THE READINESS OF PUBLIC LIBRARIES IN SOUTH AFRICA FOR INFORMATION LITERACY EDUCATION: THE CASE OF MPUMALANGA PROVINCE

by

GENEVIEVE CLAIRE HART

Thesis presented for the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

In the Department of Information and Library Studies

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN

August 2005

To my Parents
and to Mike, Danielle and Ben

Acknowledgements

ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study is to investigate the readiness of public libraries in South Africa for an enhanced educational role in developing the information literacy of school learners. The public libraries in Mpumalanga Province provide the case site for the study. Across the world, information literacy education has been identified as the raison d'être of *school* libraries. There are two arguments for *public* libraries in South Africa to take on this mission:

- the demands of the global economy for information literate school leavers – reflected in South Africa's new school curriculum, which is widely described as "resource-based" and which lists information skills as a critical cross-curricular outcome

- the shortage of school libraries in South Africa. It has been estimated that eight million out of 12 million learners do not have access to libraries in their schools.

In recent years there have been suggestions that South African public libraries take on a more direct educational and developmental role – which might be more appropriate than the inherited Western model of service. Information literacy education might well be their unique contribution to social inclusion in a country where, on average, less that 10 percent of the population belong to public libraries. The introduction in the late 1990s of the new curriculum has brought a huge increase in the use of public libraries by school learners – most of whom are not signed-up members but who need access to public library resources as they grapple with the information seeking demands of their school projects and assignments. The increase in use has led to much comment in public library circles on the ill-preparedness of school learners for project work in the library.

The theoretical underpinning of the study comes from the research and theory building of Carole Kuhlthau and Christine Bruce – both of whom have enriched information literacy theory with their "borrowing" from constructivist and relational learning theory. To Kuhlthau, information literacy is a constructive process of building meaning and knowledge. The task of information literacy education – in schools and libraries - is to teach people how to learn – not how to find discrete bits of information. Christine Bruce's research highlights the significance of people's conceptions of information and information literacy. She identifies categories of conceptions ranging from those which see information literacy as knowing about resources to those who describe it as creating new knowledge and building wisdom. Effective information literacy education has to take into account the existence of these different conceptions.

The PhD study sets out to examine if indeed public libraries in South Africa might assume an enhanced responsibility for information literacy education and, if so, what inhibiting and

facilitating factors might exist. The word "readiness" in its title has two layers of meaning: at one level it refers to physical capacity and on a second level to more intangible and subjective attributes such as staff attitudes and beliefs. The research questions examined in the study relate to these two layers of meaning. They are informed also by a wide-ranging survey of the literature of educational change in South Africa and of the role of public libraries, internationally, in information literacy education. The questions can be grouped into three categories:

- What is happening at present in terms of information literacy education for school learners?
- Do public libraries have the physical capacity for information literacy education?
- What are the attributes of public library staff in terms of their experience of and attitudes towards information literacy, information literacy education, and, indeed, towards a stronger educational role for public libraries?

Any discussion on the capacity of Mpumalanga's public libraries for information literacy education has immediately to acknowledge the uneven distribution of libraries – common to all South African provinces. The Director of Mpumalanga Provincial Library Service estimates that his province requires 98 new libraries. The Province of Mpumalanga lends itself to the research problem for a number of reasons. Its social and economic characteristics throw into relief the critical issues highlighted in the literature review. It is one of South Africa's five "new" provinces, having amalgamated two apartheid era "homelands". It is regarded as a "rural" province" with sprawling densely populated but underdeveloped areas. Only 18 percent of its schools have libraries. The study took place in a time of upheaval and restructuring of local government – the tier of government responsible for the day to day management of public libraries. The climate of uncertainty is found to play a significant part in the prevailing low morale of public library staff.

