addendum A.

In order to adhere to principle of respect for the participants so that they were not coerced into participation and had access to relevant information prior to the consent (Halai, 2006), I explained the reason for my presence at the excursion and shared with the participants what my research topic was about. I then elaborated on the reasons

---

why they would be considered suitable candidates for the study, since they were first year students, and many of them were first generation students.

The second principle was dealing with voluntary consent. As the researcher, it was important to my research study that the students had a clear understanding and willingness to participate in the study, and that it was not just about signing a consent form. In order for the students to make an informed decision about participating in the research study I emphasised the possible risks and benefits to their involvement, and letting them know absolutely that they did not have to volunteer and could withdraw at any time. Once the students had verbally agreed to participate in this research study, I distributed written consent forms to each student, to ensure that they were fully informed of what they were consenting to. The consent form was written in a language that was easily understood by the students. The written consent form included information such as, prior information on key elements of my research such as purpose, procedures, time, risks, benefits, and a clause stipulating that participation is voluntary and the participants have the right to withdraw from the study, as stipulated by (Halai, 2006). The consent clearly stated that the research study was ongoing and it was made clear to the students that it was his or her right to "withdraw" or "opt out" of the study or procedure at any time, not just at the initial signing of the consent form.

On the last day of the educational field excursion, I administered a two-part questionnaire to the participants. I ensured that I first adhered to the ethical considerations required, regarding the confidentiality and respect, of the participants involved in the research study. The students were once again informed of their right to voluntarily participate in answering the questionnaire, and that if anyone decided not to participate there would be no penalty or disadvantage to the research study.

Lastly, I assured the students of their anonymity in my research study and informed them that pseudonyms or codes would be used as identifiers when the study was written up.

3.6.1 Protecting students in observation field notes and photographs of group activities

Since the students were already aware of what my research study was about, I informed them what I planned to do while they were busy with their activities at the excursion. I explained how I would go about conducting my observations as well as

taking photographs of them during their activities, since both these forms of data collection would coincide at times. I assured the students that I would not affect the natural flow of their activities neither would I disrupt their activities and/or conversations. Once students got used to my presence, it appeared as if they were not affected by me as other facilitators were also moving from group to group – I thus became part of the 'general background' in these activities. As a researcher, I made a personal commitment to protect the identities of students even when I interacted with them informally. The students also gave me permission to take photographs of them and to use these photographs in the research study.

3.6.2 Questionnaires

On the last day of the excursion, each student was asked to complete a questionnaire. In order to protect and respect the values and interests of the students, I gave a detailed explanation to the students as to the purpose of the questionnaire and how the information would be disseminated. I reminded them what the research study was about ensuring that their student or human rights were not violated. I then informed the students that answering the questionnaire was voluntary and that they had the right to decline completing it. I informed the students that only research personnel would have access to the data and identifying information of the questionnaire. Each questionnaire consisted of a cover page that included the following information; the project title, who the investigator of the project is, a section that the students would complete giving me consent to use the feedback from the questionnaire in my study.

Each participant then completed a consent form. A copy has been attached in the addendum B. The students were informed that I would provide feedback to them about the findings at a later stage. They were also invited to read the completed version of the study if they chose to.

3.6.3 Interviews

With regard to the six dyadic interviews that I conducted, the following ethical considerations were prioritised. Firstly, I explained to the students why I wanted to interview them and what I wished to find out in my research. Next, I fully explained the purpose of the dyadic interviews to the students beforehand and how the interview sessions would be conducted. I also explained to the students the types of questions that I would pose, and how the results would be used. I also informed them of the

method of anonymization and the codes that would be used when transcribing the interviews, and the extent to which their utterances would be used in my research study. As recommended by Richards and Schwartz (2002), I informed the students that pseudonyms or their initials would be used where possible, and that any other identifiable information would be changed when the interviews were transcribed. Once this was done, each student was given a written consent letter to sign giving me permission to interview him/her as well as allowing me to use a voice recorder during the interview sessions. I made sure that the students being interviewed fully understood the interviewing process and were aware of their rights before being interviewed. I then obtained their permission to proceed with the interviews. As the researcher, I tried at all times to be as neutral as possible during the interview sessions, and did not try to coerce the students into answering in a particular way (Allmark, Boote, Chambers, Clarke, McDonnell, Thompson & Tod, 2009).

3.7   Validity

Since research is targeted at producing valid and reliable information in an ethical manner (Merriam, 1998:198), in this section I endeavour to describe the steps I implemented to increase the validity and reliability of my study. In addition, I will discuss the suitability of the tools, processes and data used in my research study, so as to convince the readers that my findings are "genuinely based on critical investigation" of the data and not just on a few well-chosen examples (Silverman, 2000:176). A valid study should demonstrate what actually exists. As the researcher, who in this study is the instrument uses tools such as observation, photographs, questionnaires and dyad interviews. In doing so the researcher can measure the validity of the study through thorough investigation. In other words, I used the aforementioned methods of data collection or tools to check if the desired outcome for my research was attained, and whether my research questions were accurately answered. In this way, I can make the assertion that this research study is both valid and reliable.

Additionally validity in research is concerned with the accuracy and truthfulness of scientific findings (Le Comple & Goetz 1982: 32). Therefore, the validity to both the design and the methods of my research were very important in analysing the suitability, meaningfulness and usefulness of this research study. As the researcher, I took primary responsibility for controlling all possible factors that may have jeopardized the validity of this study. Since validity is one of the main concerns with research, Seliger

and Shohamy (1989:95) attests that, "any research can be affected by different kinds of factors which, while extraneous to the concerns of the research, can invalidate the findings". Merriam (1998: 201-205 and 207-212), identifies two main types of validity namely: Internal validity and external validity. Internal validity deals with "how the research findings match reality" (Merriam 1998:201) or refers to the validity of the measurement and depends on the "meaning of reality". Miles and Huberman (1994:278) explain that when researchers' deal with internal validity they aim to discover if the "findings of the study make sense" and if there is an "authentic portrait" of what the researcher is looking for. Merriam (1998:204) proposes six strategies for enhancing internal validity. These include member checks, collaborative research, triangulation, long-term observation, peer examination, collaborative research, and clarifying researchers' biases.

In order to enhance the internal validity of the study, I used four of the six proposed strategies by Merriam (1998:204), namely member checks, triangulation, long-term immersion in the research and participants lives and collaborative research. I used multiple methods of data collection to get different viewpoints on the issue/s I was investigating. Both my supervisors as well as a senior colleague scrutinized my analysed data, verifying my ongoing interpretations. I also checked my interpretations with participants I had interviewed. Furthermore, using a phased approach and multiple methods of data collection allowed me to study the unit of analysis from different angles thus permitting a much more nuanced view of the unit of analysis and the warrant of the assertions I make in chapters 4 and 5. (Phillips & Burbules, 2000).

Aiming for internal validity also assisted with external validity. Guba and Lincoln, (cited in Merriam, 1998:207) point out that external validity can only take place if a study is internally valid. As with internal validity, there are strategies one can employ to strengthen the external validity of a study. Merriam and Simpson (1995:103) propose three strategies: thick descriptions, multi-site designs and modal comparisons. In this study, I used the first and provided detailed descriptions of my research study's context and the process of data analysis with ample excerpts of raw data as evidence for the claims I make. I also focused on providing "rich, thick descriptions" (Merriam, 1998:211) or detailed descriptions of information. These descriptions would place the reader in a position to determine the extent to which the findings of the research fit within the context and enable a determination of the applicability of the results for other

---

(similar) settings (Merriam & Simpson, 1995:103; Merriam, 1998:211). Most importantly, I acknowledge my positionality and placement within the context of the study and in the process disclose initial assumptions, suppositions and values that may have influenced my data gathering and processing.

3.8   Reliability

Reliability is concerned with the consistency, stability and repeatability of the informant's accounts as well as trust in the investigators' ability to collect and record information accurately (Selltiz, Wrightsman & Cook, 1976:182). In qualitative studies in particular, reliability is assessed based on how dependable the reader believes the results are with the data collected.

In order to enhance the reliability of this research I employed a number of strategies. First was the careful documentation of every activity and decision I made in the process of data collection and analysis so that the reader can form a judgement of my methods (Brink, 1993). I also clearly describe the process so that the reader can follow my thinking and decision-making as I compared the data and crosschecked the codes for possible errors – I describe this process in great depth in chapter 4. I also kept alert to theoretical questions that arose as the study progressed, discussed and shared my research actions with my supervisors and a senior colleague who served as critical reviewers (Henning et al, 2004) and advisers. I include examples of the questionnaire, transcribed interviews, process of working with my data both in the text and as addenda (Brink, 1993) so that a reader or researcher can follow the progression of events in the study, and understand the rationale of the study.

3.9   Conclusion

Chapter 3 discussed the research design of the inquiry. In this generic qualitative study, the use of grounded theory analysis as a heuristic tool in the planning was described in this chapter. This chapter also discussed the research methodology, including the sample, data collection instruments as well as strategies used to ensure the ethical standards, reliability and validity of the study. Chapter four will present a description of the process from sourcing the 'raw' data and illustrate using examples how the analysis and collation of the data was done.

CHAPTER 4:
DATA ANALYSIS

4.1   Introduction

In this chapter, I describe the process of data collection and procedures for data analysis. I discuss the procedures used in undertaking the research, recording the data in formats for working with them and outline the methods for analysis. The chapter is divided into a number of sections, with the first section focusing on the characteristics of the participants in the study drawn from an analysis of the open-ended biographical questionnaire data, which gives a 'picture' of the first year students. Thereafter, I show how I worked with the field notes, photographs, questionnaires and transcriptions. I then show the levels of coding that were collapsed into categories and later abstracted into themes that are presented as the results of the investigation.

This study investigated how an educational field excursion supports first year student teachers with their transition from school to university by addressing the relations between their academic, social and professional learning. The data analysis was conducted with this broad aim in mind. I was particularly interested in understanding who the first year students are, what specific social challenges they encounter in their transition from secondary school to university, and how the field excursion assisted them in their social and academic integration. Furthermore, I wished to investigate if and how social relationships that may have been formed at the excursion have endured over two and a half years in the university context.

4.2   Organising data for analysis

As indicated in chapter 3, data were generated in two phases. The data for this research study was stored, categorised and saved in the following way for preparation for data analysis. The questionnaire was divided into two sections with Section A, aimed at the background of the students. These open-ended, biographically focused questions enabled me to gather background information on students' home languages, their family life, and self-reported socio-economic status and living circumstances. In the first phase of data collection at the Achterbergh educational field excursion, I collected data in the form of participant observations and field notes and photographs.

On the last day of the excursion (as mentioned in Chapter 3), students completed Section A of the questionnaire. Thereafter, once they had returned from the excursion, students completed Section B of the questionnaire, in which a number of items were related to social integration. Phase 2 consisted of data collected through semi-structured interviews two and a half years after the educational field excursion had taken place. I conducted dyadic interviews with three pairs of Foundation phase students and three pairs of Intermediate phase students.

4.2.1   Section A - General biographical information of participants

Of the 227 students in the sample from Phase 1, 105 were enrolled in the foundation phase and 122 in the intermediate phase programmes on the Soweto campus. The table below indicates the gender distribution of the students.

Table 4.1:   Gender distribution of participants

Foundation Phase students		Intermediate Phase students	
Males	15	Males	34
Females	90	Females	88
Total	105	Total	122

The majority of the participants in this study were 18 years of age or older, with many between the ages of 19 to 22, with some even older students as displayed in table 4.2. The average age in this sample is typical of most first year students at university, with some entering university studies straight after school and a percentage of older students, who comprise of 36 students from both groups, who have taken a break for either a year or two before they decided to start their studies at university.

Table 4.2:   Age distribution of participants

Foundation Phase		Intermediate Phase	
Age group of students (years)	No of students	Age group of students (years)	No of students
18	19	18	30
19 – 20	48	19 – 20	61
21 – 22	20	21 – 22	16
23 – 24	5	23 – 24	7
25 – 26	4	25 – 26	1
27 – 28	4	27 – 28	2
29 – 42	5	29 – 45	5

In terms of ethnic backgrounds, students' placed themselves in the following categories: White, Coloured, Indian and African (referring to Black African) which is captured in Table 4.3. From the data, 203 of the pre-service teacher education students are Black students, whereas Coloured, White and Indian students collectively only comprise 24 students. In turn, the makeup of the ethnic groups affects the language diversity amongst the students as seen in Graph 2. This data provides a 'picture' of the demographic of first year students and was a possible factor influencing students (in)ability to form social connections with peers, especially if students were ethnically, racially and/or culturally in the minority.

Table 4.3:   Ethnicity of participants

Ethnicity of students	Number of students	Percentages	Ethnicity of students	Number of students	Percentages
Black[8]	94	89.52%	Black	109	89.34%
Coloured	2	1.90%	Coloured	10	8.20%
White	6	5.71%	White	2	1.64%
Indian	3	2.86%	Indian	1	0.82%
Total	*105*		*Total*	*122*	

---

[8] Of the 94 Black African Foundation phase students, one student is an international student from Malawi.

Even though collectively there are 203 pre-service first year students who classify themselves as Black African students, there are differences with respect to language and thus also with respect to cultural grouping. I was able to identify 14 different home languages with IsiZulu as the language that is most commonly spoken at home; it is then likely also a dominant language among students on campus. Even though English is the medium of instruction at university, only 16 students in both the Foundation and Intermediate phase groups identified themselves as English home language users.

Graph 4.1:   Language distribution of pre-service education students
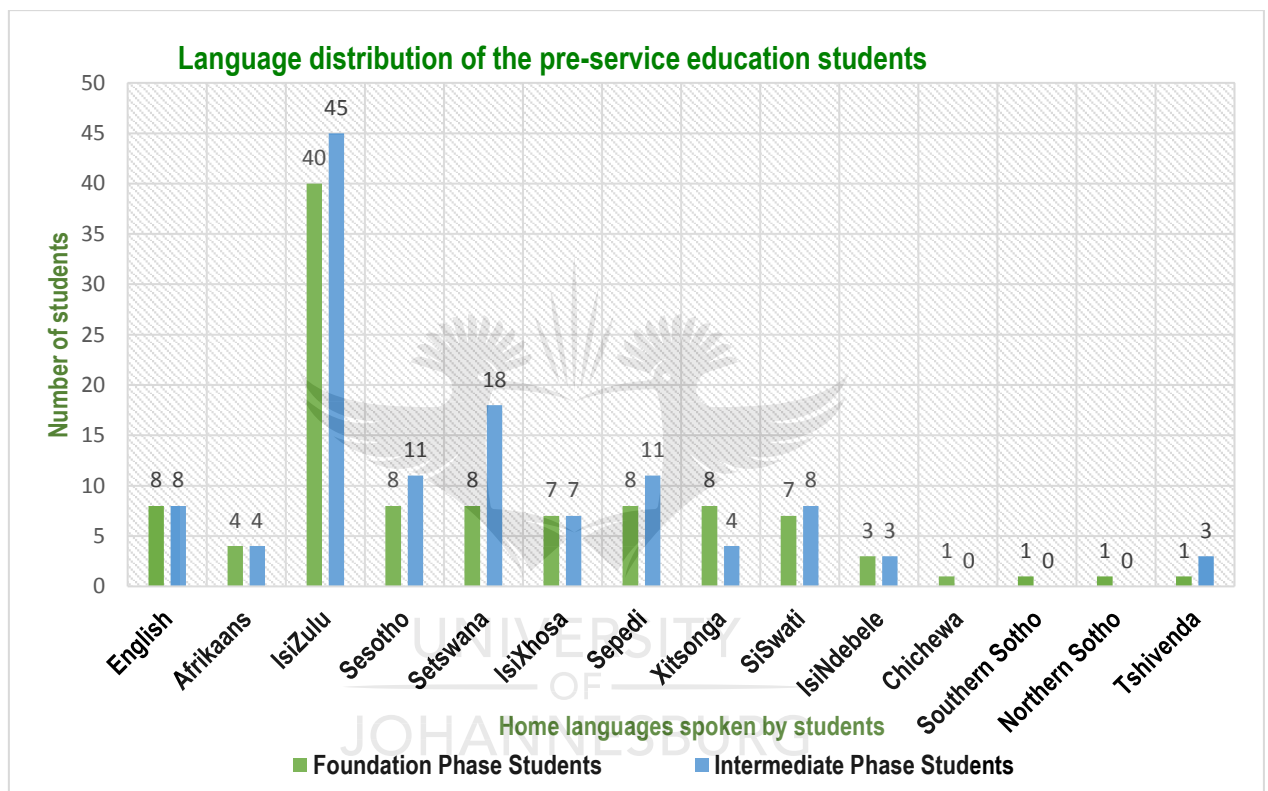
4.2.2   Observation and field notes

I observed students over a period of three days during both their curriculum-directed activities and their informal leisure time at the excursion. I first provide a brief description of the physical environment of the campsite, accompanied by a few photographs, to provide context for the analysis of my observational field notes for the reader.

- The grounds are lush and green, in a type of natural valley, with a small stream at the bottom end.

- There are two swimming pools for relaxation once students have completed their activities for the day – one outside pool near the dining halls and a heated pool for night use.
- Student accommodation is in dormitories that accommodate between 6 – 8 students with shared bathrooms for each section of dormitories. Male and females had dormitories in separate sections of the facility.
- The property is well maintained, with lots of open grass and trees and is able to comfortably accommodate up to 180 students at a time. The campsite was conducive to lots of group activities and team building exercises.
- There are three conference rooms with up-to-date audio-visual aids.

Well maintained, luscious camp site	*Hilltops that surround the camp site*
Entrance to the dining hall and one section of the dormitory	*Open field where two legged fun race took place*
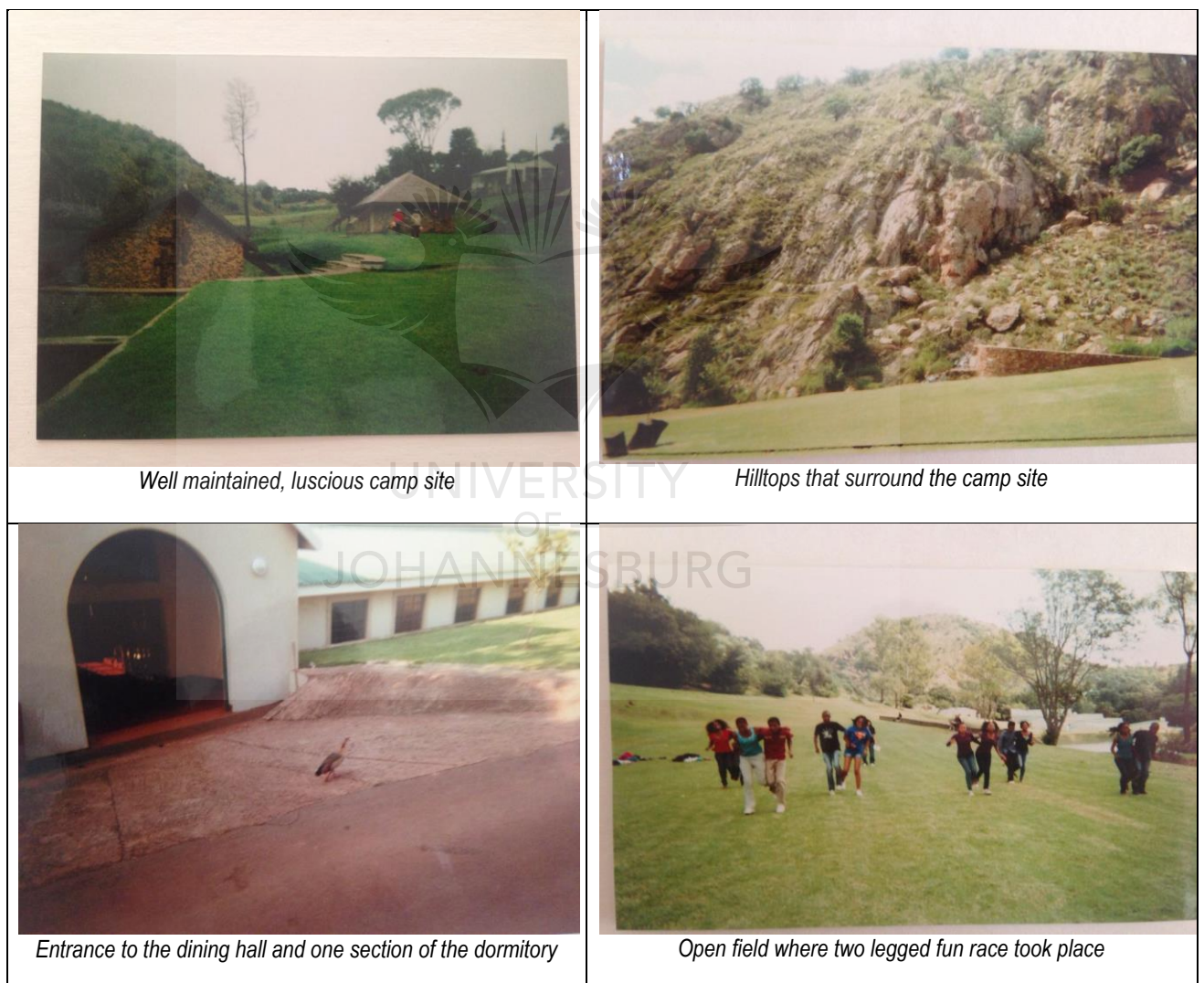
Figure 4.1:   Photographs of Achterbergh excursion campsite

4.2.3 Making sense of observations of student interactions during curriculum activities

Students were grouped for activities in smaller working groups of between 10 and 12. I obtained the list of the groups before the educational field excursion, which made it possible for me to assign an identifying code to each group beforehand to aid my notetaking as I moved between the groups. The following list of curriculum activities were scheduled for the three days, and used either small group or open session format over the three days:

- Drumming with Drum Café [9]
- Social justice and care: Food banquet game[10]
- A pedagogy of play - The HIV and AIDS Game[11]
- Design of musical instruments to be used in a play performance
- Fashioning a clay symbol as a metaphor for teaching

Groups were able to work on their activities without any interruptions or disturbances from the other groups or from me because the campground was big enough for the groups to be comfortably spread-out and for me to observe from an unobtrusive distance. In my observations, I noted the way in which the students interacted with each other, made notes on whether there were limitations that could affect their communication and completion of their group tasks; I observed whom the students socialised with, both in their groups as well as during their free time. As far as possible, I jotted down conversations verbatim amongst the students, and made particular note of when the group members seemed to be experiencing challenges. I watched the body language of the students closely and took note of the students' non-verbal expressions - during the group activities the silence of some group members 'spoke volumes' – I could infer a number of reasons for their silence and/or non-participation through the observations over time.

---

[9] Warren Lieberman started the Drum Café in Johannesburg in 1996. Moved by the experience of communal drumming he had a small group of friends exchange ideas and share in the unique experience of interactive drumming. The Drum Café' is now synonymous with interactive drumming and team building events where everyone beats along together.

[10] Food banquet game – The game is simulated as a formal banquet. A powerful activity designed to make the students think about the plight of the poor and about their own position at this 'banquet'. This game provides a platform for discussion around hunger, the plight of the poor and the need to share. The game also allows for discussion on issues of social justice (see Petersen, 2014).

[11] The HIV AIDS Game - In South Africa, people suffer from 'AIDS fatigue': the a-b-c of AIDS awareness, namely abstain, be faithful, condomise, is not heard anymore. This is a powerful game to show how everyone is at risk (see Petersen, de Beer & Dunbar-Krige, 2012).

At the end of each day, I compiled my field notes and typed them up, using as place markers, the date of the excursion, the activity students were engaged in, the time, etc. In the process, I expanded my raw observation notes into a narrative and elaborated on my initial observations. In the margins of my typed notes, I also wrote down questions that needed further consideration or that I could follow-up on during the interviews. Next, I formatted my observation notes into formal observation sheets (refer to Fig 4.2) that would serve as a data source for this study. Below is an extract of my field notes taken during one of the icebreaker activities at the commencement of the educational field excursion.

<table>
<tr><td colspan="2">Observation sheet:

Research Study: Investigating the role of an educational field excursion in assisting pre-service teachers in developing social relationships with peers

Activity: Our EGG – straordinary Earth</td></tr>
<tr><td>Day: 1
Time: 10h30 – 11h25</td><td>Date: 21 March 2014
Place: Achterbergh camp</td></tr>
<tr><td>What the students did - Activity</td><td>What I observed</td></tr>
<tr><td>Students were divided into their service learning groups[12]. Each group was given an envelope with various items in the envelope such as balloons, strings and elastic bands. Students were only allowed to use what they found in their respective envelopes to build a gadget that would prevent an egg from breaking, when dropped from a height of approximately 2 metres. No specifications or instructions other than this was provided to the students. In order for the activity to be successful teamwork and quick thinking was needed.</td><td>It was the first activity for the day as a result there was an enormous amount of excitement and quite a bit of noise amongst the students. Some students were so enthusiastic that they overpowered the quieter students who then just followed their lead during the activity. There was lots of teamwork and eagerness while building a unique a gadget during this activity. The students were very outspoken and uninhibited during the discussions. The students were generally very responsive to any questions asked by other students. They were also interactive during the reflection of the activity. Some students were quiet and seemed very self-conscious during the reflection session.

At first glance – students seemed to be sitting with friends and sat grouped according particular race groups. Males sat together in groups. I also observed that the Foundation Phase student teachers comprised mainly of female students.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Reflection: Reflection took place once the testing of the activity was completed
Feedback from the groups
• To start the respective groups had great plans but had to change their plans because of the type of resources that they needed.</td></tr>
</table>

---

[12] Service Learning groups – This course forms part of the curriculum course, Teaching Studies 1A. The Department of Childhood Education has a Service Learning component and students are already divided into groups before they come to the camp

- They mentioned that they had to make the best of what materials they had been given.
- The result is that some groups succeeded in building a contraption that protected their eggs when the eggs were dropped.
- Students blamed each other because the activity was either not completed in the designated time or the egg was not well protected and broke.

Feedback from the students – Relating the activity to protection of a child as a teacher
- One does not need extraordinary things to protect a child
- It takes a community to protect a child
- Protecting something or someone - especially a child is not easy
- Example: The egg was compared to a child - that is fragile and can break easily
- Therefore in order to protect the well–being of a child a sturdy or solid foundation is needed
- Students also realized that it takes many layers in various forms to protect a child
- Therefore as a teacher, it is imperative to be creative, especially when resources are limited. In other words make lessons work by using recyclable materials in order to convey a message to children and to obtain the required results

Discussion: Dr Nadine Petersen & Dr Kakoma Luneta

Dr Luneta Kakoma – Discussed the importance of being creative without wasting food (summarised ideas)
- When working at a school in a disadvantaged community the teacher must be careful when it comes to the examples are used in an experiment
- For example, one egg can feed a few starving children, so using an egg may not be an ideal example as it may be seen as a waste of food. It is important to consider resources especially in disadvantaged communities or in fact any community where there is no wastage of food that can sustain life
- It is imperative for teachers to think sensibly when being creative

Dr Nadine Petersen – Briefly discussed the Faculty of Conceptual Framework (summarised ideas)
- It is the duty of the teacher to be a caring, accountable, and to be a critical thinker. It will thus take the next four years to teach students to learn strategies that will assist them in becoming caring, accountable and critical thinking teachers.
- Dr Petersen asked the students to write down three words that they think are characteristic of a good teacher
- Students were given 5 minutes to discuss this with the person sitting next to them
- The students were made aware that they it is important to be considerate of the learning needs and learning barriers/problems of the learners
- It is important for a teacher to know the learners in the classroom
- As a teacher: One must set a good example – be motivational, honest and inspiring

Figure 4.2:   An extract from the field notes on the EGG-straordinary earth

In the analysis process, I started by reading through the field notes and my transcriptions of these carefully to ensure that I did not omit anything important. Thereafter, I read the field notes a number of times to get an overall understanding of the general trend in my observations – these were jotted down on a separate sheet. Then I used a form of content analysis to cluster similar items. For instance, where I had noted a clear indication of interaction amongst the students and/or socialisation during the activities - I placed these into one category, which I named "Interactive and social activities". This also included non-verbal responses of the students. Another

category included the challenges that I noticed the groups were experiencing during their interactions (or non-interactions) with each other.

4.2.4 Photographs as signifiers of interaction amongst the students at the field excursion

The photographs are not specifically treated as data to be analysed in Chapter 4, but they provide context for my observational notes. I was able to capture many unobserved details of the events that took place over the excursion using photographs. It also made it easier for me to place the activities in context and provided more nuanced detail about the activities and student interactions. The photographs were thus very useful in capturing the details of interactions that I may have missed in my observations – as I analysed my observational notes I compared this with the photographs to see if there was other evidence for the conclusions I had drawn. The photographs are also used as an accompaniment to the discussions I provide of the themes in chapter 5.

4.2.5 Questionnaires – searching for indicators of students social interaction

In this section, I focus on the responses that I received from section B of the questionnaires, which consisted of thirteen closed and open-ended questions about (1) the educational field excursion and (2) the student's experiences while developing friendships when they first started at university.

Once I received all the questionnaires, I captured the responses in two separate tabs on an EXCEL spreadsheet. The tabs allowed me to differentiate between the Foundation and Intermediate phase student groups. The questionnaires consisted of both closed questions requiring mainly responses such as "yes or no", or that the students "select an option" type answer and open-ended questions requiring more elaboration from students. I first provide a synopsis of the responses to closed questions 1, 2, 3 and 10, which enabled an understanding of the following four issues:

- Whether students reported having friends (or not) before entering university
- If students reported struggling to develop friendships during the first two weeks of university
- What type of challenges students report experiencing before they attended the educational field excursion and,

- What value the educational field excursion played with regard to the forging of friendships amongst the students.

Tables 4.4 and 4.5 capture the number of student responses for each of the closed questions in each student group.

Table 4.4:   Responses to closed ended questions in Section B (1)

Section B: Questionnaire					
Responses to closed ended questions		**Foundation Phase** 105 students		**Intermediate Phase** 122 students	
No	**Question**	**Yes**	**No**	**Yes**	**No**
1	Did you know anybody in your class/course when you started at the university?	21	84	24	98
2	Did you know anybody at the university when you started?	35	70	67	55
3	Were you scared that you would not already have any friends when you first came to university?	26	79	51	71
10	Did the field excursion help you develop new social relationships with people that you would not normally mix with e.g. different cultures, race and language?	98	7	116	6

In both the Foundation Phase and Intermediate Phase groups, the data shows that less than 20% of the students knew other students for the course in which they were enrolled. On the other hand, many more students in both groups report knowing 'other' students when they started at university. This is particularly true for the Intermediate Phase students, where 67 of the 122 students (or 55%) indicate that they knew someone at university when they started. Approximately 25% of the Foundation Phase students reported that they felt scared since they did not have friends at the university before they started, whereas in the Intermediate Phase almost double the amount of students showed concern or were fearful over the same issue. In the Foundation Phase group, 98 students (93%) reported that the educational field excursion assisted them in forging new social relationships in comparison with 116 (95%) of the Intermediate Phase students. Here, both groups were more or less the same as only about 6% of the students indicated that they found it challenging to forge new social relationships with other students at the excursion.

Table 4.5:   Responses to closed ended questions in Section B (2)

Section B: Questionnaire						
Responses to closed ended question		**Foundation Phase** 105 students			**Intermediate Phase** 122 students	
No	**Question**	A little scared at first	Yes	No	A little scared at first	Yes	No
5	Were you scared that you would find it difficult to make friends with other students when you came to university?	14	24	67	77	27	18

In the Foundation Phase group, 14 students indicated that they were a little afraid that they would not find it easy to make friends on first entering university. From the Intermediate Phase group, 77 students divulged that they were a bit scared at having to make friends at the beginning of their studies.

Table 4.6:   Activities that encouraged the formation of friendship

Section B: Question 12			
Which of the following activities helped you make friends more easily at university? (Only choose the one that helped the most)		**Foundation Phase** 105 students	**Intermediate Phase** 122 students
1	Education excursion	56	83
2	Orientation[13]	10	8
3	Group work (at the excursion)	33	24
4	Tutorial classes	6	7
Did you find making friends at the excursion difficult or easy? (Question 8)			
Difficult		17	7
Easy		88	115

Table 4.6 indicates the activities that students report assisted them in making friends. From the data, it is clear that the excursion stands out as an important way of promoting social interaction amongst the students. The reason friendships may have developed

---

[13] Orientation is held to welcome all its new first year undergraduate students. It is an informative seminar programme for students which includes academic orientation to the Faculty, Department and the specific programmes for which students have been accepted. The seminar provides students with the opportunity to meet their lecturers receive their timetables and get to know fellow students and the campus on which they will be studying. During orientation, students are also introduced to a wide range of academic development and support services the university offers.

more easily could be attributed to the more relaxed environment, and the social interaction and fun yet educative elements underlying the majority of the activities (such as the HIV and AIDS simulation game), designing and creating a musical instruments, the musical performances and the food banquet activity. Within this context, it is both the excursion environment itself as well as the suite of curriculum activities of the excursion, which seemed to play a role.

The second question in table 4.6 captures student responses to question 8, which was aimed at understanding from the student's perspectives whether or not the excursion was useful for their social integration. Less than 20 students in both phases found developing friendships at the educational field excursion challenging. This may have been because they were more reserved or because of language or other factors.

Section B – analysis of open-ended questions in section B of questionnaires

Once the student responses had been captured on the EXCEL spreadsheet, I was in a position to begin working with the data. I started by carefully comparing the captured responses from the questionnaires to what was on the spreadsheet, enlisting the assistance of a trusted student assistant in the process to ensure that I had not omitted or mistyped any information in the transferal. I used an adapted three-step process of analyzing the data for content because the student responses to each of the questions were short and concise. In this process, I read the responses a number of times and allocated provisional codes representative of the content of each of them in pencil before finalizing. The abbreviated codes I assigned next to each response (e.g. 'akp' – already knew people) sum up the content of the response. Figure 4.3 provides an example of how I looked at the students' responses to the question/s and clustered similar utterances from different students under a common abbreviated code. This was done for all the student responses to all of questions 4, 7,9,10 and 13. Thereafter, these results were captured on the EXCEL spreadsheet so that I could have an amalgamated abbreviated coding scheme for all student responses to Questions 4, 7,9,10 and 13. In the screenshot labeled Figure 4.3, I provide an extract from the Excel spreadsheet with the corresponding codes. I also captured the number of students who responded in a similar fashion to the same questions in Table 4.7 so that I could get an overall understanding of the general trends in the data.

Figure 4.3:   Extract of student responses to the open-ended questions

In both the Foundation and Intermediate Phase groups over 40% of the students were confident that they would easily make friends, whether or not they already knew people at university. Fourteen students jointly from the Foundation and Intermediate Phase groups indicated that they did not want to make friends. Some students in both phases felt that they would adapt easily to their new environment because they already had friends at university. In other words, they had a slight advantage of starting university with a support system of friends.

Table 4.7:   Capturing student anxiety/ fear at the beginning of university studies

Q4 - WERE YOU SCARED THAT YOU WOULD NOT ALREADY HAVE ANY FRIENDS WHEN YOU FIRST CAME TO UNIVERSITY? WHY WOULD YOU SAY SO?			
Responses from some of the students	**Codes**	**Frequency**	
		Foundation Phase	**Intermediate Phase**
Already knew people	**akp**	26	11
Did not know people	**dnkp**	4	12
Anxious because they knew no-one	**abkn**	27	51
Would easily make new friends	**wemnf**	40	42
Did not want to make friends	**dnwf**	8	6
Total		**105**	**122**

Using the data in Table 4.7, I provide an example with raw text from the students extract themselves to show how I moved from the student responses to the development of the codes to identify the data. For example the first four responses in figure 4.4 dealt with the fact that the students 'already knew people' at university and were therefore not scared that they would not have friends when they started university (also shown in Graph 4.2). Hence the code used for the student's responses "akp**'.**

Responses from some of the students	Code to identify group data
• It was usually easy to make friends I knew a few people. (IP) • I always knew that some of my high school friend are also accepted by the university even if they registered for different courses I'll spend some time with them. (IP) • I knew quite a few people that were at the university already. (IP) • No because I came to university with my high school friends. (FP)	*Already knew people - akp*
• Because I had to learn to adapt to the university and I would have find that difficult if I didn't have any peers. (IP) • I am incredibly shy and struggle to speak to people I don't know. (IP) • Because I am afraid of people. Especial those who are new from me. I think that they are better than me. (IP) • I have poor background and thought no one will want to be my friend. (FP)	*Did not know people – dknp*
• Because I had to learn to adapt to the university and I would have find that difficult if I didn't have any peers. (IP) • I am incredibly shy and struggle to speak to people I don't know. (IP) • Because I am afraid of people. Especial those who are new from me. I think that they are better than me. (IP)	*Anxious because they knew nobody - abkn*

- I have poor background and thought no one will want to be my friend. (FP)

- I have good relationship when I have to work with people or making friends. I am very friendly hence I do not find any difficulties in making friends. (IP)
- It is because of my personality. Since I am one of those kind person who like socialising I knew that I would not have a problem to make friends. (IP)
- I am a very social person who loves people and laughing, so I was not worried about friends. The first person you talk to is likely to be a friend. (IP)
- I always manage to make friends because I'm very loud and often people find easy to chat with me simply because I'm friendly. (FP)
- Because I know that I can make friends easily that's why I got friends on my 1st day. It's all about self-confidence. (FP)

Would easily make friends – wemnf

- Because I didn't want to have friends I was thinking that friends will disrupt me. (FP)
- I did not come here to make friends, I came to learn. I always been surrounded by friends most of my life so I thought it would be really a good thing to be alone for once. (FP)
- Because when I first came to varsity friends were the last thing on my mind. (IP)
- I didn't really want friends. (FP)

Did not want to make friends – dnwf

Figure 4.4:   Responses showing if students were scared when they started at university

Graph 4.2:   Student responses to Question 4

The information in Table 4.8 and the responses from the students below (fig 4.5) clearly show that the university orientation programme plays a vital role in students becoming

acquainted with one another. This is especially so in terms of students getting to know their classmates - these are the people that they need to connect with and with whom they will need to form support groups. A few students report making friends during their tutorial sessions – there are 15 students in both the Foundation and Intermediate Phase who indicate this in the responses. The students in the Intermediate Phase also cite their group work as also an ideal way in which to make friends. From Table 4.8 and the responses received from the students as cited below, it is clear that both the orientation and the excursion seem to be the main catalysts for peer socialization according to the students. They both take place in the first few weeks of students coming to university so its timing is the key factor in getting students to fit into their new environment as well as to interact or socialise with new people.

Table 4.8:   Student responses – making friends at university

Q7 - DESCRIBE IN A FEW SENTENCES HOW YOU MADE FRIENDS			
Responses from some of the students	**Codes**	**Frequency**	
		Foundation Phase	**Intermediate Phase**
Made friends during orientation	**mfdo**	23	23
Interacted with students on campus	**iwsoc**	26	25
Met new friends at the excursion	**mnfae**	3	3
Made friends during group work	**mfdgw**	6	17
Made friends at resident accommodation	**mfara**	8	2
Introduced to classmates	**itc**	14	37
Interacted during tutorials	**idt**	4	11
Recognised old friends on campus	**rofoc**	21	4
Total		**105**	**122**

I used the data received in Table 4.8 to provide an example with raw text from the students extracts where they described how they made friends at university. I used the student's responses in developing codes to identify the data. For example, the first four responses in figure 4.5 dealt with the responses on how students made friends during orientation. Hence the code used for the student's responses 'mfdo'**.**

Responses from some of the students

- I only made friends at the excursion when I had to spend the weekend with them (FP Student).
- The excursion made it easy for me even though I met some friends at the orientation (FP Student).
- At the excursion, they mixed us and so we made friends easily (IP Student).
- Because people stayed in my same rooms at the excursion it was easy to make friends (IP Student).

Code to identify group data Met new friends at the excursion - **mnfae**

Figure 4.5:   Excerpt - responses showing how the students made friends at university

As indicated in table 4.9 and from the responses received from the Foundation and the Intermediate Phase students, as to whether they found making friends at the field excursion difficult or easy I was able to infer the following:

- It is evident that the educational field excursion served as good platform for them to forge friendships with others in their group. The majority of the students that is, 53 Foundation Phase students and 51 Intermediate Phase students replied that at the excursion students were friendly and easy to communicate with in general. In other words, they found it easy to make friends at the excursion.

- Others students responded that the friendly behaviour amongst the students assisted them during group activities and this brought about camaraderie throughout the three days at the excursion.

- Some of the students (28 IP students and 6 FP students) found that bonding with their roommates after a very bustling day more pleasing having to interact with bigger groups of students.

- There was a small percentage of students who struggled to make friends at the excursion. Almost 6% of the students in both the Foundation and Intermediate Phase did not report adapting well to the new environment they were placed in, which was the excursion. From my observations during the excursion I noticed that some students who were naturally shy and/or introverts and/or subdued were somewhat overwhelmed by the size of the group and the more relaxed tone of the excursion, and the noise during group activities, dinner and other excursion activities which expected lots of interaction. Such students tend to find it difficult to blend in and say very little during group activities.

Table 4.9:   Ease or difficulty of making friends

Q9 - DID YOU FIND MAKING FRIENDS AT THE FIELD EXCURSION DIFFICULT OR EASY? PLEASE EXPLAIN.			
Responses from some of the students	**Codes**	**Frequency**	
		Foundation Phase	**Intermediate Phase**
People were friendly and communicative	**pwfac**	53	51
People were helpful during group activities	**phdga**	4	10
Were able to socialise freely at excursion	**wasfae**	29	23
Enjoyed bonding with roommates at excursion	**ebwrae**	6	28
Felt uneasy and shy when interacting with other people	**fuswiwo**	13	10
Total		**105**	**122**

I used the data received in Table 4.9 to provide another example of grouping the data – drawing on with content from the students extracts about making friends at university. For example, the first four responses in figure 4.6 are responses as to the type of interactions that the students experienced while at the excursion. From the student's responses, I derived the code 'pwfac', which indicates that the grouped responses were about friendliness and communication at the excursion.

Responses from some of the students	**Code to identify group data**
• Everyone was friendly and helpful so they were easy to get along with, they are so loving and responsible (IP Student). • Students are easy to communicate with and seeing a smile in a person's face make it very easy for me to approach that person (IP Student). • We were mixed with other students and I met more people from KZN that I know so it was easy (FP Student). • No one was judging and we all became friends quick (FP Student).	People were friendly and communicative - **pwfac**
• Everyone is forced to talk to everyone and ask for someone else's comment as we work in groups and share tables (FP Student). • If it wasn't for the group activities that we had to participate in, I wasn't going to talk to anyone (FP Student). • It was easy and not that difficult because what helped me the most was when they gave us group work and other activities so that's when I made friends with my group super 8 it was great (IP Student). • We were able to talk and make jokes, I was able to know everyone because we were helping each other (IP Student).	People were helpful during group activities - **phdga**

- Due to the relaxed environment at the excursion people were happier and friendlier with each other (IP Student).
- Because I interacted freely with the people by sitting with them around the fire and swimming pool (IP Student).
- We didn't care about the ages but had fun while we learn (FP Student).
- Everyone was laid back and relaxed (FP Student).

Were able to socialised freely at excursion - **wasfae**

- I shared the room with people from my group mostly and the activities we did were very engaging (FP Student).
- The time we had before sleeping made us connect with each other because we shared very personal information (FP Student).
- Because we slept in one room, so we started sharing our difficulties in our subjects, problem at home especial on finance. So you end up noticing that you are not alone. When we went for breakfast, lunch and supper we work as a team, again when we practiced for dancing (IP Student).
- Because we were having fun altogether especially with my roommates. Taking pictures together (IP Student).