The research project has a design structure of two interdependent phases. The overarching theoretical framework is interpretivist constructivism. The realities and meanings constructed by public library staff are central to the problem. However, it employs both qualitative and quantitative methodologies as each contributes to the understanding of the problem. The first phase is a broad survey of 46 public libraries in Mpumalanga, undertaken in March/April 2004, which gathers both qualitative and quantitative data by means of interviews with 57 staff members - based on a semi-structured questionnaire. The aim was to gather quantitative data on the resources and facilities within the libraries and their services to schools – and, by means of several open-ended questions, qualitative data on library staff views on the impact

of the new curriculum and possible changes in their social role. The first phase leads into the next phase – a more focused participant observation case study of the information literacy programmes in two public libraries in one small town throughout October 2004. Three vignettes scaffold the case study, which serve both to give a sense of context and to highlight the theoretical issues. In this phase, an added perspective is school educators' use of the library – and their beliefs about learning and libraries. Twenty-seven interviews with Grade 7 and 8 educators and principals in the seven schools served by the public libraries were conducted.

The analysis of the first phase data led to tentative findings. The second phase case study started afresh – open to alternative or contradictory interpretations. However, its findings are surprisingly convergent with those of the first phase. It seems that Mpumalanga public libraries are heavily engaged in serving school learners. The study indeed concludes that public libraries *need* school learners – given their low use by adults. Shortcomings in certain physical facilities, such as the lack of space and absence of retrieval tools, are inhibiting factors with the heritage of apartheid still impacting on the availability of and quality of service. The low level of professional education of public library staff is found to impede innovation in library and information service programming. The prevailing information literacy education largely comprises, at present, one-to-one support, although there is a fair amount of source-based group library orientation. Moving from library orientation towards information literacy education will depend on a shift in conceptions of the educational role of public libraries. In the absence of recognition of their curricular role by public library authorities and educationists, many public librarians are not sure that their services to school learners are legitimate. There is, at the same time, dawning recognition that present approaches are not meeting the needs of school learners and that more effective communication with educators is required. This recognition comes from public librarians' frustrating encounters with learners rather than from insight into information literacy education theory and experience. And educators' simplistic conceptions of project work and lack of cognizance of the demands of information seeking in the library do not allow for a more dynamic role for public libraries.

The study makes recommendations for various role-players – the library profession, the governance structures of public libraries, public library staff, educators and educationists, and information literacy researchers. The fundamental conclusion is that sustainable information literacy education in public libraries will depend on more dynamic leadership and on a vision of a new model of public library.

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CHAPTER 1
LAYING THE GROUND FOR THE STUDY

The aim in this first chapter is to introduce the research project by explaining its rationale, background, significance and limitations. It describes the theoretical framework which informs the project and articulates the research problem and its methodology. Finally, the Chapter delineates some of the key concepts and outlines the chapters that follow.

What it does *not* do is engage in a lengthy conceptual and historical analysis of the construct of information literacy, although it does examine some current definitions. This is because, firstly, the researcher does not want to repeat the detailed analysis she undertook in her Masters thesis (Hart, 1999a), and secondly, since the late 1990s, a number of books have appeared that provide excellent syntheses of the development of the construct of information literacy (for example Breivik & Senn, 1998; Loertscher & Woolls, 1999; Grassian & Kaplowitz, 2001).

1.1 Rationale for the study

The purpose of the study is to investigate the readiness of public libraries in South Africa for an enhanced educational role in developing the information literacy of school learners and educators. The public libraries in Mpumalanga Province provide the case site for the study.

Across the world, information literacy education has been identified as the raison d'être of *school* libraries (Association for Teacher-Librarianship in Canada, 1997; American Association of School Librarians, 1998; Australian School Library Association, 2001; Sætre & Willars, 2002). Fundamentally, there are two arguments for *public* libraries in South Africa to take on this mission:

- the demands of the global economy for information literate school leavers
- the shortage of school libraries in South Africa.