Enjoyed bonding with roommates at excursion - **ebwrae**

- There were people who were narrow minded and a lot of people paid attention to gender looks and status (IP Student).
- People would look at your physical appearance before talking to you. They judge the external appearance (IP Student).
- Because people who stayed in my room were shy like me, we didn't talk to each other (FP Student).
- I found them very rude and had the mind set of just sitting with the people from their group or their home friends and gossip about and gossiped about who knows what

Felt uneasy and shy when interacting with other people - **fuswiwo**

Figure 4.6: Responses from students regarding the development of friendships

The responses received from the students below as shown in fig 4.7 and the responses indicated in the table 4.10 shows that the students knew very little about other cultures and races before the excursion. For about 51% of the Foundation Phase students and 33% of the Intermediate Phase students, the field excursion was a way to learn more about others. Placing students into working groups before excursion compelled students to mix with a diverse set of people, in other words, students were separated from habitual groupings along the lines of race, language and gender and were thus taken out of their comfort zones. As a result, 38 Foundation Phase students and 69 Intermediate Phase students responded that socializing with diverse students encouraged the development of new friendships that they did not expect. What emerged clearly from the data was that some students' reported learning more about the values and beliefs of other cultures.

Table 4.10:   The role of the excursion in student interaction

Q10 - DID THE FIELD EXCURSION HELP YOU DEVELOP NEW SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS WITH PEOPLE THAT YOU WOULD NOT NORMALLY MIX WITH E.G. DIFFERENT CULTURES, RACE AND LANGUAGE? PLEASE EXPLAIN…			
Units of meaning	**Codes**	**Frequency**	
		Foundation Phase	**Intermediate Phase**
Learnt about other races and cultures at the excursion	**laorc**	54	40
Developed new friends with diverse students	**dnfwds**	19	36
Excursion encouraged socialising with diverse students	**eeswds**	19	33
Shared information about their cultures and values	**siacv**	13	13
Total		**105**	**122**

Using the data in Table 4.10, I supply an example with text from the students excerpts themselves to show how I moved from the student answers to the development of the codes. For example, the first four responses in figure 4.7 are brief descriptions from the students explaining if the excursion helped with the development of new social relationships with people that they would not normally mix with. The student's responses were related more to the fact that they learnt about other races and cultures at the excursion. The pie Graph 4.3, also illustrates this information clearly. Hence the code 'laorc'.

Responses from some of the students	Code to identify group data
• I had to communicate with Indians and coloureds and we became friends after noticing that we are not that our backgrounds are not that much different from each other (FP students). • Listening to other people talk about their cultures and experiences made me reflect (FP students). • I learnt a lot about other races and cultures. I learnt their values and beliefs as well as their dances (IP students). • In the education excursion, I saw the new culture that I did not know (IP students).	Learnt about other races and cultures at the excursion - **laorc**
• When we played the game, I ended up talking with different people of different race and we ended up being friends (FP students). • Coming from Soweto, you are only exposed to blacks then here I got to share bunkbed with Indian. Wow, that was super nice (FP students). • I made new friends from different cultures, races and languages meeting at our dining table (IP students). • All my friends at campus were black people but at excursion, I found new white, Indian and coloured friends, which is exciting (IP students).	Developed new friends with diverse students - **dnfwds**
• It made me to mix with different race and language because my friends are black and I had to mix with Indians and Coloureds (FP students). • I associated with others even those that are not Zulu's (FP students). • Yes, the camp has taught me to blend with everyone beyond colour, race or language because we are one (IP students). • I manage to take pictures with white girls in my class that I don't normally talk to. During breakfast or lunch we sit together as one and we will talk to each other (IP students).	Excursion encouraged socialising with diverse students - **eeswds**
• I had never said a word to my classmates that are not black but at the excursion, we did talk and shared lot of information (FP students). • I always thought Muslim values are different from other cultures but I learned that we are all the same (FP students). • In my room it was a mix of many cultures so I got a chance to learn other languages since we provided subtitles for each other (IP students). • I managed to know more about different cultures and I managed to learn a little bit of their languages (IP students).	Shared information about their cultures and values **siacv**

Figure 4.7:   Responses from students - new social relationships with people, diverse cultures and religions

Graph 4.3: Pie graphs on role of excursion in student interaction

Student responses in Figure 4.8 capture students rating of the activities at the university that assisted them most in forging friendships and provide brief explanations as to the reasons for their answers. The educational excursion by far outweighs the other activities. Collectively 139 Foundation Phase and Intermediate Phase students noted that the excursion had the most positive effect in assisting them to bond with other students. This could be attributable to the change of environment, having to spend drawn out time together, the dormitory-style sleeping arrangements or the more relaxed tone of the setting. Some of the responses from the 57 students (both FP and IP students) revealed that the group work contributed most to developing new friendships. During the group activities at the excursion, these students felt that they were able to connect better with other students. They also noted that it was easier to interact with students in smaller groups and it was less overpowering when they needed to communicate with each other. Students who had met at orientation tended to congregate at the educational excursion as well. Jointly in both phases, 13 students found it easy to make friends during tutorials.

Using the data in Table 4.6, I supply an example with text from the students excerpts themselves in which they explain why they selected the options in Question 12, to show how I moved from the student responses to the development of the codes to identify the data. For example, the first four responses in figure 4.8 are responses as to which activity, such as the educational excursion helped students with the forging of new

friendships at university. I therefore used the code 'EE' to identify the group data for these responses as shown in Figure 4.8.

Responses from some of the students	Code to identify group data
• It is because we ate at the same table with many people from IP and FP (FP Student). • I learned more about my classmates and myself (FP Student). • It was a fun educational getaway that made me reflect and knew that I made a right decision (IP Student). • This excursion made us connect more (IP Student).	Educational Excursion EE
• I met lot of interesting people there during orientation (FP Student). • I made more friends (FP Student). • I met lot of interesting people there (IP Student). • I made lots of friends and all of us shared different opinions. Some people made me feel better about myself (IP Student).	Orientation O
• Most of the time we were busy in our groups which made us connect with each other and know each other (FP Student). • The people in my group introduced me to their friends and I did the same for them it was a whole lot of friends (FP Student). • We spent lot of time together and we all came from different backgrounds and had different strengths (IP Student). • The group I was working with was so nice and friendly it felt like we knew each other forever.	Group Work GW
• I love the intimate set up of learning style. We were same group every time and became friends (FP Student). • It was about people who wanted to learn. It made it easy to have a reliable people (FP Student). • Not many students came to tutorials so we just few and it was easy to talk (IP Student). • I needed help and people were friendly in tutorials (IP Student).	Tutorials TUTS

Figure 4.8:   Responses from students regarding activities that encouraged the development of friendship at university

4.2.6   Using interviews to capture endurance of friendships from the excursion

During the second phase of data collection, I used dyad interviews (see addendum D) with a purposeful selection of students who had participated in the excursion in their

first year and who were now in their third year of studies. In this section, I describe the process that I used to analyse this data.

I conducted six dyadic interviews with twelve students and transcribed these verbatim in WORD. I first labeled the pages of each document with the symbol "T" to indicate that it represents a transcription of interview data, with a number "1" to indicate which interview of the six I was working with. Each page of the six transcripts and each line of the interviews were numbered for easy referencing. In setting out the parameters of the transcripts I created a broad margin on the right hand side of each page of the transcripts which I used for making my notes when "unitizing the data" of responses from the transcribed interviews. Thereafter I gave the respective interviewees letters to replace their names in order to mask their identities, for example MM or SN. These allowed me not only to identify whom the interviewee is but also made it easier to identify the specific speaker and the applicable line/s in the transcripts when I needed to reference any utterances in chapter 5 (see addendum G).

As I explained in chapter 3, I used procedures commonly associated with grounded theory to analyse the data (Charmaz, 2006). This process consisted of several steps. I first read over the transcripts several times in order to get an overall understanding of the content of the interview. I jotted down issues that I thought were pertinent on a separate page, which I refer to as my "discovery sheet" (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994), for instance when participants mentioned something several times during the interviews. As I read each transcript again, I carefully looked for segments of the interview that could stand on its own as a meaningful unit – these were underlined in the text and a phrase that captured the meaning of the text was written in the margin on the right hand side of each page. In choosing the phrases I tried to stay as close to the data as possible. Once I had completed this procedure for each transcript, I went through it several times to ensure that there was consistency in my naming of the "units of meaning" and that I was capturing accurately what students had said in their interviews. Although there are computer-assisted programmes for this kind of work, I preferred to work manually with the data. Figure 4.9 is an example of how this was effected.
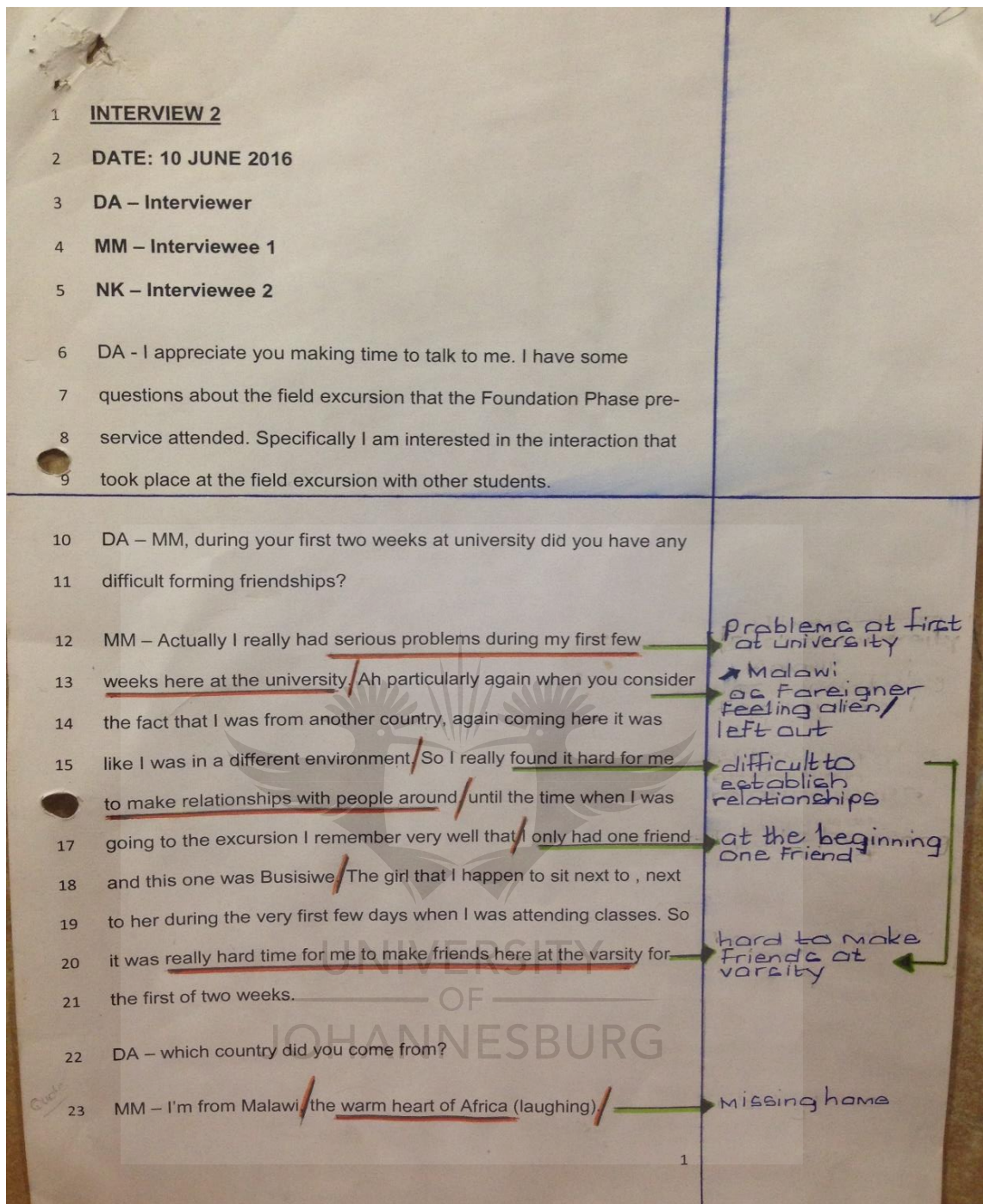
Figure 4.9: Extract from a transcript showing the units of meaning

Thereafter I compiled these units of meaning in tables indicated as responses to specific interview questions. Once I had transcribed all the units of meaning, I typed each unit of meaning into a block in a WORD document under the 11 questions used in the interviews. Where students had veered away from a specific question and/or where their responses were in reference to an earlier question I compiled these responses in the place I deemed most appropriate. Table 4.11 is an example of how this was effected.

Table 4.11: Example of capturing units of meaning

INTERVIEW 2			
1 – Difficulty forming friendships at UJ during the first two weeks	**2 – Challenges experienced mixing with students of a different gender**	**3 – Communicating with students of different race groups**	**4 – Is language a barrier in making friends**
Problems at varsity forming friendships	Problems interacting with girls	Problems communicating with people of different race groups	Definitely. Not being able to speak English lowered the students' self-esteem because I she did not have anyone to talk to
As a foreigner feeling left-out/alien – Malawi	Found it difficult to interact with girls because he was Malawian	This racial barrier impacted group work activities	Only being able to speak English made it difficult to communicate with other students
Difficult to establish relationships	He did not smoke or drink like other boys	Local languages were mainly used during group work and it caused communication problems	Struggling to understand English caused communication challenges in class especially when trying to make friends
At the beginning of varsity had only one friend	Lack of commonality created a barrier in general with males and females	He had no knowledge of other /South African languages	Found it easier to communicate in English in order to accommodate other race groups e.g. whites and foreigners
Hard to make friends at varsity	Had to learn to adapt to South African ways and that the females behaved very differently	Received no acknowledgement from other students – rarely communicated	Language was not a barrier at varsity because the student speaks 9 different languages
Missed home because he felt out of place	Because he was a foreigner girls did not trust him	His contributions were ignored	Language was a barrier when trying to forge friendships with Afrikaans speaking students

I was now in a position to cut the typed responses out in blocks so that I could manipulate them easily as I searched for recurrences that I could place together. In this step, I used several charts and prepared a list of provisional categories under which I could place each coded unit of meaning. I used the "look/feel-alike criteria" of

Maykut and Morehouse (1994:137), who describes a process in which researchers first compare ideas to ascertain initial placement. I then grouped similar ideas together. For instance, the coded units of meaning, about the challenges students faced regarding language barriers when they started at university or at the excursion, I placed under one category. Once I had six to eight, I was in a position to be able to finalise the provisional coding category and write a "rule of inclusion", for example, the excursion promoted interaction amongst students. This rule of inclusion would thereafter serve as the basis for including (or excluding) subsequent data blocks in the category" (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994:139). I analysed the rest of the interviews using the same process of data analysis as described above until there was no longer any data left. At this point I had a number of well-written propositional rule statements, which were the rules of inclusion for each of my categories. Below is a representation of the process used to organise my codes (refer to Fig 4.10). I identified 44 codes and therefore had to group codes to reduce them into categories. In the process I systematically increased my understanding of the categories, which were beginning to form, by subjecting the categories to constant testing, checking and examination in order to identify ambiguities and overlaps. In this regard the rules of inclusion were refined and adjusted where necessary. These were then compared to identify those that stood alone and those that had noteworthy connections with others. These were then written up as "outcome propositions" (Maykut and Morehouse, 1994: 144) and formed the framework of the findings.
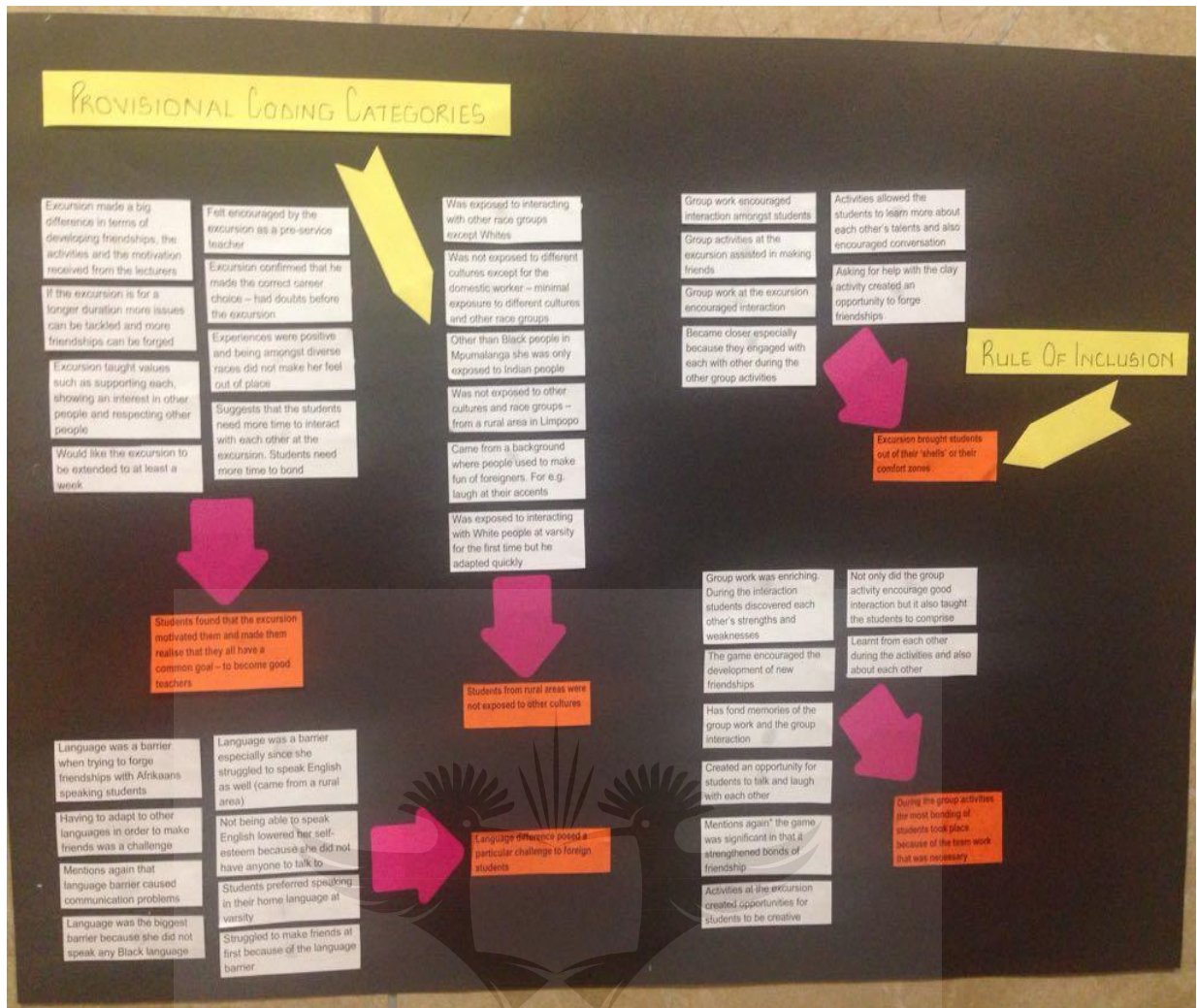
PROVISIONAL CODING CATEGORIES

Excursion made a big difference in terms of developing friendships, the activities and the motivation received from the lecturers

If the excursion is for a longer duration more issues can be tackled and more friendships can be forged

Excursion taught values such as supporting each, showing an interest in other people and respecting other people

Would like the excursion to be extended to at least a week

Felt encouraged by the excursion as a pre-service teacher

Excursion confirmed that he made the correct career choice – had doubts before the excursion

Experiences were positive and being amongst diverse races did not make her feel out of place

Suggests that the students need more time to interact with each other at the excursion. Students need more time to bond

Was exposed to interacting with other race groups except Whites

Was not exposed to different cultures except for the domestic worker – minimal exposure to different cultures and other race groups

Other than Black people in Mpumalanga she was only exposed to Indian people

Was not exposed to other cultures and race groups – from a rural area in Limpopo

Came from a background where people used to make fun of foreigners. For e.g. laugh at their accents

Was exposed to interacting with White people at varsity for the first time but he adapted quickly

Group work encouraged interaction amongst students

Group activities at the excursion assisted in making friends

Group work at the excursion encouraged interaction

Became closer especially because they engaged with each with other during the other group activities

Activities allowed the students to learn more about each other's talents and also encouraged conversation

Asking for help with the clay activity created an opportunity to forge friendships

RULE OF INCLUSION

Excursion brought students out of their 'shells' or their comfort zones

Students found that the excursion motivated them and made them realise that they all have a common goal – to become good teachers

Students from rural areas were not exposed to other cultures

Group work was enriching. During the interaction students discovered each other's strengths and weaknesses

The game encouraged the development of new friendships

Has fond memories of the group work and the group interaction

Created an opportunity for students to talk and laugh with each other

Mentions again" the game was significant in that it strengthened bonds of friendship

Activities at the excursion created opportunities for students to be creative

Not only did the group activity encourage good interaction but it also taught the students to comprise

Learnt from each other during the activities and also about each other

Language was a barrier when trying to forge friendships with Afrikaans speaking students

Having to adapt to other languages in order to make friends was a challenge

Mentions again that language barrier caused communication problems

Language was the biggest barrier because she did not speak any Black language

Language was a barrier especially since she struggled to speak English as well (came from a rural area)

Not being able to speak English lowered her self-esteem because she did not have anyone to talk to

Students preferred speaking in their home language at varsity

Struggled to make friends at first because of the language barrier

Language difference posed a particular challenge to foreign students

During the group activities the most bonding of students took place because of the team work that was necessary

Figure 4.10: Example of "provisional coding categories" and the "rules of inclusion"

Table 4.12: Codes and categories created from the transcripts

Codes	Categories
• Students experience challenges forming friendships during the first two weeks at varsity • Students felt alone and overwhelmed during the first two weeks at varsity • Female students felt that the male students were more tolerant and accepting • Female students found it difficult at first to interact with other females students • There were challenges experienced by some students in terms of mixing with different genders • Students struggled to interact with different race groups. Not because of race but because of the language barriers • There is a lot of stereotyping on campus amongst the students that affects the disadvantaged students • Students place a lot of focus on financial background – affects the self-esteem of some students	Forging friendships at university during the first two weeks were challenging for first year students

• Language was a barrier regarding the forging of friendship • Language prevented students from interacting with each other • The language barrier affected students' self-esteem in and out of class • Students having to adapt to each other's languages was challenging • Language difference posed a particular challenge to foreign students • Different accents of the students also affected their forming of friendship and interaction with each other	The diverse languages amongst the first year students thwarted students interaction, socialisation and adaptation to their new university environment
• Students from rural areas were not exposed to other cultures • Students that attended multiracial schools were exposed to diverse cultures and races • Students interacting with Coloureds, Whites and Indians at varsity for the first time • Challenges experienced during the first weeks at varsity was the language barrier • Language barrier was not only experienced amongst Black students who could not speak English but also amongst other students who could not speak any of the vernacular languages • Communication amongst students especially for foreign students was a problem • Students feel that barrier language cause separation amongst students on camps	Many students were not exposed to diverse cultures and race groups
• The excursion had a positive influence on many students • Excursion promoted interaction amongst students • Excursion brought students out of their 'shells' or their comfort zones • Excursion encouraged the forging of friendships • Students were able to bond and work together at the excursion • Interaction at the excursion assisted in breaking down barriers amongst the students • Students found the group activities enriching	The educational field excursion promoted interaction amongst the students and encouraged the forging of friendships
• Group activities encouraged lots of interaction amongst the students • During the group activities the most bonding of students took place because of the team work that was necessary • HIV/AIDS game made an impression on the students -created a lot of excitement and interaction amongst the students • Students valued the drumming session because it made them feel united • The making of costumes allowed students to show off their creativity at the same time teaching each other • Students found the group activities enriching • Students developed strong friendships at the excursion that are still continuing • Friendships forged at the excursion are highly valued by students • Students are friends off campus as well and have shared the essence of their different cultures with each other • Students had to learn to comprise at the excursion • Students had to adapt to sharing rooms	Group activities encouraged interaction amongst the students and united them

• Students were forced to interact and practice tolerance towards each other • Students formed 'clicks' when they arrived at the excursion • Students find the excursion valuable and feel that it should take place for at least one week • Topics dealt with in the group activities empower the pre-service • Students found that the excursion motivated them and made them realise that they all have a common goal – to become good teachers	Friendships that developed at the educational field excursion have endured once students returned to university

4.3   Conclusion

The inductive analytic process discussed throughout this chapter led me to construct the following themes that are the outcome of the research. Below I list the themes as well as the sub-topics discussed under each theme. In Chapter 5, I will discuss the patterns that I have identified across the themes as the findings of the inquiry in the following order:

Theme 1

The excursion setting and activities helped students find points of commonality and overcome challenges in their transition into university.

Sub-topics

Racial and cultural differences

Overcoming differences in religion

Addressing the fear of using English as a language of communication

Theme 2

The relaxed social tone of the excursion and the nature of activities aids student's development and interaction and leads to investment in long lasting relationships.

Sub-topic

Excursion environment as catalyst for enduring social integration

I have identified the following patterns across the above-mentioned themes. The educational field excursion is a potential platform for students communicating with one another and for forming enduring friendships.

CHAPTER 5:

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

The overriding purpose of this study was to determine how an educational field excursion served as a unique opportunity for first year pre-service student teachers to form new social relationships with peers. Additionally it was to ascertain the value they attached to these connections for their integration into university. I also reviewed if and how, these social relationships formed during the excursion endured over a period of two and a half years in the university context. To accomplish this goal it became necessary for me to explore the social challenges that first year pre-service teachers experienced when forging social relationships with peers. In addition, I investigated the social challenges that first year pre-service teachers' encounter in their transition from secondary school to university.

There is a slew of research over the last 30 years (Pace, 1980; Kuh, 2003; Gordon, Ludlum & Hoey, 2008) which investigates social integration of students, with many universities implementing innovations to encourage student interaction (Zhao & Kuh, 2004). However, this list is not exhaustive, nor are innovations equally useful in all contexts and for all students. Researchers admit that there is still much work to be done in this field. It is to this end that the study examined if an educational excursion was beneficial in helping students traverse their individual differences, and assist them in finding shared/common ground as a basis for social integration. In reporting on the findings I will make references to the racial groupings 'African', 'Coloured', 'Indian' and 'White' which is reflective of the four major race divisions under Apartheid which are still used for demographic reporting purposes in South Africa . In this chapter, I will discuss the main themes that I have identified in the findings, and reflect on the extent to which the research questions set at the beginning of the study have been addressed. I will also use the theoretical framework of Tinto's (1975) longitudinal model of student retention outlined in chapters 1 and 2, integrated with Turner (1960:1969) and van Gennep's (1909) ideas of liminality as the lens to interpret the findings.

5.2   Discussion of the research findings

The two themes are presented in the same sequence as they appeared in chapter 4 with findings arranged according to how strongly they manifested in the analysis of the data.

5.2.1   Excursion environment: Finding points of commonality

The first theme to emerge from my analysis of this study is that the excursion setting and activities helped students find points of commonality and overcome challenges in their transition into university. These include overcoming differences in race, culture, religion and language. Since the majority of the students at the Soweto campus are Black (African) students as opposed to a handful of White, Coloured and Indian students collectively, meaningful communication amongst the student groups was important. It seems as if the educational field excursion curriculum and activities played a pivotal role in not only changing the idea of coexistence amongst students but also assisted them in breaking down barriers to social integration.

5.2.1.1   Overcoming differences in race, culture, religion and language

The data suggest that despite the students having grown up in a democratic, non-racial society, many of the students had in fact had very few opportunities to mix in educational and/or social settings with other racial or cultural groups. This echoes the stages of Tinto's longitudinal model of student retention (1975), which describes the factors that influence the transition of students into higher education. These factors also have the most direct influence on student success and persistence. From the work of van Gennep, (1909) in describing the liminality of students' moving from familiar environments to a new university context they would be bound to face a number of key challenges as indicated in Diagramme 2.3. (Page 29). Thus, given the general composition of the two first year classes in this study, which mirror most first year classes at South African Universities, there were issues related to race, culture, religion and language. For instance, during the separation stage, students adapted to becoming autonomous individuals, overcoming their fears and anxiety in their new environment and learned to develop new friendships. I discuss each of the identified issues with examples from the student text below.

5.2.1.1.1   *Racial and cultural differences*

Given the racial and cultural diversity and the lack of integration during their schooling years, the majority of students struggled integrating with other race groups when they entered university. For some students the university environment was a first social encounter with someone from a different race group. The excursion played an important role in that it assisted a smoother transition for the students to deal with this issue in the movement from the separation stage to the integration stage.

The excursion setting provided myriad opportunities for students to communicate with other students, as evidenced by the following:

Q10/SecB/L39[14]*: "It [the excursion] made me mix with different races and language groups because my friends here in Soweto are all black. I had to mix with Indians and Coloureds. And, I learned to share a table with Whites". (African FP student).*

It seems that the nature of the excursion environment, where students lived in small group-dormitories, with shared eating and ablution facilities, and where they had ample time for leisure activities at the swimming pools, nature walks and fireside chats, provided multiple instances for informal student engagement. Based on the qualitative data the excursion setting created opportunities for students to learn to get to know *the other* (Butin, 2003; Petersen, 2007) thus de-emphasising differences and understanding points of commonality.

Students soon came to realise the value hereof and it is captured in utterances such as the following:

Q10/SecB/L5: *"I never thought in my life I would have conversation with Indians and coloureds. It made me realise that we are the same; just the colour that separates us. It helped me a lot because it was my first time having a proper conversation with other races and female genders". (African FP student)*

INT1/L138-143/PFM[15]*: "…we used to see whites when we go to town in Pretoria [a city in South Africa]. We were not exposed to seeing other people from different racial groups except*

---

[14] Q10/SecB/L39 – refers to identification of the source of data and its placement in the analysis, e. g. Quotation taken from the questionnaire: Question 10/ Section B/ Line 39

[15] INT1/L129-133/SF - Quotation taken from Interview 1/Lines 129-133 of transcribed interview/ SF-Code used for interviewee

Indians[16]. So, it was a big deal for us to see a White person in our class. To us having a white friend was an achievement". (African FP student).

What I found in the data that this was similar for Indian, Coloured and White students – for many the excursion was the first time they interacted closely with Africans. Prior to the excursion, such interactions were often limited by the subservient positions African people held in students' homes or family businesses or simply as passers-by.

INT1/L129-133/SF: *"I think the most exposure I had was with the domestic worker [usually an older African woman] or when I would go with my dad to the shop and customers would come into his shop and then I would engage with the customers. But, it was very minimal engagement with people from different races". (Indian FP student).*

The excursion setting also created many opportunities where students could debunk myths about themselves with each other. Conversations enabled students to see that despite their racial and cultural differences their challenges were often similar. Two responses provide some evidence of how the excursion influenced the perceptions of the students regarding other races:

Q10/SecB/L50: *"I always thought that only black people were poor and have a hard life but after spending time with other races [at the excursion], it made me realise that we go through the same difficulties". (African FP student).*

Q10/SecB/L66: *"I never thought other races struggle with money like us Blacks until I heard the stories from the girls we talked to. We are alike in most things … I understood that even though we are different races and cultures we still experience the same issues". (African IP student).*

The excursion thus created a 'safe space' for students to explore their racial and cultural differences, and learn about *the other* in a safe environment. Henning and de Beer (2011), ascribe this to the students' living arrangements at the excursion, which requires them to learn when students co-exist across racial, cultural, and ethnic lines as evidenced in the following student quote:

---

[16] Indians have traditionally been generations of traders who established small stores in remote areas selling anything from bread to bicycle parts. They often owned small businesses in African Townships.

Q10/SecB/L4: *"There was no other way I would have known about other people's cultures if we were not together at the excursion". (African IP student).*

Even within a seemingly homogeneous grouping of the race group 'African', students from different cultural and/or tribal affiliations often do not know much about each other. For instance, in Soweto where the childhood education programmes are located, the township has traditionally been divided into zones, with each zone housing a specific cultural group such as Xhosa's, Zulu's, Sotho's, etc., with interaction between groups often being frowned upon. The data show that these divisions are still prevalent and that students need the creation of deliberate opportunities to engage. Two student quotes are indicative hereof:

Q10/SecB/L88: *"I always spoke to Zulu people but there [at excursion] I spoke to Sotho and Xhosa as well. Where I come from there is only Zulu people so I didn't know anything about other people". (African FP student).*

Q10/SecB/L75: *"I never thought I will make friends with Venda and Zulu people". (African Sotho IP student).*

5.2.1.1.2 *Overcoming differences in religion*

Exploring religious difference also became possible. For instance, many African students had not interacted with Muslim people before, and were unclear about the reason/s for their special diet and for instance, why the female students wore headscarves or long garments that covered their bodies. Likewise, for the female Muslim students, especially those who had grown up in very conservative environments, mixing with other races and genders was disconcerting at first. This is quite normal in the movement from one environment to another (Tinto, 1975) as students negotiated the unfamiliar in their journey towards integration with their peers. The structured discussion forums and informal learning groups created space for students to explore their questions about different religions as indicated by these student responses:

INT1/L28-32/SF: *"Because I am Muslim, the school that I went to only had Muslim girls, so I wasn't used to interacting with people from different races and cultures. Coming to university, I didn't know anyone and I was afraid to approach people. So, it was quite a challenge making*

friends in the first two weeks [at university]. In my culture and religion, we wouldn't normally engage with the opposite sex or a different gender, so I was even more afraid". (Indian FP student).

Q10/SecB/L18: *"I used to think that Rasta people's lives focus on not eating meat and smoking weed [marijuana] but after meeting and talking to a Rasta student I wouldn't mind to mix myself with them". (African IP student).*

5.2.1.1.3   *Addressing the fear of using English as a language of communication*

One of the biggest impediments to students' social interaction in the first year seems to be the difficulties the majority of them face with English as the primary language of communication and academic work. This is an enduring problem in South Africa, which many researchers argue stems from the policy of home language instruction (in one of 11 official languages in different parts of the country) up to the end of Grade 3 with a switch to English as the main language of teaching and learning in Grade 4. The difficulties of this have been widely documented in South African research literature (Pretorius & Spaull, 2016) and has its negative effects on schoolchildren's educational outcomes further up the education chain (Pretorius & Spaull, 2016). In addition, many African students in particular may come from impoverished education backgrounds, with limited access to books and libraries (Jackson, 2000), and/or teachers who are not fluent English speakers. These students then face tremendous struggles with English when they enter university, where it is the main language of communication and of teaching and learning. This is significant as it impacts the duration of the liminality (van Gennep, 1909) of these students much more than those who have a greater cultural capital, Van Zyl (2010:35).

Understandably, many students' biggest fear was communicating in English. For the African students in particular, language played an important role as it served as an identity marker (Petker & Petersen, 2014) and an indicator of whether or not they belonged at university, (Burger, 2007), the majority spoke at length of their struggles with English as evidenced by the following:

INT3/L227-2231/ER: *"I'm from Polokwane from Laboya. Then English wasn't my thing, I found out like people at here varsity speak like ...fluent. I was so scared to, to, to introduce myself to them. I was so scared that I would make mistakes and they would laugh at me. It was*

so difficult. I speak broken English … everyone will end up laughing at me… I don't want others to hear that ay my English is broken, is horrible … It was so difficult …language". (African FP student).

INT1/L72-78/PFM: *"I think I struggled 'cos I am from a community where there are only Blacks … so being exposed to sitting next to a White person or an Indian person is something else because you get worried about your speech. You don't know how to put things …. you don't know how to express yourself in the English language because we were taught in our home language and we did not speak English". (African FP student).*

INT1/L102-105/PFM: *"So for me coming from a background which I did not speak English is a problem in my first year. It even lowered my esteem because I'd go from campus to home without talking to anyone because of the language barrier". (African IP student).*

The language that students speak also generally tends to determine whom they interact with at university. I have observed that the activities at the excursion did not allow students to isolate themselves according to language preferences. Carefully designed group activities enabled students to overcome their fears or feelings of anxiety regarding language insecurities. This often meant that in order to successfully complete their activities and give good feedback students had to find different ways of communicating with each other. For instance, English first language students, usually White, Coloured and Indian, taught African students (usually second or third language speakers) how to pronounce words or use particular phrases or idioms. The African students on the other hand, helped their counterparts understand popular words in the vernacular languages. For students these moments seemed to stand out, because even though they were working, I observed much laughter and bonding (OB/SH4/L26-27[17]). Students' social experiences and interactions are important, as it is often cited as one of the major factors in their decision to remain at university (Mayo, Helms & Codjoe, 2004). Social support, such as a helpful peer group, has also been found to be a good predictor of student success (DeBerard, Spielmans & Julka, 2004: 6). The excursion can be argued to relieve anxiety and lack of confidence – I saw many instances where students felt able to ask their peer group what a word meant or to translate a word irrespective of race or culture (OB/SH3/L24-25). This may be

---

[17] OB/SH4/L26-27 – Observation taken from Observation sheet 4/ Lines 26-27 of transcribed field notes.

interpreted as a significant factor enabling students' integration (Tinto, 1975) into the academic environment of teacher education.

I also found that the logistics of the excursion – sleeping arrangements in small rooms accommodating 12 students seems to have helped them get over some of their discomfort with expressing themselves in English. Based on the evidence in the data, I surmise that it may be the informality and safety of dormitory-style night discussions that encouraged this:

Q10/SecB/L37: *"Because I was always afraid to talk when am around Whites and Coloureds, lucky I was sharing a room with those races and I am now able to talk to them". (African IP student).*

Q10/SecB/L13*: "From people like her (X) that I shared a room with at the camp, we got to talk more English, because I was not exposed to it that much at school". (African FP student).*

For some students, such as these in this study, who come from impoverished educational backgrounds, with limited access to books and libraries, and poor English language skills the university can be a particularly alienating factor for retention (Ivanič, 1998). If such students do not find mechanisms to become acquainted with the dominant modes and literacy practices of the university, they may be hampered in their knowledge resulting in restricted "epistemological access" (Morrow, 2007: 41). In this study all the data show that the excursion provided multiple opportunities for students to begin crafting informal learning communities, which I argue is invaluable for helping them fit in and make sense of the pedagogical, linguistic and rhetorical conventions of their areas of study.

5.2.1.1.4.   *The excursion activities promoted social integration*
One of the most enduring influences on students' social integration are the excursion activities – both the directed excursion curriculum activities and the informal leisure opportunities. The deliberate sub-division of students into small multi-racial and multi-lingual working groups at the excursion, as well as the range of games, simulations and group-based activities provided many opportunities for students to engage with each other and lay the foundation for enduring friendships. Prominent in the various data sets, immediately after the excursion and in the interviews two and a half years later, are the simulation games and the topical issues they addressed such as HIV,

---

AIDS and food security, and the emphasis on music and team building activities. One particularly shy young student had the following to say:

INT4/L126-140/NT: *"I feel the excursion was like a team building kind of exercise, because it allowed us to get out of our comfort zones and the activities we had. We were obligated to make new friendships, because some activities required group work … interaction. So, the excursion taught us to make new friends. At the end of the day, me and Person A met when we were in the same group in the excursion. So from then on we grew to be so close, like brothers in a way". (African FP student).*

HIV and AIDS game

For one, the HIV AIDS simulation game created much merriment while at the same time addressing a very serious social issue amongst the students. The game was constructed in such a manner that students were forced to confront many of their preconceived notions about culturally prescribed sexual roles for men and women. Lecturers had to deal with the students feelings of despair at the havoc the disease causes and the almost fatalistic view some students have of their future. The lecturers found that when they used the HIV and AIDS simulation game during the formal university classes they found that students were not half as forthcoming in their responses. The excursion provides an ideal environment to sensitize prospective teachers to their roles in combating this pandemic (de Beer, et al., 2012). However, we also realized that we have to provide support for these students, and since 2009, postgraduate educational psychology students have now joined the excursion to be available for counselling after such discussions. According to de Beer et al (2012), another semiotic tool used during the excursion, particularly when students seemed to be concentrating more on their differences (usually along the lines of race and language), was to focus their attention on what they have in common.

The game required that each student made four exchanges using the glass of chemicals each one was given to represent the exchange of fluids in the game. During these exchanges, there were many opportunities for the students to interact with each other. The benefit of this particular game was that, not only was the objective of the game reached, which was to create an awareness, namely to abstain, be faithful and to condomise, but it also encouraged camaraderie amongst the students. The response from the student describes this well:

INT2/L375-382/MM: *"When we did the HIV and AIDs game [at the excursion] .... When I had to say to other students, 'can I have this nice time with you' and then we would laugh and laugh. You would go to any person around ... you would ask to pour the mixture into that person's cup. So it really made us talk to each other ... It broke down barriers ... you would have to talk to the person". (African FP student).*

Communal drumming session

Another activity that many students commented on was the communal drumming session. Here an outside team facilitated an hour-long session where they used the relaxed environment of the excursion to break down barriers and inspire the students. Drum Café sees music as a universal language, and since there is rhythm in all of us, it enabled the students to communicate, work together and experience a common sense of belonging. Through the music/drumming session, the students learnt to be open and creative at the same time. As the students drummed together, each student felt like a part of something bigger while simultaneously gaining a better understanding of his or her individual role. The most significant lesson Drum Café taught the students was that they all succeed or fail together. The drumming is deliberately included on the first night of the excursion to help build teamwork and a sense of identity as a group.

INT2/L409-415/MM: *"The drumming[at the excursion] ... it was an exciting opportunity where you were beating your own drum but you were laughing and doing things together with other people. At times, you would take to the floor to dance there with people of different races, people that we have never spoken to before. So again the excursion brought us together as a class to interact with each other, because we were able to go there dance freely". (African FP student).*

Play production – using recycled materials

A third activity at the excursion, the design and production of recycled garments to be used in a play production, is where each group would have met prior to the excursion to select and discuss a theme. In addition, they were also required to choose the type of recycled items they would make and wear for the performance at the excursion. The aim of this activity was to develop skills to implement 'shoestring-approaches' making use of recycled material. The activity was also aimed at showing the students how they can develop and provide learning opportunities that support the holistic development of learners in general. The activity encouraged the students to make known their

uniqueness in their respective groups. The students revealed their individuality by showing their creativity using the recyclable materials, at the same time, sharing more about themselves with each other. The following response describes the interaction between the students:

INT1/L176-181/PFM: *"The play performances using recyclable materials ... the dancing and the making clothes ... that was very interesting because we talked about the materials we used and we laughed at each other. We were not even aware of each other's creativity. We developed friendships from there because afterwards we knew this person likes this ... your dress in a way told a story about you". (African FP student).*

Social justice – food scarcity

Another benefit of an excursion is identified in a simulation game, on food security that provided an authentic experience for beginner student teachers at the University of Johannesburg, at a first year educational excursion (Petersen, 2014). During the simulation game students were able to converse about and reflect on the effect of food scarcity on childhood education. According to Petersen (2014), the aim of the simulation game about food scarcity gives the students an opportunity to recreate dramatically what they will realistically encounter in many of the classrooms. Some children will be hungry and suffer neglect and bias. Of the different types of play and drama available in the educational arena, simulation and role-play are seen as powerful tools. I concur with (Zeichner 2009:55) who asserts that the educational excursion provides the optimal time to start discussions with students about the "complex moral and ethical issues associated with their work".