1.1.1 Information literacy: lifelong learning for the information society

Since the 1970s, librarians working within the educational sphere – at school and tertiary level – have identified information literacy education as one of their key functions. The pressures of globalisation have brought an awareness of the need for lifelong learners, who can adapt to change because they know how to learn (Kuhlthau, 1993b: 16; Bundy, 2002a). In his preface to the South African position paper at the Information Society and Development Conference in 1996, Thabo Mbeki, now South Africa's president, connected economic

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development to information literacy in his contention that "the ability to use information effectively is now the single most important factor in deciding the competitiveness of countries" (National Information Technology Forum, 1996). The information or knowledge economy prizes self-educators, people who, in Fritjof Capra's words, can "process information and create knowledge" (2003: 125). Librarians would interpret Capra's statement in terms of the concept "information literacy", which was first coined in the 1970s (Behrens, 1994). Information literacy refers to a complement of competencies – the ability to identify and analyse a need for information to solve a problem, find and select information relevant to that need, assess the quality of information, assimilate new information into existing knowledge, and create new knowledge out of a synthesis of information from a variety of sources. The concept of information literacy education refers to programmes in school and academic libraries that teach learners how to find, interpret and use information. These programmes thus aim to teach people how to learn; hence their importance for lifelong learning (Kuhlthau, 1993b).

The construct of information literacy has been criticised for its ambiguity (Arp, 1990; Snavely & Cooper, 1997). Marcum claims that information literacy "reaches too far" and that its proponents need to define more realistic objectives (2002: 20). Other criticism has included claims that it is nothing more than the traditional bibliographic instruction offered in school and university libraries and warnings that it represents a misguided straying into an alien field, namely education (Feinberg & King, 1988; McCrank, 1991). However, in recent years, research has enhanced its academic maturity and it is accepted, at least in American, Australian, European and South African library circles, as a genuine shift in thinking within the profession (Bruce, 1997: 7; Grassian & Kaplowitz, 2001: 4, 337; Bruce & Lampson, 2002; Clyde, 2002). The fundamental shift, perhaps, is towards a grasping of a teaching role for the profession – what Peacock calls a "metamorphosis from librarian to educator" (2001: 27). Whether librarians on the ground are adequately prepared for this shift is a question central to this study.

Most of the summarising texts and review articles of the last few years describe information literacy as a literacy crucial for the global information society of the 21st century and thus a tool in the narrowing of the so-called digital divide between information-rich and information poor. The recent *Prague Declaration* (2003), the outcome of a UNESCO supported meeting of 40 information literacy experts from 23 countries, suggests three strategies to narrow the gap: ready access to information and communications technologies (ICT), unrestricted availability of needed information and an information literate citizenry. It states that, "an information literate citizenry is required to mobilize an effective civil society and create a

competitive workforce". Most commentators (for example Langford, 1998; Spitzer et al, 1998) view information literacy as a kind of umbrella literacy that covers other literacies such as, what Makhubela (1998: 65) calls, "bookish" literacy, computer literacy, visual literacy, media literacy and cultural literacy. Tyner's discussion of "multiple literacies" (1998: 63) includes also the notion of critical literacy, which insists on the ideological contexts of literacy. Critical approaches to literacy take into account its contribution to social transformation through its enabling learners to understand the relations between power on one hand and reading, information, and knowledge production on the other (Makhubela, 1998: 45). The implication here is that information literacy, like literacy, is not a neutral value-free concept. The researcher's stance is that information literacy is indeed liberating in its potential to empower an information seeker to take control of his or her life.

Bruce, one of the leaders in the field in Australia, has outlined what she describes as the "collective consciousness" of information literacy researchers and practitioners - the common thinking within its domain (2000b). The "bipolar" nature of information (Dick, 2002b: 151) – its physical "containers" and its subjective meaning-related attributes – perhaps explains why most current definitions acknowledge two aspects or layers of information literacy: the content or "what" people need to know and the cognitive strategies of knowing *how* to learn (Bruce, 1997: 8). Thus, Todd (1995a: 24) distinguishes between the knowledge of and skills in "the things" of the information world and the cognitive skills of analysis, interpretation, synthesis and evaluation. Doyle's influential list of attributes of information literacy, gathered from exploring the views of experts in the field using the Delphi technique (1992), includes both technical skills and high-level cognitive skills. Fundamental is an attitude that recognises "that accurate and complete information is the basis for intelligent decision-making".