Establishing relationships with lecturers

As mentioned in Chapter 2, this is in line with Tinto's (1993) argument that the benefit of institutions working towards creating personal connections among and between students, faculty, and staff, the outcome is the improvement of student retention. The influence of how the excursion bridged the gap between university lecturers and the students is captured in the student's response:

INT2/L551-554/MM: *"When we went for the excursion ... I also had the opportunity to interact with the lecturers apart from interacting only with the students. So, this has really helped me to cope with the university life here at UJ". (African FP student).*

The relaxed informal environment also allowed students to see their lecturers in a different light. It was interesting to note that the data in this study was consistent with the findings of Henning and de Beer (2011) and de Beer, Petersen and Dunbar-Krige (2012). Findings in their study indicated that informal, often playful social tone of the excursion activities also contributed to a more relaxed learning atmosphere and helped bridge the gap between university lecturers and the students. At the excursion, away from the formality of lecturer-student interactions in the university environment, students could see their lecturers in a different light and engage differently in interaction with each other (de beer, Petersen & Dunbar-Krige, 2012). This fits with one of a set of principles outlined by Pitkethly and Prosser (2001) who state that informal games, comfortable talks around the campfire and shared mealtimes encourages students' to forge a different kind of relationship with the university faculty staff, which is likely to support students' commitment to their studies.

5.2.2   The excursion as a catalyst for enduring social integration

A second theme is that the relaxed social tone of the excursion and the nature of activities aids students' development and interaction and leads to investment in long lasting relationships. I argue that based on the interview data it is reasonable to argue that students have successfully managed to enter the assimilation phase (Tinto, 1975). More than two and a half years later students still recount the role of the excursion as a catalyst for promoting social integration and their persistence at university. This is pertinently captured in the following vignette from an international African student who described his distress in the first few weeks of university and how this was turned around by the excursion experience. His descriptions of his social exclusion and isolation should be read against the background of frequent, and often violent, xenophobic attacks on foreign nationals from other parts of Africa, from South Africans since 2008 (much of this has to do with competition for scarce resources among the poorest of the poor in the country).

INT2/L309-332/MM: *"If I could have a single story to tell about my life at the university, then I will start talking about the excursion, because all the challenges I had in the first few weeks of university were still there until we went for the excursion. No one greeted me or spoke to me. They would not even shake hands with me. I would like just to say that life at university the very first few days was really very hard. Now what happened at the excursion …? After a session,… I would see four or five students coming to ask me … what's your name? Where you from? You*

see, I came now to start talking to different people. So, that was like the trend until we finished the three days. After every session, people would come ask a few questions, interested to know much about me. I had a number of conversations with people that I was not even talking to here at varsity. It's amazing that today we (Person X and Y) and I are friends ... this friendship started at the excursion, that's where they started talking to me ...". (African Foreign FP student).

In 2017, this student is now a respected senior tutor in his fourth year, who as a top achiever, assists junior students with academic support, and has become spokesperson for his class group. He also accompanies staff each year on the first year excursion and acts in the capacity of peer mentor to new students. This student, who once on the extreme periphery of the academic environment in the first few weeks of university studies has now been fully assimilated into the social and academic communities of the institution (Tinto, 1975) and has even begun to take leadership. This student's story is an ideal example of the role of resilience as alluded to in Chapter 2 (Freiberg, 1994) and how the excursion has helped self-efficacy (Bandura, 1986). Other students have similar stories as is evidenced by the following.

Both the excursion setting and its suite of activities, provided opportunities for students to come to know their classmates, oftentimes classmates with whom they would not have interacted with under normal university classroom conditions. The excursion was a good way to start the ball rolling for students who were sharing rooms to get to know each other better. Two and a half years later a sample of students reported that the strong relationships built with their peers at the excursion helped them during their transition period at university. For others, the excursion helped them find fellow students with similar interests, such as chess and certain types of sports. As Tinto (1975) reminds us, in order for students to become assimilated into the institution they have to attain full membership into the social as well as the academic communities of the institution. The excursion is a way in which the University of Johannesburg assists the students with this process of integration. Therefore, as mentioned by Tinto (1975) the number and quality of interactions experienced by the students with peers and lecturers at the excursion assists students during their integration stage and impacts the student's assimilation into the institution. Once back at university these shared interests then served as a basis for spending social time with each other as is captured in the following:

INT3/L196-201/ER: *"From the excursion, I made a lot of friends and we are still friends now. I met those guys, because we shared a room. We played chess. ...one of them told me he is a soccer player ... I was also a soccer player .... now we play for the same team. We are still friends". (African FP student).*

From the analysis of the responses from the questionnaires and the dyadic interview data, there is evidence that the excursion has helped in alleviating the feeling of despair, loneliness and confusion during students' initial entry to university. As recapped by Turner (1981), during this transitory stage students experience many turning points that mould and alter the way in which they make meaningful connections with their new university environment. In earlier research, de Beer and Henning (2011) contend that even students who have been isolated until the excursion are given ample opportunities at the excursion to establish bonds with a significant other individual or community. When students are able to transfer the informal social learning networks from the excursion to the formal university classroom environment then the feeling of 'not belonging' diminishes.

5.3   Limitations of the study

There are a number of possible limitations in this study. Firstly, although I interviewed 12 students - three pairs of students from both the Foundation and the Intermediate Phase group – increasing the number of dyads interviewed may have contributed additional findings. However, given my insider position within the faculty I believe that the findings from this sample is sufficiently descriptive of the overall trend in the two student cohorts.

Secondly, some of the open-ended questions in Section B of the Questionnaire – such as asking students specifically why they found it easy (or not) to make friends at the excursion and to explain why – may on the one hand be interpreted as leading. However as I was specifically interested in gaining an understanding of the student's social integration, I had to phrase the questions in such a way as to get information from the participants that would address the unit of analysis directly.

A third possible limitation is that I focussed on two intact groups on the Soweto campus. Including another programme (namely the Further Education and Training) students on the Auckland Park campus may have been useful. However, I was limited in my

---

sample for a number of reasons: a) I specifically focussed in on students in childhood education because this is the area of greatest need in South Africa and their retention at university is of great concern, b) as this is a masters study it would not have been possible to work with a larger population and c) as this study is part of a larger Thuthuka project, many more aspects of the excursion are being studied by other post graduate students. The findings of this study correlate well with the findings of other studies conducted on the excursion (Govender, 2014, Taljaard, 2016) and are therefore to be taken in conjunction with those in the bigger study.

5.4 Recommendations

Despite the limitations of the study, I would like to make the following recommendations, which I believe may assist the institution regarding the educational excursion, which forms part of the FYE of the Faculty of Education.

- It would be useful to study what students feel and say about the excursion eight to ten months into their first year of study as they approach the assimilation phase.
- Also, possibly checking in on a few students to pursue whether (or not) the friendships that were forged and the professional community that the students created continued beyond university.
- The annual educational field excursion has been reasonably successful within the Faculty of Education. A recommendation is that this model be shared with other faculties within the institution. Already discussions are underway to work together with the community engagement division to develop an educational excursion for all UJs volunteers from other divisions.

5.5 Conclusion

This study aimed to explore the role of an educational field excursion in the development of pre-service student teachers' social relationships with peers. I wanted to contribute to the research about how a customised first year experience project, namely an educational excursion, influenced the development of students' social relationships in South Africa. I was also interested in investigating if friendships initiated at the excursion endured once the students returned to their formal environment and for how long.

In order for me to address the aims, this study was designed as a generic qualitative study aiming for an 'insider perspective' of how the education excursion influenced social relationships from the students themselves. I used research tools such as observation accompanied by photographs, student questionnaires and dyadic interviews. These tools enabled me to generate data to address the research questions from which I was able to gain insight into and describe the experiences of students in this study. For instance using questionnaires I managed to find out information on the background of entering students and the issues they experienced, in particular those that impacted their social integration, on entry to the academic environment. The dyadic interviews too gave me a deeper insight into the extent of a sample of student's socialisation and how friendships initiated at the excursion, had endured two and a half years later.

As this study has shown the educational field excursion assisted students in addressing the initial challenges they faced on entering university. It can also be argued that the excursion was particularly useful in assisting first generation students with the process of enculturation into university and that it prompted the development of enduring friendships that may not have been possible in the formal university classroom setting alone. Important aspects that emerged were that a class of very diverse first year pre-service students realized that they could bond despite these differences. The excursion environment also created the opportunities for the students to find points of commonality and triumph over difficulties presented by differences of race, culture and language. Particularly pertinent was that the excursion seems to have helped many second and third language students overcome their fear of speaking English and increase their chances of asking for assistance in the transition phase of enculturation into university (Tinto, 1975; Turner, 1969). In present day South Africa with its challenging social and political climate, where such issues spark huge debate, contestation and even violent clashes, it was refreshing to see students beginning to address their differences and embrace their commonalities. This success can largely be attributed to the setting of the excursion in combination with the customised suite of activities that encompassed the educational excursion curriculum.

For many universities First Year Experience programmes play a vital role in assisting first year students through the liminal stage of moving from school to university. At the University of Johannesburg, based on the data from this small study within two primary

school teacher education programmes, I can conclude that the educational excursion as an extended FYE programme has assisted in easing enculturation/assimilation of these first year students into the university environment. At the same time, this study is a confirmation of the pivotal role that First Year Experience Programmes continue to play at higher education institutions, and specifically at the University of Johannesburg, where initiatives such as these inform further FYE efforts within the broader university setting.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Achterbergh Oasis. (2015, May 20). Retrieved from http://achterbergh.co.za.

Agherdien, N. (2015). *Cultivating social learning spaces at an urban Johannesburg university student residence. PhD thesis.* Johannesburg: University of Johannesburg.

Agherdien, N., & Petersen, N. (2016). The challenges of establishing social learning spaces at a Johannesburg university student residence: Student views. *African Education Review, 13(2)*, 64-81.

Allmark, P. J., Boote, J., Chambers, E., Clarke, A., McDonnel, A., Thompson, A., & Tod, A. (2009). Ethical issues in the use of in-depth interviews: literature review and discussion. *Research ethics review, 5(2)*, 48-54.

Antonio, A. L. (2016). The Influence of Friendship Groups on Intellectual Self-Confidence and Educational Aspirations in College. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 446-471. doi:https://doi.org/10.1080/00221546.2004.11772267

Archer, J., Ireland, J., Amos, S.L., Broad, H., & Currid, L. (1998). Derivation of a homesickness scale. *British Journal of Psychology, 89*, 205-221.

Arkarsu, O., & Harputlu, L. (2014). Perceptions of EFL students toward academic reading. *The Reading Matrix, 14(1)*, 61-75.

ASHE Higher Education Report. (2004). Special Issue: Understanding and Reducing College Student Departure, 30(3). *Wiley Periodicals*, pp. 1-105.

Astin, A. W. (1993a). *What Matters in College? Four Critical Years Revisited.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Astin, A. W. (1993b). Diversity and multiculturalism on campus: How are students affected? *Change, 25*, 44-49.

Baik, C., Naylor, R., & Arkoudis, S. (2015). *The first year experience in Australian universities: Findings from two decades, 1994-2014.* Melbourne: Centre for the Study of Higher Education.

Bandura, A. (1986). The explanatory and predictive scope of self-efficacy theory. *Journal of Clinical and Social Psychology,* 4, 359-373.

Bandura, A. (1994). Self-Efficacy. In *V. S. Ramachaudran (Ed.), Encyclopedia of Human Behavior, 4* (pp. 71-81). New York: Academic.

Bandura, A. (1997). *Self-efficacy: The exercise of control.* New York: W. H. Freeman/Times Books/Henry Holt & Co.

Barefoot, B. O., Fidler, D. S., Gardner, J. N., & Roberts, M. R. (1999). A natural linkage: The first year seminar and the learning community. In *J. H. Levine (Ed.). Learning communities: New structures, new partnerships for learning (Monograph No. 6).* Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina , National Resource Center for the First Year Experience & Students Transition.

Bennet, L. A., & McAvity, K. J. (1994). Family research: a case for interviewing couples. In *G. Handel and G. Whitchurch (Eds.), The Psychosocial Interior of the Family* (pp. 87-107). New York: Walter de Gruyter.

Berkovitz, R. A., & O' Quinn, K. (2006). Predictors of graduation of readmitted "at-risk" college students. *Journal of College Student Retention, 8(2)*, 199-214.

Bernard, H. R. (1994). *Research methods in anthropology: qualitative and quantitative approaches (second edition).* Walnut Creek, CA: Alta Mira Press.

Bogdan, R. C., & Biklen, S. K. (1982). *Qualitative research for education: An introduction to theory and methods.* Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Braxton, J. M., & McClendon, S. A. (2001-2002). The fostering of social integration through institutional practice. *Journal of College Student Retention: Research, Theory and Practice, 3(1)*, 57-71.

Brewin, C. R., Furnham, A., & Howes, M. (1989). Demographic and psychological determinants of homesickness and confiding among students. *British Journal of Psychology, 80*, 467-477.

Brink, H. I. (1993). Validity and reliability in qualitative research. *Curationis, 16(2)*.

Bulmer, M. (2004). *Questionnaires, Volume 1.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Burger, D. H. (2007). *The applicability of logotherapy as an organisation development intervention. Unpublished doctoral thesis.* South Africa: University of Johannesburg.

Bui, K. (2002). First-generation college students at a four-year university: Background characteristics, reasons for pursuing higher education, and first-year experiences. *College Student Journal, 33(1).*

Butin, D. W. (2003). Of what use is it? Multiple conceptions of service-learning within education. *Teacher Education, 105*, 1674-1692.

Caelli, K., Ray, L., & Mill, J. (2003). 'Clear mud': Toward greater clarity in generic qualitative. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods, 2(2)*.

Campbell, D. E. (2004). *Choosing democracy: a practical guide to multicultural education.* New Jersey: Merill Prentice Hall.

Carlson, L.W., Gurwitch, R., Molitor, N., O'Neill, H. K., Palomares, R. S., & Sammons, M. (2003). *Resilience in a time of war.* Washington D. C. United States: The American Psychological Association (APA).

Carver, C. S., Sutton, S. K., & Scheier, M. F. (2000). Action, emotion and personality: Emerging conceptual integration. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 26*, 741-751.

Cavallo, A. M. L., Potter, W, H., & Rozman, M. (2004). Gender differences in learning constructs, shifts in learning constructs, and their relationship to course achievement in a structured inquiry, yearlong college physics course for life science majors. *School Science and Mathematics, 104(6)*, 288-300.

Cavote, S., & Kopera-Fryke, K. (2007). Non-traditional student persistence and first year experience courses. *Journal of College Student Retention, 8(4)*, 477-489.

Cervone, D. (2000). Thinking about self-efficacy. *Behavior Modification, 24(1)*, 30-56.

Cervone, D., & Palmer, B. W. (1990). Anchoring biases and the perseverance of self-efficacy beliefs. *Cognitive Therapy and Research, 14*, 401-416.

Chabalala, J. (2017, November 13). *SA doesn't have money for free higher education - Heher Commission.* Retrieved from 24.com encourages commentary submitted via MyNews24.

Chamberlain, K. (2000). Methodolatry and Qualitative Health Research. *Journal of Health Psychology, 5(3)*, 285-296.

Chapdelaine, R. F., & Alexitch, L. R. (2004). Social skills difficulty: Model of culture shock for international graduate students. *Journal of College Student Development, 45(2)*, 167-184.

Charmaz, K. (2002). Ground theory analysis. In *Handbook of interview research. Edited by Gubrium, J., & Holstein, J.* Thousand Oaks, London: Sage Publications.

Charmaz, K. (2003). Qualitative interviewing and grounded theory analysis. In *Holstein, J.A. & Gubrium, J.F. (Eds.), Inside Interviewing: New Lenses, New Concerns* (pp. 311-330). London: Sage.

Charmaz, K. (2006). *Constructing grounded theory: a practical guide through qualitative analysis.* Thousand Oaks, London: Sage Publications.

Chatman, E. A. (1984). Field research: Methodological themes. *Library & Information Science Research, 6(4)*, 425-438.

Clark, M. R. (2006). Succeeding in the city: Challenges and best practices on urban commuter campuses. *About Campus, 11(3)*, 2-8.

Cloke, P., Kirby, D., & Park, C. (1981). An exercise in in intergrated fieldwork. *Teaching Geography*, 134-137.

CNN. (2003). Challenges of a first-generation student. Retrieved September 8, 2006, from http://www.cnn.com/2003/EDUCATION/11/10/first.to.college.ap/

Cousin, G. (2006). An introduction to threshold concepts. *Planet, 17*, 4-5.

Creswell, J. W. (1994). *Research design: Qualitative & quantitative approaches.* Thousand Oaks, Calif: Sage Pubilcations.

Creswell, J. W. (2003). *Research Design, Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approaches (2nd Ed).* Thousand Oaks, London: Sage Publications.

Creswell, J. W. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches (2nd ed.).* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Dampier, G. (2015). A qualitative study of the reasons for student drop out in 2015. *Presentation at the First Year Experience University of Johannesburg Strategic Committee.*

De Beer, J. J., & Henning, E. (2011). Retreating to a Vygotskian stage, where social 'dramatical collisions' are played out by pre-service teachers. *Acta Academia, 43(4)*, 203-228.

De Beer, J., Petersen, N., & Dunbar-Krige, H. (2012). An exploration of the value of an educational excursion for pre-service teachers. *Journal of Curriculum Studies, 44(1)*, 89-110.

De Beer, J., Smith, U., & Jansen, C. (2009). 'Situated' in a Separated Campus – Students' Sense of Belonging and Academic performance: A Case Study of Experiences of Students During a Higher Education Merger. *Education as Change, 13(1)*, 167-194.

DeBerard, M. S., Spielmans, G. I., & Julka, D. C. (2004). Predictors of academic achievement and retention among college freshman: A longitudinal study. *College Student Journal, 38(1)*, 66-80.

Dennis, J.M., Phinney, J.S., & Chuateco, L.I. (2005). The Role of motivation, parental support, and peer support in the academic success of ethnic first-generation college students. *Journal of College Student Development, 46(3)*, 223-236.

Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2000). *Handbook of qualitative research.* Thousand Oaks, Calif: Sage Publications.

Denzin, N., & Lincoln, Y. S. (1994). Introduction: Entering the field of qualitative research. In *N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln. (eds.). Handbook of qualitative research.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Department of Higher Education and Training. (2012, p41). *The South African Green Paper for post-school education & training.* South Africa.

Dlomo, T. (2003). An investigation into Cultural barriers in Intercultural Communication between Blacks and Indians at the Durban Institute of Technology. Durban, UNISA: Unpublished dissertation.

Du Toit, C. W. (2004). Diversity in a Multicultural and Poly-Ethnic World: Challenges and responses. *Religion & Theology, 11*, 3-4.

Eisikovits, Z., & Koren, C. (2010). Approaches to and outcomes of dyadic interview analysis. *Qualitative Health Research, 20*.

Eurelings-Bontekoe, E. H., Brouwers, E. P. M., & Verschuur, M. J. (2000). Homesickness among foreign employees of a multinational high-tech company in the Netherlands. *Environment and Behavior, 32*, 443-456.

Fazey, D., & Fazey, J. (2001). 'The potential for autonomy in learning:perceptions of competence, motivation and locus of controlin first-year undergraduate students'. *Studies in Higher Education, 26(3)*, 345-361.

Freiberg, H. J. (1994). Understanding resilience; Implications for inner city schools and their near and far communities, chapter 11. In *Educational resilience in inner-city America, challenges and prospects.* Wang, M. C. & Gordon, E. W. (Eds).

Gardner, J. N. (1986). The freshman-year experience. *The Journal of the American Association of Collegiate, 61(4)*, 261-274.

Gibbons, M. M., & Shoffner, M. F. (2004). Prospective first-generationcollege students: Meeting their needs through social cognitive career theory. *Professional School Counselling, 8*, 91-97.

Gordon, J., Ludlum, J., & Hoey, J. (2008). Validating NSSE against students outcomes: Are they related? *Research in Higher Eduaction, 49(1)*, 19-39.

Gorman, G. E., & Clayton, P. (2005). *Qualitative research for the information professional (2nd ed.).* London: Facet.

Govender, S. (2014). *Tutor's Roles in the Formation of Learning Communities during an Educational Excursion, Masters thesis.* Johannesburg: University of Johannesburg.

Govender, T. (2013). The education gap – practical solutions to key barriers. *University World News Global Edition, 289*. Retrieved from http://www.universityworldnews.com/article

Hackett, G. (1995). Self-efficacy in career choice and development. In *A. Bandura (Ed.), Self-efficacy in changing societies* (pp. 232-258). New York: Cambridge University Press.

Halai, A. (November, 2006). Ethics in Qualitative Research: Issues and Challenges. *Plenary Address: Multi-Disciplinary Qualitative Research in Developing Countries, EdQual Working Paper No. 4.* Pakistan: Aka Khan University, Karachi.

Hammersley, M., & Atkinson, P. (1983). *Ethnography: Principles in Practice.* London: Tavistock.

Handel, S. J., & Herrera, A. (2003). Acess and Retention of Students from Educationally Disadvantaged Backgrounds: Insights from the University of California. In *L. Thomas, M. Cooper, and J. Quinn, Improving Retention Rates among Disadvantaged Students* (pp. 33-51). Stoke on Trent, Uk: Trentham Books.

Harper, D. (2005). Whats New Visually. In *N. K. Denzin and Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research, 3rd edition* (pp. 747-762). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Henning, E., Van Rensburg, W., & Smit, B. (2004). *Finding your way in qualitative research.* Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.

Holder, G., Jones, J., Robinson, R., & Krass, I. (1999). Academic literacy skills and progression rates amongst pharmacy students, 18(1). *Higher Education Research and Development*, 19-30.

Hunter, A, J., & Chandler, E. G. (1999). Adolescence Resilience. *Journal of Nursing Scholarship, 31(3).*

Hunter, M. D. (2006). Fostering student learning and success through first-year programs. *Association of American Colleges and Universities, 8(3)*, 4-8.

Huon, G., & Sankey, M. (2002). 'The transition to university: understanding differences in success'. *Presented at the 6th Pacific Rim First Year in Higher Education Conference (8-10 July).* Christchurch, New Zealand, University of Canterbury.

Hydén, L. C., & Bülow, P. H . (2003). Who's talking: drawing conclusions from focus groups – some methodological considerations. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology, 6(4)*, 305-321.

Imberti, P. (2007). Who resides behind the words? Exploring and understanding the language experience of the non-English speaking immigrant. *Families in Society, 88(1)*, 67-73.