Perhaps for a South African study of public librarians, those definitions that are not too closely dependent on sophisticated information and communication technologies might be valuable. As Moore warns (2002: 4), if definitions of information literacy as ICT literacy prevail, then an individual, who has not access to ICT, will dismiss information literacy as beyond reach. Different contexts call for different skills. In her survey of information literacy education for the recent international summit on information literacy in Prague, Moore finds that essentially it does not depend on ICT nor even on the existence of a good library; rather it depends on the design of learning activities, using whatever information resources are possible, in order "to promote critical interaction with and understanding of the information environment" (2002: 5). Reporting on a new resources centre in Namibia that mediates between sophisticated ICT networks and rural communities, Jacobs (2000) begins to confront the relevance of the construct of information literacy to developing societies. She

acknowledges the significance of oral sources of information and quotes Sturges and Neill's comment in their book on libraries in Africa (1998: 139) that in every community there are "skills", equivalent to the information skills described in the Western literature, which enable people to function in the surrounding economy. Sayed and de Jager, in describing their study of the information literacy of students in the Western Cape, are critical of the Western definitions of information literacy that ignore context (1997: 8). They point out, for example, that information literacy education has to allow for students' varying backgrounds and educational environments. Their claim, however, that "information literacy is ... as much about the resources and materials that frame the nature and form of information as it is about higher order cognitive skills" (p. 8) is open to the interpretation that information literacy cannot be expected of students from disadvantaged backgrounds. Their statement has to be weighed against other claims that information literacy can be taught in any environment (Marais, 1996; Moore, 2002: 5). These claims are that, if learners, even those in ill-resourced environments, develop the higher-level cognitive skills of analysing information, interpreting it and applying it to solve problems, then they will be able to generalise or transfer these abilities to any situation. Despite the ambiguity in the above statement by Sayed and de Jager, the definition, which is the outcome of their focus interviews with librarians in the five tertiary institutions in Cape Town, is useful in any environment:

> Information literacy refers to the ability of learners to access, use and evaluate information from different sources, to enhance learning, solve problems and generate new knowledge (Sayed & de Jager, 1997: 12).

The following section, in which a theoretical framework for the doctoral study is presented, will argue that a social constructivist frame for information literacy education ensures its relevance to all kinds of communities. There are certain critical approaches that are generic to all information-seeking – whether in print, electronic or oral environments. As Dike and Amucheazi point out in their discussion of information literacy education in Nigeria's disadvantaged schools, students in under-resourced situations still need to solve information problems (2003: 195).

South Africa's post-1994 school curriculum, Curriculum 2005, and its revision, the Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS), have been widely described as "resource-based" (for example Lombo, 2002) – learners being expected to engage with a variety of information sources as they "research" problems and topics. Internationally, it is assumed that a pre-requisite for this kind of learning is access to a school library or media centre (Breivik & Senn, 1998; Brown, 1999). The American Association of School Librarians (1988; 1998) distinguishes two kinds of "access" provided by school library programmes: "physical" access to the collection and "intellectual" access. "Intellectual" access refers to the mission of

the school librarian who, in collaboration with educators, teaches learners how to build their own knowledge in engaging with the collection of information resources. In other words, she or he teaches information literacy. However, in South Africa, less than 20 percent of schools have libraries (South Africa. Department of Education, 1999; 2005:3) - and even fewer have school librarians.

1.1.2 School libraries in South Africa

The theses of Fredericks (1993: 85), Le Roux (2001: 147) and De Vries (2002: 28) chronicle the history of school libraries in South Africa across its racially based education system before 1994. All three rely on Overduin and de Wit's investigation into school libraries in the mid 1980s (1987) and reproduce its tables of expenditures and resources. For example, they show that, in 1986, the "White" schools in the provincial education departments had about 10 books per pupil, the "Indian" schools of the House of Delegates 5.5, the "Coloured" schools of the House of Representatives 2.5 and the "African" schools of the Department of Education and Training 2.4. In the mid 1980s, perhaps as a result of the so-called Tricamaral Government in 1984 that ostensibly extended political power beyond the white minority (*South Africa: system of government*, 1996), the House of Delegates (HOD) and the House of Representatives (HOR) had more generous education budgets. They adjusted their school library policies and allocated large sums of money to the provision of libraries, their staff and school library support services (Stadler, 1991; Stopart, 1995). Linking school libraries to the political economy, Stadler (1991) sees the improvement in school libraries in the late 1980s in the "Indian" and "Coloured" schools as a sign that the government was realising that the South African economy needed more sophisticated school leavers, which the "white" sector could no longer continue to provide alone. The expansionary period in the HOR and HOD schools was not to last for long, however. As Stopart, a manager in the HOR school library support services, records (1995), the school library budgets dried up in the early 1990s as the end of the apartheid regime drew near. The researcher's survey of a school circuit in Cape Town in 1999 documents the loss of teacher librarian posts, the scattering of library collections, and the closing of libraries (Hart, 2000b) – confirming Job's findings in 1993 on the impact of budget cuts on all sectors (1993).

The *School Register of Needs*, an audit of school facilities conducted by Government in 1997, estimates that eight million out of 12 million learners do not have access to libraries in their schools (South Africa. Department of Education, 1997b). The Human Sciences Research Council's *South African School Library Survey* in 1999 confirms the precarious position of school libraries in its finding that 32 percent of schools nationwide have an "on-site library" and another 12 percent have some sort of "library collection/box service" (South Africa.

Department of Education, 1999: iv). No descriptive details are given about these libraries and book collections. The report echoes Overduin and De Wit's (1987) earlier concern over the under-use and misuse of the libraries that exist – with comment on the unavailability of libraries which are shut for much of the day or which are being used as classrooms (1999: 25). It reports that only in Gauteng do more than half of schools allocate funds to the library (namely 56.6%). The report fails to specify the sources of library funds – which is a pity, given the widespread comment in school library circles and the researcher's experience in running courses for teacher-librarians at the University of the Western Cape that most funding for library materials and staff comes from so-called "Governing Body funds", levied by means of school fees. The implication is that libraries continue to be an indicator of advantage, as schools serving poorer communities cannot afford these "extra" expenditures. Another ambiguity in the audit is its vagueness over the amount of time teacher-librarians spend in the library. It hints at the problem in its questioning the high number of teacher librarians who describe themselves as principals, deputy principals and teaching Heads of Departments (30%); but it does not analyse how many hours a week they and other designated teacher librarians spend on library work and information literacy education.

Whatever the shortcomings of the 1999 report, it is clear that South Africa has a huge backlog in school library facilities. In the absence of school libraries in South Africa, there is increasing evidence, to be discussed in Chapter 3 in more detail, that public libraries are having to step into the gap and provide for the information needs of school learners. Whether they are able to provide for more than mere *physical* access to their collections of information resources is the question at the heart of the study. There have been suggestions that public libraries in Africa in any case should re-examine their educational role. One argument is that public libraries in post-colonial Africa are underused because they present a model of service irrelevant to African needs (Sturges & Neill, 1998; Issak, 2000). The inherited Western model of service sees its educational role with regard to schools as indirect support – supplementing the services of school libraries. In Africa, it is argued, the existence of school libraries cannot be assumed and public libraries should therefore provide for the curricular needs of school leavers. These arguments will be returned to below.

1.2   Theoretical framework

The above introduction has indicated that the project has its roots in two research traditions: that of information literacy education and that of the social mission of public libraries. The overarching framework for both is social constructivism.