Income dynamics and poverty status of households in South Africa Census. (2011). *Income and Expenditure Survey 2010/2011.* South Africa. Retrieved from www.statssa.gov.za

Ingels, S., Curtin, T. R., Owings, J. A., Kaufman, P., Alt, M. N., & Chen, X. (2002). *Coming of age in the 1990s: The eigth-grade class of 1988 - 12 years later.* Washington, DC: Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement.

Ivanič, R. (1998). *Writing an identity: the discourscal construction of identity in academic writing.* Amsterdam/Philadelphia: Johan Benjamin.

Jackson. (2000). *Students' learning needs in an English language foundation course.* Retrieved from World Wide Web: http://www.ru.ac3/academic/adc/papers/jackson/html

Jacoby, B. (2000a). Why involve commuter students in learning? In *Kramer, M. (Series Ed.), & Jacoby, B. (Vol. Ed.). New directions for higher education: Number 109. Involving commuter students in learning* (pp. 3-12). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Jenkins-Guarnieri, M. A., Horne, M. M., Wallis, A. L., Rings, J. A., & Vaughn, A. L. (2015). Quantitative evaluation of a first-year seminar program: Relationships to persistance and academic success. *Journal of College Student Retention, 16(4)*, 593-606.

Jewler, A. J. (1989). Elements of an effective seminar: The University 101 program. In *M. L. Upcraft, J. N. Gardner, & Associates (Eds.), The freshman year experience:* (pp. 198-215). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Jones, J., Coetzee, G., Bailey, T., & Wickham, S. (2008). Factors that facilitate Success for Disadvantaged Higher Education students. Accessing higher education for rural youth from poor communities. *An Associate Body of the Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference. Research and Academic Development (RAD).*

Jorgensen, D. L. (1989). *Participant observation: A methodology for human studies.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Kern, C. W., Fagley, N. S., & Miller, P. M. (1998). Correlates of college retention and GPA: Learning and study strategies, test wiseness, attitudes, and ACT. *Journal of College Counseling, 1*, 26-35.

Keup, J. R. (2015). National research and trends on senior capstone experiences. *Presentation given to Academic Development Centre.* South Africa: University of Johannesburg.

Kobasa, S. C. (1979). Stressful life events, personality, and health: An inquiry into hardiness. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 37*, 1-11.

Kobasa, S. C., Maddi, S. R., & Kahn, S. (1982). Hardiness and health: A prospective study. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 42(1)*, 168-177.

Kuh, G. D. (2003). What we're learning about student engagement from NSSE: Benchmarks for effective educational practices. *Change, 35(2)*, 24-32.

Kuh, G. D., & Love, P. G. (2000). A cultural perspective on student departure. In *J. M. Braxton (Ed.), Reworking the student departure puzzle* (pp. 196-212). Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press.

Larose, S., Bernier, A., & Tarabulsy. (2005). Attachment State of Mind, Learning Dispositions, and Academic Performance during the College Transition. *Developmental Psychology, 41(1)*, 281-289.

Latham, G., & Green, P. (2003). The journey to university: a study of the first year year experience. *Journal of Educational Enquiry, 4(2)*.

Le Comple, M. D., & Goetz, J. P. (1982). Problems of reliability and validity in ethnographic research. *Review of Educational Research, 52(1)*, 31-60.

Lei, S. A. (2010b). Field trips in college biology and ecology courses: Revisiting benefits and drawbacks. *Journal of Instructional Psychology, 37(1)*, 42-48.

Lonergan, N., & Anderson, L. W. (1988). Field-based education: some theoretical considerations. *Higher Education Research and Development (7)*, 63-77.

Macgregor, K. (2007). Student drop-out rates alarming. *University World News, South Africa, 3*.

Maykut, P., & Morehouse, R. (1994). *Beginning qualitative research: A philosophic and practical guide.* Washington, DC: Falmer.

Mayo, D., HelmS, M., & Codjoe, H. (2004). Reasons to remain in college: A comparison of high school and college students. *International Journal of Eduactional Management, 18(6)*, 360-367.

McGuirk, P. M., & O'Neil, P. (2005). Using questionnaires in qualitative human geography. In *I. Hay (Eds.), Qualitative Research Methods in Human Geography* (pp. 147-162). South Melbourne, Australia: Oxford University Press.

McInerney, D. M., & McInerney, V. (2002). *Educational Psychology: Constructing Learning (3rd Ed.).* Frenchs Forest, NSW: Pearson Australia.

Meece, J. L., Wigfield, A., & Eccles, J. S. (1990). Predictors of math anxiety and its consequences for young adolescents' course enrollment intentions and performances in mathematics. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 82*, 60-70.

Meier, C. (2007). Enhancing intercultural understanding using e-learning strategies. *South African Journal of Education, 27*, 655-671.

Mellor, A. (1991). Experiential learning through integrated project work: an example from soil science. *Journal of Geography in Higher Education, (15)*, 135-147.

Merriam, S. B. (1998). *Qualitative research and case study applications in education. Revised and expanded from case study research in education.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Merriam, S. B., & Simpson, E. L. (1995). *A guide to Research for Educators and Trainers of Adults.* Florida: Krieger Publishing.

Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis: An expanded sourcebook.* Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Miller, J. W., & Lesik, S. S. (2014). College Persistence over Time and Participation in a First- Year Seminar'. *Journal of College Student Retention: Research, Theory & Practice 16(3)*.

Moja, T. (2008). Racism – an event or a way of life on campuses? *New York University, (2)*.

Morgan, D. L. (1996). *Focus groups as qualitative research (2nd Ed.).* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Morgan, D. L., & Kreuger, R. A. (1993). When to use focus groups and why. In *Morgan D.L. (Ed.) Successful Focus Groups.* London: Sage.

Morgan, D. L., Ataie, J., Carder, P., & Hoffman, K. (2013). Introducing dyadic interviews as a method for collecting qualitative data. *Qualitative Health Research 23(9)*, 1276-1284.

Morgan, D., Eliot, S., Lowe, R., & Gorman, P. (2016). Dyadic Interviews as a Tool for Qualitative Evaluation. *American Journal of Evaluation, 37*, 109-117.

Morris, S. M. (2001). Joint and individual interviewing in the context of cancer. *Qualitative Health Research, 11(4)*, 553-567.

Morrow, W. (1994). Entitlement and achievement in education. *Studies in Philosophy and Education, 13(1)*, 33-47.

Morrow, W. (2007). Learning to Teach in South Africa. *HSRC press*, 41.

Motsabi, S., & van Zyl, A. (2017). The University of Johannesburg (UJ) First Year Experience (FYE). Initiative in Higher Education in South Africa: . *A Good Practice Guide, 18-29*.

Mudhovozi, P. (2012). Interdisciplinary Reflection of Contemporary Society. *Journal of Social Sciences, 33(2)*, 251-259.

Naidoo, S. (2008, Februaury 24). High drop-out rate due to poverty. *The Times*, p. 16.

National Association of School Psychologists. (2012). *Racism, prejudice, and discrimination [Position statement]*. Bethesda, MD: Author.

Newcomb, A. F., & Bagwell, C. L. (1996). The developmental significance of children's friendship relations. In *Bukowski, W. M., Newcomb, A.F., & Hartup, W. W. The company they keep* (pp. 289-321). San Diego, CA: Cambridge.

Newcomb, A. F., Bukowski, W. M., & Pattee, L. (1993). Children's peer relations: A meta-analytic review of popular, rejected, neglected, controversial, and average sociometric status. *Psychological Bulletin, 113,* 99-128.

Ong, A. D., Phinney, J. S., & Dennis, J. (2006). Competence under challenge: Exploring the protective influence of parental support and ethnic identity in Latino college students . *Journal of Adolescence, 29*, 961-979.

Oppenheim, A. N. (1992). *Questionnaire Design, Interviewing and Attitude Measurement.* London: Continuum.

Pace, C. R. (1980). Measuring the quality of student effort. *Current Issues in Higher Education, 2*, 10-16.

Pajares, F. (2002). Gender and perceived self-efficacy in self-regulated learning. *Theory into practice, 41(2)*, 116-125.

Palani, K. K. (2012). Promoting reading habits and creating literate society. *International Refereed Research Journal, 3(2)*, 90-94.

Palmer, D. (2006). Durability of Changes in Self-efficacy of Preservice Primary Teachers . *International Journal of Science Education, 28(6)*, 655-671.

Palmer, M., O'Kane, P., & Owens, M. (2009). Betwixt spaces: Student accounts of turning point experiences in the first-year transitions, 34(1). *Studies in Higher Education*, 37-54.

Parker, J., & Asher, S. R. (1993). Friendship and friendship quality in middle childhood: Links with peer group acceptance and feelings of loneliness and social dissatisfaction. *Developmental Psychology, 29*, 611-621.

Pascarella, E., & Terenzini, P. (1991). *How college affects students: Findings and insights from twenty years of research.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Pascarella, E.T., Pierson, C.T., Wolniak, G.C., & Terenzini, P.T. (2004). First-generation college students: Additional evidence on college experiences and outcomes. *The Journal of Higher Education, 75 (May-June)*, 249-284.

Payne, S. L. (2004/1951). Who left it open? A description of the free-answer question and its demerits. In *M. Bulmer (Ed.), Questionnaires, Volume 1* (pp. 131-147). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Peng, S. S. (1994). Understanding resilient students; the use of national longitudinal data bases, chapter 4. In *Educational resilience in inner-city America, challenges and prospects.* Wang, M. C. & Gordon, E. W (Eds).

Petersen, N. (2007). Pre-service teacher education students' engagement with care and social justice in a service learning module. *Education as Change, 11(3)*, 169-181.

Petersen, N. (2014). Childhood education student teachers responses to a simulation game on food security. *South African Journal of Childhood Education, 4(1)*.

Petersen, N., De Beer, J., & Dunbar-Krige, H. (2011). Use of a simulation game for HIV/AIDS education with pre-service teachers. *African Journal of AIDS Research 10(1)*, 73-81.

Petker, G., & Petersen, N.F. (2014). Service learning in foundation phase teacher education: Experiential learning opportunities for teachers. *South African Journal of Childhood Education, 4(3)*, 122-135.

Phillips, D. C., & Burbules, N. C. (2000). *Postpositivism and educational research.* New York: Rowman & Littlefield.

Pink, S. (2004). Applied visual anthropology social intervention, visual methodologies and anthropology theory. *Visual Anthropology Review, 20(1)*, 3-16.

Pitkethly, A., & Prosser, M. (2001). The first year experience project: A model for university-wide change. *Higher Education Research & Development, 20(2)*, 185-198.

Poyrazli, S., & Lopez, M. D. (2007). An Exploratory Study of Perceived Discrimination and Homesickness: A Comparison of International Students and American Students. *The Journal of Psychology, 141(3)*, 263-280.

Pretorius, E. J., & Spaull, N. (2016). Exploring relationships between oral reading fluency and reading comprehension amongst English second language readers in South Africa. *Reading and Writing, 29*, 1449-1471.

Prosser, J., & Schwartz, D. (1998). Photographs within the sociological research process. In *Prosser J. (Ed.) Image-Based Research: A Sourcebook for Qualitative Researchers.* London: Falmer Press.

Ribeiro, B. T. (2006). Are we talking about the same things? In *A de Fina, D Schiffrin & M Bamberg (Eds). Discourse and identity.* Cambridge, UK: University Press.

Richards, H. M., & Schwartz, L. J. (2002). Ethnics of qualitative research: are there special issues for health services research? *Family Practice, 19*, 135-139.

Ross, K. N. (2005). UNESCO, Quantitative research methods in educational planning. Paris, France. Retrieved from http://www.unesco.org//iiep

Ruspini, E. (2002). *Introduction to Longitudinal Research.* London: Routledge.

Ryan, M., & Deci, E. (2000). Self-Determination Theory and facilitation of intrinsic motivation, social development, and well-being. *American Psychologists, 55(1)*, 68-78.

Saldana, J. (2003). *Longitudinal Qualitative Research.* New York: Alta Mira Press.

Sarantakos, S. (2005). *Social Research (2nd Ed.).* Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan.

Scanlon, L., Rowling, L., & Weber, Z. (2005). "You don't have like an identity...you are just lost in a crowd":forming a student identity in the first-year transition to university. *Journal of Youth Studies, 10(2),* 223-241.

Schmuck, R. (1997). *Practical action research for change.* Arlington Heights, IL: IRI/Skylight Training and Publishing.

Schunk, D. H. (1981). Modeling and attributional effects on children's achievement: A self-efficacy analysis. *Journal of Educational Psychological, 73*, 93-105.

Scott, I., Yeld, N., & Henry, J. (2007). A case for improving teaching and learning in South African higher education. *Higher education monitor, 6*, 1-86.

Sekhukhune, M. E. (2008). *An empirical investigation into the key factors causing second-year Accounting students to drop out at Tshwane University of Technology – Soshanguwe campus between 2004 – 2006.* Potchefstroom: Masters of Business Administration: North West University.

Seliger, H. W., & Shohamy, E. (1989). *Second language research methods.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Seligman, J. (2008). Integrating language and subject content in higher education: a pedagogy for course design. *Unpublished PhD dissertation.* Johannesburg: University of Johannesburg.

Seligman, J., & Gravett, S. (2010). Literacy development as 'a marginalised pedagogical service enterprise' or as social practice in the disciplines? *Education as Change, 14(1),* 107-120.

Selltiz, C., Wrightsman, L. C., & Cook, W. S. (1976). *Research methods in social relations (3rd Ed.).* New York: Holt Rinehart & Winston.

Silverman, D. (2000). *Doing qualitative research: a practical handbook.* London: Sage.

Smith, J. S., & Wertlieb, E. C. (2005). Do first-year college students' expectations align with their first-year experiences? *NASPA Journal, 42(20)*, 153-174.

Stokols, D., Schumaker, S. A., & Martinez, J. (1983). Residential mobility and personal well-being. *Journal of Environmental Psychology, 3*, 5-19.

Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. (1999). *Basics of qualitative research: Techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory.(2nd Ed.).* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Striplin, J. (1999). Facilitating Transfer for First-Generation Community College Students (ERIC ED430627). *ERIC Digest*(June). Retrieved from www.eric.ed.gov.

Stroebe, M., van Vliet, T., Hewstone, M., & Willis, H. (2002). Homesickness among students in two cultures: Antecedents and consequences. *British Journal of Psychology, 93*, 147-168.

Sutherland, T. (2009). *'A curriculum framework for an introductory programme in the National Diploma: Engineering at the Vaal University of Technology'.* Stellenbosch: PhD thesis, Stellenbosch University.

Talbert, J. E., & David, J. L. (2008). *Evaluation of the Disciplinary Literacy-Professional, Learning Community (DL.PLC) Initiative in Austin Independent School Distric, Final Report, Center for Research on the Context of Teaching.* Stanford: University of Stanford.

Taljaard, S. (2016). The value of an educational excursion in the professional development of first year student teachers of the University of Johannesburg, PhD Dissertation. Johannesburg: University of Johannesburg.

Tan, H. (2005). *Ideas of teaching: how to conduct field trips.* Retrieved from http://www.cdtl.nus.edu.sg/ideas/iot95htm, 15 June 2009.

Terenzini, P.T., Rendon, L.I., Millar, S.B., Upcraft, M.L., Gregg, P. L., Jalomo, J. R., & Allison, K.W. (1994). "Making the transition to college". In *Menges, R.J & Weimer, M. and Associates, Teaching on solid ground.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Thomas, G., Walker, D., & Webb, J. (1998). *The Making of the Inclusive School.* London: Routledge.

Tien, C. Y. (2015). A large-scale study on extensive reading program for non-English majors: Factors and attitudes. *Internal Journal of Applied Linguists & English Literature, 4(4)*, 46-56.

Tinto, V. (1975). Dropouts from higher education: A theoretical synthesis of recent literature. *A Review of Educational Research, (45)*, 89-125.

Tinto, V. (1987). *Leaving college.* Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Tinto, V. (1993). Leaving College: Rethinking the causes and cures of student attrition (2nd Ed.). *University of Chicago Press.*

Tranter, D. (2003). "Fish out of water": Students from disadvantage schools and the university. *Paper presented at Creating Spaces: Interdisciplinary writings in the Social Science Conference.* Canberra: Australian National University.

Turner, S. G. (2001). Resilience and social work practice: three case studies. *Families in Society, 82(5)*, 441-448.

Turner, V. (1960;1969). *The ritual process: Structure and antistructure.* New York: Aldine De Gruyter.

Turner, V. (1981). Social Dramas and Stories about Them. In *On Narrative. W. J. T. Mitchell, (Ed.)* (pp. 137-164). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

University 101 Program. (2012). Retrieved from www.sc.edu/univ101/aboutus/history.html

University of Johannesburg. (2015). *Teaching and Learning Report.* Johannesburg: University of Johannesburg.

Upcraft, M. L., Gardner, J. N., & Barefoot, B. O. (2004). The first year of college revisited (Chapter 1, Introduction). In *Challenging & supporting the first-year student: A Handbook for improving the first year of college.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

USC American College Health Association. (n.d.). *National College Health Assessment Report: International and Domestic Freshman. 2013.*

Van Gennep, A. (1909). *The Rites of Passage.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Van Rooy, B., & Coetzee-Van Rooy, S. (2015). 'The language issue and academic performance at a South African University'. *Southern African Linguistics and Applied Language Studies, 33(1)*, 31-46.

van Tilburg, M. A. L., Vingerhoets, A. J. J. M., & van Heck, G. L. (1997). Coping with homesickness: The construction of the adult homesickness Coping Questionnaire. *Personality and Individual Differences, 22(6)*, 901-907.

van Zyl, A. (2010). The predictive value of pre-entry for student academic performance in the South African context. South Africa: University of Johannesburg.

Van Zyl, A. (2012). The predictive value of pre-entry attributes for student academic performance in the South African context. *South African Journal of Higher Education, 26(5)*.

Venezia, A., Kirst, M., & Antonio, A. (2003). *Betraying the college dream: How disconnected K-12 and postsecondary education system undermine student aspirations.* Standford: Final Policy Report From Standford Unviversity's Bridge Project.

Vosloo, M., & Blignaut, S. (2010). From hero to zero ... and back? The journey of first year access students in mainstream programmes. *Prc ASSAF "Mind the Gap" forum*.

Wang, M. C., Haertel, G. D., & Walberg, H. J. (1994). Evaluational resilience in inner cities, chapter 3. In *Educational resilience in inner-city America, challenges and prospects.* Wang, M. C., & Gordon, E. W (Eds).

Warburton, E.C., Bugarin, R., & Nunez, A. (2001). *Bridging the Gap: Academic Preparation and Post Success of First-Generation Students.* Washington DC: National Centre for Education Statistics.

Ward, C., Bochner, S., & Furnham, A. (2001). *The Psychology of Culture Shock.* London: Routledge.

Weissberg, N.C., Owen, D.R., Jenkins, A.H., & Harburg, E. (2003). The incremental problem: Enhancing the predictability of academic success in an urban, commuter institution. *Genetic, Social, and General Psychological Monographs 129(2)*, 153-180.

Yeh, C. J., & Inose, M. (2003). International students' reported English fluency, social support satisfaction and social connectedness as predictors of acculturative stress. *Counseling Psychology Quarterly, 16(1)*, pp. 15-28.

Zeicher, K. M. (2009). *Teacher education and the struggle for social justice.* New York: Routledge.

Zeldin, A. L., Britner, S. L., & Pajares, F. (2008). A comparative study of the self-efficacy beliefs of successful men and women in mathematics, science, and technology careers. *Journal of Research in Science Teaching, 45(9)*, 1036-1058.

Zhao, C., & Kuh, G. D . (2004). Adding Value: Learning Communities and Student Engagement. *Research in Higher Education, 45(2)*.

Zimmerman, B. J. (1989). Models of self-regulated learning and academic achievement. In *B. J. Zimmerman & D. H. Schunk (Eds.), Self-regulated learning and academic achievement: Theory, research, and practice* (pp. 1-25). New York: Springer-Verlag.

Zoller, U., & Ben-Chaim, D. (1989). Interaction between examination type, anxiety state, and academic achievement in college science; an action-oriented research. *Journal of Research in Science Teaching, 26(1)*, 65-77.

UNIVERSITY
OF
JOHANNESBURG

ETHICS CLEARANCE

Dear D Arends

Ethical Clearance Number: 2013-060

Re: The contribution of an educational excursion to pre-service teacher education students' formation of social relationships with peers

Ethical clearance for this study is granted subject to the following conditions:

- If there are major revisions to the research proposal based on recommendations from the Faculty Higher Degrees Committee, a new application for ethical clearance must be submitted.
- If the research question changes significantly so as to alter the nature of the study, it remains the duty of the student to submit a new application.
- It remains the student's responsibility to ensure that all ethical forms and documents related to the research are kept in a safe and secure facility and are available on demand.
- Please quote the reference number above in all future communications and documents.

The Faculty of Education Research Ethics Committee has decided to

☒ Grant ethical clearance for the proposed research.
☐ Provisionally grant ethical clearance for the proposed research
☐ Recommend revision and resubmission of the ethical clearance documents

Sincerely,

Prof Geoffrey Lautenbach
Chair: FACULTY OF EDUCATION RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE
4 February 2014

Ethics Clearance Application – Faculty of Education

I, Delia Ruth Arends hereby confirm that:

1. The information provided in this ethics clearance application to undertake research with human participants is accurate to the best of my knowledge;

2. I understand the principles of conducting ethical research;

3. I will endeavor to conduct all the research in an ethical manner as prescribed by Faculty and University rules; and

4. I will inform the Faculty Academic Ethics Committee of any substantive changes to the project that might impact on the ethical clearance of the project.

_____
Signature

26 January 2018

If this is a student project, then:

☐ This project and associated ethics application has been approved by the Department for submission to the relevant Committees of the Faculty of Education

_____
Signature - Supervisor

If this research project will be undertaken under the auspices of UJICE, then:

☐ This project and associated ethics application has been approved by the UJICE Management for submission to the relevant Committees of the Faculty of Education

_____
Signature - UJICE Management

Auckland Park Kingsway Campus | Cnr Kingsway and University Road Auckland Park
PO Box 524 Auckland Park 2006 Johannesburg Republic of South Africa | Tel +27 11 489 2911 | www.uj.ac.za

Research Design

Please supply the relevant information.