1.2.1 Information literacy theory

The concept of information literacy - in common with its parent discipline Library and Information Science (McKechnie & Pettigrew, 2002) - has been criticised for its lack of theoretical underpinning (for example Eisenberg & Brown, 1992; Todd, 1995b). However, in the late 1990s, the historical reviews of information literacy in professional and academic texts agree that the work of Carole Kuhlthau in the United States and Christina Doyle and Christine Bruce in Australia has to some extent mitigated this weakness (for example Spitzer at al, 1998; Loertscher & Woolls, 1999; Grassian & Kaplowitz, 2001). Bruce, herself, acknowledges that information literacy research is still in its infancy and that suitable theoretical frameworks are only just beginning to be explored (2000a: 213). She contends, however, that a "collective consciousness" has evolved among information literacy researchers – a necessary prerequisite for the development of a research domain (2000b: 92).

1.2.1.1 Kuhlthau's ISP modelling

The most influential theoretician in the field of information literacy education at school level is the American Carole Kuhlthau, based at Rutgers University, whose body of work over a number of years, beginning with her PhD (1983), has contributed to the knowledge base of the field. Kuhlthau is an information scientist in the cognitive paradigm (Ingwersen, 1996: 13; Pettigrew & McKechnie, 2001: 64), respected for the empirically derived models of cognition she has brought to the literature of librarianship (Eisenberg & Brown, 1992: 104). Indeed, she has been critical of the lack of theoretical underpinning of the "user education" prevalent in libraries and in 1987 suggested that librarians needed to re-examine their programmes in the light of empirical research in information users' behaviour and needs (Kuhlthau, 1987: 27).

Kuhlthau's theory is a synthesis of two schools: cognitive information science and constructivist learning theory. The thread, common to both traditions, that enables her synthesis is constructivism – usually placed within the interpretivist theoretical paradigm. This paradigm assumes that people construct their own personal worlds, thus differing from the positivist assumption of an objective and measurable reality (Gorman & Clayton, 1997: 28). In keeping with the interpretive paradigm, cognitive constructivist information theory can be characterised as follows (Allen, 1991; Dervin, 1992; Reneker, 1993; Ingwersen, 1992, 1996):

- Information is seen as subjective rather than as something objective that exists apart from human behaviour. Information is what transforms existing knowledge into a new state (Ingwersen, 1992: 48). It involves cognitive processes aimed at constructing sense and meaning out of human experiences (Solomon, 1997: 292).
- Information users are, thus, assumed to be purposive agents - not passive recipients.

- Information behaviour is investigated in naturalistic ways – in a range of situations not isolated from its social context.

- Information users' cognitive models or schemata, as well as their feelings, domain knowledge and preferences, are valid, indeed crucial, subjects of investigation.

Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, cognitive information scientists like Dervin and Belkin depicted the information search as a problem-solving or sense–making process which the information user undertakes in order to fill a gap in knowledge or to answer an uncertainty (Belkin, Oddy & Brooks, 1982; Allen, 1991; Dervin, 1992). They stressed the subjective and purposive nature of the process, thus enriching what Ingwersen calls "system-driven" information science (1996: 13). Kuhlthau's empirical work with information users, across a number of projects and across a number of years, led her to view information-seeking as a constructive process of sense-making and problem-solving. Information thus cannot be the "thing" it is in traditional information theory. It is rather a subjective process. To Pitts, a researcher in the Kuhlthau school, information transforms existing knowledge structures by triggering a process of reflection and restructuring. It is not "discrete, separate bits of data, each of which has little effect on the other" (Pitts, 1994: 66).