1. Data Collection Types
   - ☒ Qualitative
   - ☐ Quantitative
   - ☐ Mixed Methods

2. Research Methodologies/Approaches
   - ☐ Biographical
   - ☐ Phenomenological
   - ☐ Grounded Theory
   - ☐ Ethnographical
   - ☐ Case Study
   - ☐ Design Experiment
   - ☐ Action Research
   - ☐ Survey
   - ☐ Other (please provide details)

   Generic qualitative study

3. Research Instruments/Methods
   - ☐ Document analyses
   - ☒ Questionnaires
   - ☐ Surveys
   - ☐ Individual interviews
   - ☒ Group interviews
   - ☒ Observations
   - ☐ Other (please provide details)

   Focus groups

4. Sampling
   - ☐ Random
   - ☐ Targeted
   - ☒ Purposeful
   - ☐ Snow balling
   - ☐ Other (please provide details)

5. Sample size
   - ☐ < 11
   - ☐ 11- 50
   - ☒ > 50
   - ☐ Other (please provide details)

   A sample of first year students from the APK and SWC campuses

6. Age of participants
   - ☒ < 14
   - ☐ 14- 17
   - ☒ > 17

   Please provide the name and designation of an adult who will protect the rights of the child who has neither parents nor a guardian, or who is younger than 14 years of age.

Faculty of Education - Research Project Information
The contribution of an educational excursion to pre-service teacher education students formation of social relationships with peers

Background to the study
There has been minimal research on the role that an educational excursion plays in the changeover of first year students experience when they move from high school to university. This research is intended to investigate how an educational excursion excursion assists first year teacher-students to develop social relationships with peers and what value they place on these relationships. My research will also investigate the social challenges that first year teacher-students deall with when they first come to the university from the school context; I will therefore set about studying how students are able to deal with the separation and then how they find their feet when faced with the many challenges as first year teacher-students. I will also investigate if any of the new friendships that developed during the field excursion has endured during the course of students's first year and if so how it has helped students cope with adjusting to university.

Intention of the project
Research associated with this project attempts to:
The purpose of my research is to find out two things:
1. How a field excursion can help students build social relationship with peers, to see if they maintain these relationships over time and how important these relationships are to them.
2. What are the social challenges first year students are faced with while adjusting to their new univeristy environment

Procedures involved in the research
Throug the excursion period, I will observe all the first year students and take note of how they interact with one another when carrying out their assigned activities. At the end of the excusion all the students will fill in a questionnaire about the excursion and how the various activities assisted in them developing new social relationships as well as what social challenges they experienced when they first entered university. My first set of data will be collected from interviews that will take place once the students have returned from the excursion. I will interview about 5 small groups made up of 10 students on each campus (3 groups from APK in the senior and FET phase programmes and 2 groups from the SWC in the foundation and intermediate phase programmes) in order to gather descriptive data. During the interviews I will pose open-ended questions to the students so that I can draw on their attitudes, beliefs, feelings and experiences. During the second phase of my data with be collection after six months at which time I will interview the students in focus groups again. The reason for the follow up interviews is to find out if the friendships endured once they returned to the university. Once the second phase is completed I will analyse the data that I have collected. I will first code the students responses from the questionnaires and the two sets of interviews. Once I have done this I will cluster the codes into a number of categories. The categories will then be collapsed into themes. Next I will identify patterns. These patterns will form the basis of my findings.

Potential Risks
It is unlikely that there will be any harm or discomfort associated with your participation in this study.

Potential Benefits
The educational excursion gives students an opportunity to experience learning in an interdisciplinary setting and is an opportunity for students to intereact with other students in their first year of study. This study may help to identify issues or aspects that promote (and detract) from students developing social relationships with peers. It may also help students to identify other students that have similar interests to their own. Through this study students will be contributing to important research findings that could help provide insight as to how an excursion for teacher-students plays an integral role in the formation of social

Auckland Park Kingsway Campus | Cnr Kingsway and University Road Auckland Park
PO Box 524 Auckland Park 2006 Johannesburg Republic of South Africa | Tel +27 11 489 2911 | www.uj.ac.za

Addendum B 127

relationships. Furthermore the information can be used to aid understanding if a lack of social relationships with peers on campus influences the failure and/or drop-out rates of first year students from the university.

Confidentiality
Every effort will be made to protect (guarantee) your confidentiality and privacy. I will not use your name or any information that would allow you to be identified. However, we are often identifiable through the stories we tell. Furthermore, if information you have provided is requested by legal authorities then I may be required to reveal it. In addition, all data collected will be anonymous and only the researchers will have access to the collected data that will be securely stored for no longer than 2 years after publication of research reports, or papers. Thereafter, all collected data will be destroyed.

Participation and Withdrawal
Your participation in this study is voluntary. You may withdraw your consent to participate in the project at any time during the project. If you decide to withdraw, there will be no consequences to you. Your decision whether or not to be part of the study will not affect your continuing access to any services that might be part of this study.

Future interest and Feedback
You may contact me (see below) at any time for additional information, or if you have questions related to the findings of the study.

Delia Ruth Arends
deliaa@uj.ac.za
011 5595102
082 750 5311

Dr N Petersen (study supervisor)
nadinep@uj.ac.za
011 559 5103
Ms G Petker
gadijap@uj.ac.za
0115595101

26 January 2018

Informed Consent/Assent Form

Project Title:
The contribution of an educational excursion to pre-service teacher education students formation of social relationships with peers

Investigator:
Delia Ruth Arends

Date:
26 January 2018

I hereby:
☐ Agree to be involved in the above research project as a participant.
☐ Agree to be involved in the above research project as an observer to protect the rights of:
      ☐ Children younger than 14 years of age;
      ☐ Children younger than 18 years of age that might be vulnerable*; and/or
      ☐ Children younger than 18 years of age that are part of a child-headed family.
☐ Agree that my child, _____ may participate in the above research project.
☐ Agree that my staff may be involved in the above research project as participants.

I have read the research information sheet pertaining to this research project and understand the nature of the research and my role in it. In addition, I have had the opportunity to ask questions about my involvement in this study and to receive additional details I requested. I understand that I may withdraw from the study at any time.

☐ Please allow me to review the report prior to publication.

Name: _____

Phone or Cell number: _____

e-mail address: _____

Signature: _____

If applicable:
☐ I consent/assent to audio recording of my/the participant's contributions.
☐ I consent/assent to video recording of my/the participant's contributions.

Signature: _____

* Vulnerable children refer to individuals at risk of/exposed to harm (physical, mental, emotional and/or spiritual).

Auckland Park Kingsway Campus | Cnr Kingsway and University Road Auckland Park
PO Box 524 Auckland Park 2006 Johannesburg Republic of South Africa | Tel +27 11 489 2911 | www.uj.ac.za

ADDENDUM C:
COPY OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

UNIVERSITY
OF
JOHANNESBURG

Ethically approved

Name of university	University of Johannesburg
Name of student	
Student number	
Date	
Name of Researcher	Delia Arends

Please answer the questions below by crossing (x) the relevant block or writing down your answer in the space provided.

Section A: Background information of students

This section of the questionnaire refers to background or biographical information. Although we are aware of the sensitivity of the questions in this section, the information will allow us to compare groups of respondents. Once again, we assure you that your response will remain anonymous. Your co-operation is appreciated.

1. Gender

Male	1
Female	2

2. Age (in complete years)

3. Ethnicity

Black	1
White	2
Coloured	3
Indian or Asian	4

4. Home language

5. Describe some details of your background briefly. You can write about your socio-economic background, your religious or cultural background, where you live while at university or any other details that you want to share.

6. How would you describe the area in which you live when you are not at university?

Urban	1
Rural	2

Section B:

1. Did you know anybody in your class/course when you started at the university?

Yes	No

2. Did you know anybody at the university when you started?

Yes	No

3. Were you scared that you would not already have any friends when you first came to university?

Yes	No

4. Why would you say so?

5. Were you scared that you would find it difficult to make friends with other students when you came to university?

6. Why would you say so?

7. Describe in a few sentences how you made new friends at university.

8. Did you find making friends at the education excursion difficult or easy?

Difficult	Easy

9. Why would you say so? Please explain ……
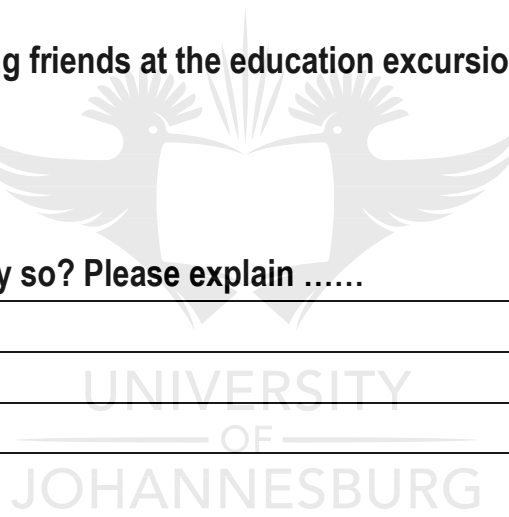
10. Did the field excursion help you to develop new social relationships with people that you would not normally mix with e.g. different cultures, race and language?

Yes	No

11. Please explain….

12. Which of the following activities helped you make friends more easily at university? (Only choose the one that helped the most)

Education Excursion	
Orientation	
Group work	
Tutorial classes	

13. Briefly explain why you chose your particular option above?

UNIVERSITY
OF
JOHANNESBURG

Interview: Foundation Phase/Intermediate Phase pre-service teachers

Name of university	University of Johannesburg
Name of interviewer	Delia Arends
Date	
Place of interview	Achterberg camp
Duration of interview	
Digital Folder name	

Introduction

I appreciate you making time to talk to me. I have some questions about the field excursion that the Foundation Phase/Intermediate Phase pre-service students attended. Specifically I am interested in the interaction that took place at the field excursion with other students.

1. During your first two weeks at university did you have any difficult forming friendships?

2. What did you find most challenging when it came to mixing with students of a different gender? Did they treat you differently? Why do you think so?

3. Did you struggle to communicate with students of different race groups? What do you think are the reasons for this?

4. Is language in any way a barrier for you in making friends? Please explain how.

5. What experience/s have you had before coming to varsity with students from culturally diverse/ racially diverse backgrounds?

6. Did the education excursion encourage you to make new friendships? Please explain.

7. Did any of the group activities at the field excursion encourage interaction amongst your classmates? Please mention which activities and how this contributed to you making new friends (or not).

8. Have the friendships you made continued when you got back to varsity? Why or why not?

9. What were some of the challenges you experienced when you tried to make friends during the first few weeks at varsity?

10. What were some of the challenges that you experienced when you tried to make friends at the excursion

11. Is there anything else that was not spoken about in the interview that would you like to add?

Students interacting during their group activities. Using the recycled materials to design outfits and musical instruments for their performance.
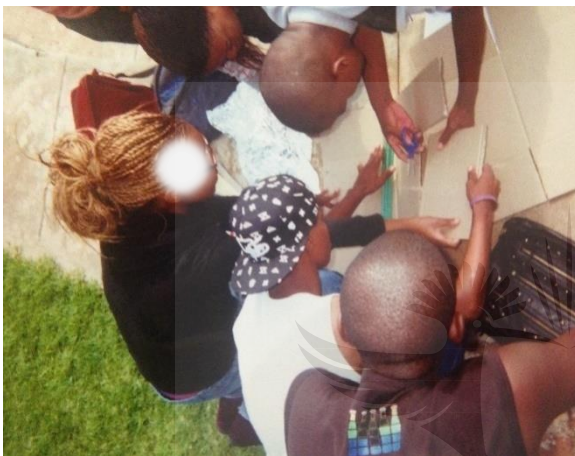
ADDENDUM F:

FIRST YEAR EXCURSION PROGRAMME

SEE CD INSERTED

1

2   **<u>INTERVIEW 2</u>**

3   **DATE: 10 JUNE 2016**

4   **DA – Interviewer**

5   **MM – Interviewee 1**

6   **NK – Interviewee 2**

7   DA - I appreciate you making time to talk to me. I have some
8   questions about the field excursion that the Foundation Phase pre-
9   service teachers attended. Specifically I am interested in the
10   interaction that took place at the field excursion with other students.

11   DA – MM, during your first two weeks at university did you have any
12   difficult forming friendships?

13   MM – Actually I really had serious problems during my first few
14   weeks here at the university. Ah particularly again when you consider
15   the fact that I was from another country, again coming here it was
16   like I was in a different environment. So I really found it hard for me
17   to make relationships with people around, until the time when I was
18   going to the excursion I remember very well that I only had one friend
19   and this one was Busisiwe. The girl that I happen to sit next to , next
20   to her during the very first few days when I was attending classes. So
21   it was really hard time for me to make friends here at the varsity for
22   the first of two weeks.

23   DA – which country did you come from?

24   MM – I'm from Malawi, the warm heart of Africa (laughing).

25   DA - NK, during your first two weeks at university did you have any

26   difficult forming friendships?

27   NK - Mm actually ah the first day, it was a, it was like a, ay me I don't

28   want to, it was like very one was still happy and it was not easy but

29   actually, actually it happened and we make friends and we talked

30   and ja. It was not that complicated and eh until I met this brother

31   (points to MM) and we were, we were good friends since then, since

32   the beginning.

33   DA - MM, what did you find most challenging when it came to mixing

34   with students of a different gender? Did they treat you differently?

35   Why do you think so?

36   MM- I really have a broader understanding or a broader explanation

37   regarding the treatment that I got from the friends of different genders

38   during my very first few ah, few weeks. I have in the place to say

39   myself, I had a problem to interact flexibly with girl, you know

40   sometimes casually you viewed like somebody who is chasing the

41   girls, so on (laughing), so ah I had that hard time to fully and

42   comfortably interact with the girls, because I was like introduced in a

43   different context and at the same time I also had a hard time to make

44   friends with some, with a male, male classmates just because. I sorry

45   to mention this, but, my observation has shown that the majority of

46   boys that you will find around here, most of them find that they smoke

47   and they drink. So it was like for myself it was something, something

48   strange so I found it like ah, it was creating a barrier for me to interact

49   fully with people, but as time went I had to accept the context in which

50   I am and also accept the friends. But these are just some of the few

51   factors that made me not find it easy to form, make friendships with

52   females and a female classmates.

53   DA - The females here are they very different from the females in

54   Malawi?

55   MM- Yes they are. Actually what I notice here is that people here

56   including the girls are defaced when they just came to varsity. It was

57   like every person was ah, mm not a person worth trusting. It was like

58   people were always nervous when they came across a different

59   person. So even it was more worse with a girls as they seen me as a

60   guy so they treatment they gave was different and also just again to

61   talk more about the question, you find that girls here in South Africa

62   are more different to girls in Malawi. Ah particularly when we talk more

63   of this issue of socialisation of course boys, I mean girls in Malawi do

64   interact with girls, but what I found strange here is that the rate at which

65   ah girls engage themselves with drinking in public or smoking in public

66   even smoking weed is something that is quite rare in Malawi, where

67   you wouldn't easily find a girl smoking like weed in public. It's really

68   something that people feel like doing they do it in secrete they don't

69   come openly. But when I got this side they would drink freely, they

70   would gather somewhere smoke, that actually the difference I noticed

71   in the girls in South Africa and Malawi.

72   DA – NK, what did you find most challenging when it came to mixing

73   with students of a different gender? Did they treat you differently? Why

74   do you think so?

75   NK – Hmm this actually the opposite, because hmm, you find that most

76   females when you trying to interact think ay this one, ay is having an

77   intention of his own and we don't know , so they didn't trust and even

78   some they think that. But I find it more easier to interact with males

79   because we talk about other things like your studies and your sports

80   so it was kinda easy to interact more with males than females, because

81   there are differences between the males and females, because they

82   think differently because of their maybe their experiences or

83   something else yeah.

84   MM – Sorry allow me again to come in on the same issue of treatment

85   that we got from people of different sexes. I had this very terrible

86   experiences, hmm you know where I'm coming from I believe in

87   greeting even if you don't know the person. But even if you sitting next

---

88   to a person whom you don't know, but just a greeting where I'm coming

89   from is a sign is that recognize that there is somebody or a person

90   sitting next to me. Now what experience did I have when I arrived to

91   South Africa? You'll sometimes sit in class but if you don't greet the

92   next person it means no one will greet you. Err especially these ah,

93   our friends of the opposite sex, especially the girl. You will sit until the

94   class is over even after spending some minutes in the class after the

95   class is over but you would not see somebody greeting you. At the

96   same times when you are walking at the corridor, you know the first a

97   few days at varsity, you don't know where to attend, where are the

98   classes, where GNA102 is. Now you stop somebody to ask, most of

99   the people that I had been asking, they wouldn't stop and attend to

100 whatever request you are trying to, to make. You stop somebody and

101 they just look at you while they are moving away from you. And it was

102 this experience that even made me cry until I asked myself, but what

103 do I look like. There was this other day when I was greeting some few

104 girls from my class. When I was greeting I was, I wanted to give a hand

105 shake, but they refused my hand. So it was something quite shocking

106 for me (very sad expression), until when I went back to the res where

107 I was staying. I had to ask myself like ah, but what do I look like, but

108 luckily a voice came to me, that no MM you are the image of God.

109 That's one of the very terrible experiences and this was from ah

110 females. So it was really one of the challenging moments I had, I

111 remember shedding tears.

112 DA - MM, did you struggle to communicate with students of different

113 race groups? What do you think are the reasons for this?

114 MM- I also had serious problems in communication with the students

115 of different racial groups or ethnic groups because of having the

116 Tsongas or Zulus. It was a big challenge, especially with our

117 foundation phase or in our faculty we always work in groups. So when

118 we use to have group discussions most of the times the language used

119 there was the local languages. Yet I was just a few days old in South

120 Africa. I had no knowledge about any other language, and worser still

121   because I couldn't speak any of the local languages, most of the times
122   when I'm making my contribution on the group just after spoken a
123   single word somebody would already interrupt me. People were not
124   err, they were paying attention to whatever contribution I was making.
125   This made me to conclude, that err probably because I can't speak
126   any of the South African languages, then it means I'm dumb. So there
127   were really serious problems in terms of communication, especially
128   because of the language barrier. My group, my group miss, they
129   wouldn't mind to accommodate or they wouldn't take into
130   consideration that we got someone who is not from South Africa, so
131   what should we do to accommodate, to accommodate him. Yes it was
132   also challenging for me, because I felt that when you feel like you have
133   a strong point to contribute but people they wouldn't pay attention,
134   because you are speaking in English and them, they are speaking in
135   local languages. So it was challenging.

136   DA- Thanks, MM. Did you struggle to communicate with students of
137   different race groups? What do you think are the reasons for this is
138   NK?

139   NK- Hmm I struggled a bit because ah, I found that most of the time
140   when I want to make a contribution in terms of maybe ah, in the group
141   work or elsewhere , you find that hmm , while one is talking they
142   counteract the females. It's like they talk , talk , talk, non-stop so when
143   you want to say ay man no, let's do this , let's try this , let's try this and
144   yoh they don't . It's like they, they run over your ideas, and they.

145   DA - And do you think this was a racial issue?

146   NK - No, I think it wasn't a racial issue, because of err, ah fortunately
147   we are, we are in the same race.

148   DA – what race and what language are you speaking?

149   NK – Obviously we have Sotho and Zulu and Sepedi. So fortunately I
150   could, I can communicate in those languages. But it was not the issue
151   of language; I think it was the mindset and the way they, they handle

152   themselves. Because they don't, they don't even give you even a small

153   space, they don't, they don't, they don't. yeah so its ah, it was one of

154   those things, hmm but it was not that challenging, but ah, when the

155   contribution part ay it made you feel like ay I'm worthless in this room,

156   so yeah it was okay.

157   MM – I wanted NK to come, hmm to come then I make my final, my

158   other contribution or share my other experience on the same issue of

159   communication. I should also, I can always had a problem with

160   communication in class, err especially because of the accent, because

161   we have people again of the different races, we have the 'Kulids', I

162   mean Coloureds students and the lecturers and the Indian students

163   and lecturers and you got the White students and lecturers

164   DA – Yes many races, diverse.

165   MM - Yes, then I'm coming from my only contexts coming here, it

166   wasn't easy for me to communicate effect, effective with these people,

167   because I was not used to accent. Like in class I use to sit on the

168   second, second row in class so that I should hear, err properly, err

169   from the lecturer.

170   DA - So you struggled to understand also what the lecturers were

171   saying, because of their accents

172   MM – Yes, because of their accents, even when we are also working

173   in other small groups with these, some group members, I also

174   struggled because of accent but with time I have managed to cope and

175   even myself because like English in my country is ah, is the last

176   language, rather it doesn't have any position where in South Africa you

177   do recognize English as the third language. But in my country it doesn't

178   have a position, you are usually introduced to English very late, so our

179   English is basically for the purpose of communication .So I couldn't

180   speak it , proper English but rather I was happy because I was able ,

181   to communicate ideas. So that's the raw purpose of language, to make

182   sure that ideas are taken across to the other party. So I'm happy that
183   I was able to do that.

184   DA - Thanks MM, so the next question asks is language in any way a
185   barrier for you in making friends? Please explain how.

186   MM- So far, I would say it's a barrier in a part, but not a serious problem
187   , because what I noticed is sometimes when I have to interact with err,
188   ah friends here in South Africa , some of them don't feel comfortable .
189   They have been talking to me that, ah May you been her in South Arica
190   for three years, we no longer speak with you in English , every time we
191   chatted with you , we have to speak in English (amused). So it's like
192   err, I noticed of there, that some of them choose sometimes to avoid
193   me, because they either not comfortable to speak with English every
194   time they are with me. So they choose to avoid me at times, others
195   would come.

196   DA- But, at university MM is it a barrier, at university is the language a
197   barrier when it comes to making friends?

198   MM- Yeah this experience, I am saying is happening here at the
199   university. Yes, because I have very few friends out there most of my
200   friends are here. So even my fellow class, my fellow classmates and
201   some friend I met here at varsity doing different programmes in a way
202   language has been a barrier, because they don't really feel 100%
203   comfortable to speak English every time they are with me. And it's
204   these very same varsity students that have been talking to me, but MM
205   you must learn to speak at least isiZulu, we can't speak to you in
206   English every time .This shows that people are not comfortable to
207   communicate with me every time in English meaning that language is
208   a barrier.

209   DA - That is very interesting. And NK is language in any way a barrier
210   for you in making friends? Please explain how.

211   NK – Hmm to me language is not that much of a barrier because me
212   hmm, I grew up in Soweto and we speak many languages and we find

213 that many students are from, they speak different languages.
214 Fortunately enough I can speak some of those languages. But hmm,
215 when it comes to, to English they don't its like err, they have this, I
216 don't know how to call it, but they have this mindset or attitude towards
217 English. They don't err; they don't communicate much in English. We
218 use our home languages. When we are in our groups and even outside
219 here when we are walking. Because when you, immediately maybe
220 when you see people start communicating in English and then they
221 are not White people. They I don't know, they look at you like ay this
222 one is trying to be intelligent or ay this one is testing our intelligence.
223 So it is a barrier when it comes to, to English when we communicate
224 in English

225 DA – When you in class?

226 NK – yeah, it's its, when you are in class it's, it's a barrier because of
227 people don't communicate much, because even when the lecturer are
228 asking questions, it's like silence, silence it's like only one or two
229 people. it's like silence only the lecturer is talking so, err; ay it's a
230 barrier when it comes to, to communicate with a person of a different
231 race. Err maybe the lecturer or the other classmates because we are
232 mixed.

233 MM - it is really a common experience. Most of the times say in class
234 some students they will have questions, but because they have to ask
235 in English they don't, really stay in varsity. They feel what if I speak
236 broken English that everyone will end up laughing at me. So some of
237 them they wouldn't ask, but if they are friends to you, you realize that
238 soon after the lesson they come to you and ask. But what was she
239 trying to say here. Why is because they couldn't feel comfortable or
240 confident enough to ask the question because the language or the
241 medium that you supposed to use to ask the question was English. So
242 this is always the same, especially myself when I am interacting with
243 more people, you will find that they will come or some they will push
244 you that, please will you ask this, ask this. But why can't you speak.
245 Because of English. I feel it is the lack of understanding. That the

246   whole purpose of language is that the other person should get the
247   meaning. Yes, so it's like people lack confidence of that
248   understanding, so it's a real problem also.

249   DA- MM, what experience/s have you had before coming to varsity
250   with students from culturally diverse/ racially diverse backgrounds?

251   MM – Hmm experiencing people from various backgrounds, ah to me
252   I felt it was a quite I good opportunity because if offered me an
253   opportunity to come to understand people of different races, come to
254   understand people different ethnic groups, different cultural
255   backgrounds. So it gave me, really it gave me this rich opportunity,
256   where I would be able to understand and appreciate peoples culture,
257   how people do things. How do hmm people, people speak Sepedi,
258   how do they speak, how do they do this. What happens in Indian
259   culture? What happens in Coloured culture? What happens in African
260   culture? So, I mean in the White culture. So I'm able to learn all these
261   different cultures because I'm interacting with the people from all these
262   racial groups, from all these ethnic groups. So it really played an
263   advantage but at first I was nervous, ah I was nervous as to how I'm
264   going to fit myself this, hmm complex ah context. But later I realized
265   it's a great opportunity for me, but now I'm rich because I can
266   experience something about Coloured culture and all these other
267   different races.

268   DA – Did you struggle to fit in with these culturally diverse groups?

269   MM - It too me a few weeks or a month in order for me to fit well into
270   all these cultural groups

271   DA - NK, what experience/s have you had before coming to varsity
272   with students from culturally diverse / racially diverse backgrounds?

273   NK - Hmm the experience I had is ah, these different cultures and the
274   different diverse religions and it's like a, me I was fortunate enough I
275   grew here, so I know a bit of each and every culture. It's like a when I,
276   I meet people from different cultures or in my group or anywhere it's

277   like ah that culture wants dominate. It's supposed to be this way, my

278   culture say it must be done like this, and the other one says like this,

279   this. There is conflict because of ah no one wants to, to be under, how

280   can I, under somebodies culture, and to be led by that culture, so there

281   was a bit of a challenge, because there is lots of disagreements. Even

282   now when you can meet someone of a different culture saying ay do

283   you know us, we do this thing like this, maybe in a group or we have a

284   problem somewhere, let's do it like this, because that's how it's

285   supposed to be done. Then you say no, no, no because of it's your

286   culture let's do it like this and ah that seems to be a problem, because

287   hmm culture is very important here in, in South Africa and eh Soweto

288   DA- What experience/s have you had before coming to varsity with

289   students from culturally diverse/ racially diverse backgrounds?

290   MM- Hmm the experience I had with people of diverse cultures,

291   especially also in Malawi we got also people with diverse cultures.

292   Hmm it's a common thing where one culture would feel to be superior

293   over the, the , over the other culture and will want to be dominant hmm

294   in everything that is happening either in society or in a group just

295   because this particular person feels that he belongs to a culture that

296   is more superior . So that experience I had, that some cultures feel

297   superior, other cultures for some reasons they would feel inferior. So

298   because these ones other cultures they would feel people from other

299   minority, especially from minority groups always feel inferior, they

300   always, they always hmm make sure that they are listening to those

301   people from other cultures looking that are, that are regarded to be

302   superior like there I got the Sela cultures, the Gewa cultures hmm

303   Nanja so such a, some of the cultures that are people of that ethnic

304   groups are regards as inferior. In the Gewa and the Toboqua groups

305   that feel that them they are the centre of everything. Yeah so that's the

306   experience I had before coming to varsity.

307   DA- MM, did the education excursion encourage you to make new

308   friendships? Please explain.

309   MM – Well, I could have a single story to tell about my life at the
310   university, ah then I will start talking much about the excursion,
311   because all these challenges I have explained here were still there
312   until the time we went for the excursion. Now what happened at the
313   excursion, because in such kind of a person that who say okay even
314   though others might look down on me, but I am here as a student , I
315   do participate everywhere. So also when we went for the excursion I
316   was comfortably participating in whatever was going on there, all the
317   sessions, I was participating. Now, what did I see? Usually after, after
318   a session, because I would participate actively after a session maybe
319   we go for a break, I would see four or five students coming to ask me,
320   ah but what's your name? I am MM. Where you from? I'm from Malawi.
321   Oh alright. You really seem to make very powerful and strong
322   contributions. You see I came now to start talking to different people.
323   So that was like trend until we finished all the three days. You know
324   after every session people would come ask a few questions, interested
325   to know much about you. You make this strong contribution, could you
326   please tell us something about yourself. So I really had a number of
327   conversations with people that I was not even talking to here at varsity.
328   Even these people that I was greeting at first, they never responded to
329   me rather they ignored my hand. It's amazing that reaching this date
330   they are the best friends, but this friendship started at the excursion,
331   that's where they started talking to me and we have been talking up
332   until now.

333   DA - NK, did the education excursion encourage you to make new
334   friendships? Please explain.

335   NK – Yes the excursion, ah, ah, ah encouraged us to make
336   friendships, but ah ay me I didn't ah actually make ah, many friends,
337   because I am this kind of person who doesn't go out there and talk , I
338   listen most of the time, I listen most of the time. But I made two friends
339   like the roommates where we were staying I made some friends there,
340   and when were required to , there was this activity , when we were
341   required to make hmm, friends, group activities, and exchange some

342   items there. So me I would pretend that I exchanging it. I would walk

343   around walk around and I would just come back and sit because of ay

344   I am not that talkative and the socializing is not easy for me because

345   ah, I'm not too much into talking, I like to listen err, hmm what other

346   people think. They, they, they think about different issues, different

347   tasks there, there, there in the excursion. Since then I was fortunate

348   enough to, to meet some few friends there like Malola (MM) here.

349   MM – I wanted to remind you that probably you're making a very

350   important point, that's where our relationship strengthened, that

351   excursion. We knew each other here as classmates, but we were not

352   so much close. Until we went for the excursion and that's why most

353   cases where you find NK, I am also there up until now. You go

354   anywhere; ask where's NK people will refer you to me. They want me

355   they will refer you to NK. Ask NK that this relationship strengthened at

356   the excursion; prior to this excursion we just knew each other as

357   classmates

358   DA – Did any of the group activities at the field excursion encourage

359   interaction amongst your classmates? Please mention which

360   activities and how this contributed to you making new friends – or

361   not.

362   MM – I'm going to mention this game. At the excursion every year

363   because I been there for three years now. So this game we also played

364   the same game when I was in my first year is called sex game, please

365   it's not , it's not the real sex but it's a sex game . So it's like people

366   where more excited you know they use hmm, it's a topic about HIV.

367   Demonstrating how HIV is spread so on. So you know this kind of topic

368   is sensitive, they really grab the attention of young people. So when

369   we had this topic we had a presentation, afterward we had had to play

370   what was called sex game showing how HIV was transmitted from one

371   person to another. So we had hmm, we had hmm ah water and some

372   solutions in our small, small cups. So we had to go around and hmm

373   have, have simulation sex with as many people as possible. So people

374   where excited, excited so we were really talking to each other can I

375   have sex with you, then you would laugh and laugh. Can I have this

376   nice time with you, and then we would laugh and laugh, then you would

377   pour the water in that person's hmm cup. So it really made us come to

378   talk and laugh with each other, because it was all of us as a class. So

379   you would go to any person around, so got to talk to each other. It

380   broke down the barrier that was there. There we people who would not

381   talk to other persons, because before having this simulation sex you

382   would have to talk to the person. So it was like a breaking down for if

383   for somebody not to speak to some body at least that particular game

384   offered an opportunity to, for you to talk to somebody you have never

385   spoken to before.

386   DA – Did any of the group activities at the field excursion encourage

387   interaction amongst your classmates? Please mention which

388   activities and how this contributed to you making new friends – or

389   not.

390   NK – Hmm the, the group activities were hmm, the games

391   encouraged err, err interaction between students and classmates.

392   For me what particularly stood out err firstly it was that HIV game.

393   But mostly it was err.

394   DA – But how did you feel about it? Just listen, did any of the group

395   activities at the field excursion encourage interaction amongst your

396   classmates? Please mention which activities and how this

397   contributed to you making new friends – or not.

398   NK – Yes, okay particularly the HIV/AIDS game contributed much

399   because we had the fluids that we exchanged, we talked to people

400   and interact. So hmm, for me it was err it was not easy but it

401   encouraged everyone to talk. To exchange and talk, ay my friend can

402   we play around and talk and we laughed there. It actually helped a lot

403   because it was like err, err break in the barrier for the, or the ice for

404   communication. It actually worked because people started talking

405   and after the games and we had small interactions, we talked, yeah

406 made new friends and yeah it actually helped a lot the, the, the HIV
407 game.

408 MM – It would be a serious mistake if we don't mention about the drum
409 beating. Drum beating actually provided something else. An a, an
410 exciting opportunity where of cause you were beating your own drum
411 but you were laughing and doing things together with your other
412 people. At times you would take onto the floor to dance there with ah
413 people of different races, people that we have never spoken to before.
414 So again the excursion brought us as a class to interact with each
415 other, because we were able to go there dance freely. So people won't
416 know the other persons characters and even by beating the drums, we
417 are beating while excited or ululating or doing whatever we could. So
418 it provided an exciting opportunity and this other activity also where we
419 performed. We do have a night of performances where we do different
420 activities in our groups, though we are the activities with our group
421 members but it also gave the other people who were not at that time
422 hmm performing, to also get to know the other persons, that okay this
423 is skill this particular person has. I mean has like people are good at
424 acting, singing who were dancing there. So in this way we are able to
425 know the other persons abilities and it was that again small thing that
426 also influences other people to have an interest to talk to another
427 person seeing how this particular persons has acted or has performed
428 during the performance so they develop an interest to be closer or to
429 know more about that particular person. So we also came to talk soon
430 after the performances.

431 DA - Have the friendships you made continued when you got back to
432 varsity? Why or why not?

433 MM – The friendships are still strong up to now. That's why I'm here
434 with NK, it's not only just by, by just because of the interview. Probably
435 the one who recommended myself and NK that person may have seen
436 us closer. So that points to the fact that our relationship started at the
437 excursion and is still growing stronger. I made friendships with XXX at
438 the excursion she was one such a person that we, previously could

439   not see each other before we went for the excursion. That is quite
440   amazing that we went from last year. She is now the one that I am
441   working with, either as a tutor, or if there is class work that I don't
442   understand or she doesn't understand, we are able to approach each
443   other. Or, we just make time to chat. This relationship started at the
444   excursion is still strong. It's going stronger each passing day, and even
445   with so many people in my class which I cannot manage to mention
446   one – by – one.

447   DA – NK, have the friendships you made continued when you got
448   back to varsity? Why or why not?

449   NK – The friendships that I made have continued. Some of them I
450   would say the, the specific one is XXX because we made friendships,
451   since from the excursion and we are even now still friends. Even some
452   of my group members we, we sometimes sit around and we talk. So I
453   would say it, it really helped and the friendships are strong and they
454   are being stronger each passing day.

455   DA - What were some of the challenges you experienced when you
456   tried to make friends during the first few weeks at varsity?

457   MM – Probably language may have been a barrier because I couldn't
458   speak any isiZulu, that would be the first factor and I would also think
459   that ah, probably my nationality was a problem. I was tempted to think
460   that it seems people have got a negative attitude for people from other
461   African countries. Now just hearing that I'm from Malawi they really
462   had that negative attitude towards me. That from Malawi, it means, the
463   picture they already about Malawi , the picture that they have about
464   Malawi maybe the one influenced them to think, that there is probably
465   nothing that can come out of a person, something good that can come
466   out from a person coming from such a country. How did I arrive at this
467   conclusion? It is because while I was going through those terrible
468   times, a few people were awful enough to come to me after some days
469   to ask but do you have universities in Malawi? I was like shocked,
470   because my coming here to UJ I came straight from a university. I

471   dropped, I mean I did a self-withdraw for the university, they following
472   day I took a plane coming to South Africa. So to me it was a kind of
473   insult by asking, do you also have universities in Malawi? Then just for
474   the sake of peace I just smiled and said we also have a forest of
475   professors there. Then I kept quiet. So this rang a bell to me, that
476   probably this difficulty that I had in making friendships it was from the
477   fact that people just they assume that Malawi is probably a kind of
478   bush where people don't know school, don't go to school. So this
479   interaction that I had from the few friends that probably my nationality,
480   people they had a negative perception of where I'm coming from.
481   Hence they chose not to respect me.

482   DA -What were some of the challenges you experienced when you
483   tried to make friends during the first few weeks at varsity?

484   NK – Hmm most of the challenges ah, to me was ah different in the
485   different cultures because hmm ah you find that most of the people are
486   Sotho and Zulu, especially Zulu. I'm sorry to say that but that's the way
487   it happened to me, because hmm I was advantaged to grow up in a
488   context of different cultures. But ah when, in the university when you
489   try to communicate with this one for the first few days there was this
490   excitement, at the same time there was this culture saying no, no, no
491   I don't, I don't do dat I don't actually mix with Zulu's maybe for instance
492   or Pedi or Coloured's, and the likes. So that was a challenge and they
493   don't know because there was this incident I had a conversation with
494   a other friend, a Zulu friend and he didn't know that I know the culture
495   of Zulus and I stayed with them a long time. So he was shocked, he
496   even asked me, wena what, where, where do you come from? What
497   culture are you? I said no I'm Sotho, I grew up in this context, he said
498   no. You see because us Zulus have this negative attitude towards
499   other cultures because they think they, they, them are above
500   everyone. Because the language, they, they say no, the most
501   important languages is here isiZulu and then English. That was the
502   challenge I had. But it was not that difficult, it was intense, but not that
503   much. Because I knew that Zulu culture and that English I know a bit

504   of cultures. So it wasn't that much of a problem to me to interact with

505   people.

506   DA - What were some of the challenges that you experienced when

507   you tried to make friends at the excursion

508   MM – At the excursion. I think I really have, really have to be honest I

509   didn't face challenges in making friendships with people at excursion.

510   There wasn't a serious problem that stood out to me that it's because

511   of this I can't make friendships, I can't interact with friendships. To

512   me everything was super at the excursion.

513   DA - What were some of the challenges that you experienced when

514   you tried to make friends at the excursion

515   NK – it wasn't much of, there weren't many challenges. The only

516   thing that hmm people from this, this bad community, they have this

517   tendency; it's like those classmates when you talk to them because

518   they were excited and they like things. They look at you like this one,

519   they wearing this tekkie and it's like they don't, classify you according

520   to your material things. But yeah it was nice, it was nice but the most

521   things that I observed it that they look at material things. What's this

522   name you are wearing, the physical appearances, what's this one?

523   It's not that important this one, I will talk to that one because he has

524   this. But it was okay all in all, it was not a problem

525   DA – Is there anything else that was not spoken about in the

526   interview that would you like to add?

527   MM – I would like just to say that ah, that it has shown life at

528   university the very few days was really hard. That only, that I had

529   confidence actually particularly in class, when we went for the

530   excursion I had confidence and I should also really mention probably

531   one thing I should mention that you did not ask whether the lecturers

532   are supportive or did they play any role in helping us making

533   relationships . I really want to mention this particular module teaching

534   studies. Teaching studies really brought us together the content that

535   we covered in our first semester it required us to interact; it required

536   us to talk to each other. It also facilitate the formation of our

537   friendships and at the same it while I had this negative experience or

538   bad experiences with some of my classmates , when it comes to the

539   side of lecturers I was receiving extensive support. They not viewed

540   me the same way other students were viewing me. They looking at

541   me from a different perspective. Now I feel like because from the

542   lecturer's side I was receiving respect of cause not different from

543   other students, but of cause it was different from the treatment I was

544   getting from other students. And this also makes some students to

545   start also recognizing me as one of the human beings so I would

546   really want to appreciate the support I was getting from lecturers

547   otherwise my life would have been hard if I got a negative

548   experience, bad treatment from classmates during my first few days

549   at varsity and also getting the same from lecturers. I think my life

550   would have been very hard. We went for the excursion and going to

551   the excursion I also had that opportunity also to interact with the

552   lecturers apart from interacting only with the students. So this has

553   really helped me to, to, to cope with the university life here at UJ.

554   DA – Is there anything else that was not spoken about in the

555   interview that would you like to add?

556   NK – Hmm for me it's just the issue of language because I think it

557   goes hand-in-hand with self-esteem. Because during lecturers

558   people don't participating because they not confident in this language

559   of teaching especially English, because it's a medium of instruction

560   here. They don't communicate much because they are not confident

561   and people have this negative attitude about English, because they

562   are not that confident speaking English so it creates a, ah, ah low

563   self-esteem because you find that other lecturers they don't, they

564   have to communicate in English so they can't communicate in any

565   other language. So I feel that maybe in future if we, before we

566   proceed with our studies we can have at least a little bit of maybe a

567   course of which talks of self-esteem and confidence of using other

568	languages specially English , because I find that is a barrier ,
569	because people are not communicating much in terms of , in terms
570	class. But especially in activities, because for one when I go I meet
571	my friend here. He would say, I communicate with him in English, he
572	would look at me in the other way say ay this one is trying to be
573	smart or he just want to expose me because I am not that good in
574	English. So to me that would be important if it is included in one of
575	the courses maybe, err to include the basics of how to communicate
576	in English or a self-esteem how to confident enough to stand in front
577	of people and talk your questions and not, because there was this
578	tendency of after the lecture hrrr to the lecturer they move fast and
579	run. They want to ask because they don't want others to hear that ay
580	my English is broken, is horrible. So it's kind of a problem because
581	there was this time when I tried to communicate something , I asked
582	myself what's happening or maybe it's the way I look because I said
583	something and my English was not that nice and yoh! They laughed
584	everywhere and when we meeting in the corridors they laugh and
585	laugh I said eish! Maybe it's one of the issues the language.
586	MM – Yeah NK has just raised a very very important point
587	considering we are in a diverse context, yeah of cause it is one of the
588	elements in our concept of framework for the faculty of education.
589	Right here at UJ we are in diverse contexts where with people from
590	different races, ethnic backgrounds, cultural groups and alike. So it
591	will really be necessary if during the very first few lecturers , I mean
592	very first few lectures in a first semester first year maybe just to ,to, to
593	share with the class they whole purpose of communication . That
594	don't be ashamed to express yourself in English, hmm of cause we
595	are teachers we have to strive to be perfect in terms of our English,
596	but it's also important also to let the students know the whole
597	purpose of communication. The whole purpose of communication is
598	to transfer the ideas to the other person. So don't feel ashamed with
599	the kind of ah English that you speak as long as the lecturer is able
600	to understand you , as long as your friend is able to understand you
601	and also if this person is listening. It means one is also know that

602   okay this friend is speaking hmm, hmm horrible shocking English, but
603   still I'm able to get the ideas. So still these two people will come
604   together is of language, how come they not able to communicate well
605   it won't be an issue anymore. However we still have to strive to
606   improve. The other thing is the first few lectures can also talk of
607   issues of hmm, ah ethnic stereotypes. To say okay we do have some
608   ethnic minorities but us we are here at varsity , it doesn't necessarily
609   mean we are different it only means that this Tsonga person was
610   born in Limpopo and this Venda was born in Limpopo and this Zulu
611   was born in Kwa-Zulu Natal but we are not different in any way. So if
612   we can start instilling that, ah understanding right at the beginning of
613   first year it means that as they continue or as we continue working in
614   our groups something will still be ringing in someone's mind, to say
615   okay fine I do have something different from other people , so I have
616   to view others equally. That will strength the relationships that we are
617   making at varsity.

618   DA – NK and MM thank you for taking the time. For allowing me to
619   interview you. It was really fantastic, thank you hey.

620   MM – It has been a pleasure to us