Despite her use of information science theory, eventually Kuhlthau found herself unable to explain adequately the user's perspective of information seeking and so turned to learning psychology – beginning, in her PhD study (1983), with the personal construct theory of George Kelly. Constructivist learning theory, emanating from the work of theorists like John Dewey, George Kelly and Jerome Bruner, assumes that learning is an active building of meaning, involving the whole person – cognition, emotions and behaviour (Brooks & Brooks, 1993; Kuhlthau, 1993b: 14-32). The central tenet of constructivist learning theory is that learning demands that each individual construct his or her unique personal understanding of the world out of a process of outcome prediction (relying on prior learning) and choices - in the drive from uncertainty to understanding. Thus, in searching for understanding of a problem or topic, people look for information to extend or define it. As constructs are formed and clarified, learners shift perceptions as to what is useful or relevant.

Kuhlthau's 1993 book *Seeking Meaning: a Process Approach to Library and Information Service* presents a synthesis of her research up to that date and reports on her construction of a theoretical frame for information literacy education. Figure 1 depicts the outcome of her research, the Information Search Process (ISP) model.

	Task initiation	Topic selection	Prefocus exploration	Focus formulation	Information Collection	Search Closure	Starting Writing
Thoughts	ambiguity		⟶			specificity	
Feelings			⟶ increased interest				
Actions	seeking relevant information		⟶		seeking pertinent information		

Figure 1: Kuhlthau's Information Search Process (ISP) model (Kuhlthau, 1993)

The model shows the interaction between cognitive processes and affective or emotional factors. The seven phases of the ISP are not linear; learners, in reading up a topic, begin to see it differently and go back and analyse again what it is they need to know, for example. Kuhlthau's research highlights the crucial importance to learning of the early phases of information seeking. A crucial turning point is the fourth phase – Focus formulation – when the learner, having explored the topic in the early three phases, finds a focus in the information he or she has encountered. Something shifts towards a personal ownership of the information; a personal angle is found; changes in original views of the topic take place. Information literacy is, in her view, an ability for lifelong learning (1993b: 16, 154), involving the use of information independently to build personal knowledge.

Kuhlthau's early work in the 1980s fell within the qualitative school of research as she explored, in a longitudinal study over 14 years, the thinking, emotions, and behaviour of small numbers of learners seeking information for their school and university assignments. Kuhlthau followed up her doctoral study with larger-scale and more quantitative studies that served to validate her model (1990). She has also since tested her theory in different contexts – in the workplace, for example (1997; 2004:165-186).

Several researchers have followed her example in turning to learning theory in their PhD studies of information-seeking in schools (for example McGregor, 1993; Pitts, 1994; Limberg, 1999). Their research has validated the ISP model across a variety of sites and user groups – including those in online environments (for example Isbell & Kammerlocher, 1998; Byron & Young, 2000). Limberg's PhD study in a Swedish high school (1999) adds another dimension. Her work highlights the significance of variations in people's conceptions of or "ways of experiencing" information in information seeking for research assignments. Her

phenomenographic study of students engaged in a research project concludes that there are three ways of approaching information in the school project context: fact-finding; finding information to support a view; and scrutinising and analysing information to understand a topic. The behaviour of the students in the third category conforms to Kuhlthau's ISP. This third group used far more information sources than the first two groups; they scrutinised their information sources, trying to understand underlying values and motives; they built a broad understanding of the topic then put new information into its wider context; they built their own perspectives on the research topic. Kuhlthau's own comment on Limberg's study is that, while all three approaches are useful for students to know, students in the third group are truly information literate (1999a).

Kuhlthau has emphasised the practical application of her research and theory – for example, in their insights for librarians into the kind of support information users require at the various phases of the information search process (2000). Indeed, one outcome of her modelling is a manual on information literacy education that demonstrates how to apply her model in library user education (1994). Kuhlthau points out that her research implies "process" approaches to information literacy education, in which learners are taught information literacy by means of authentic assignments rather than by source-based instruction in tools and systems (1985). Studies in schools have confirmed that those that emphasise in their assignments the construction of personal meaning rather then the finding of "the right answer" provide a more nurturing environment for information literacy and indeed for higher quality learning (Limberg, 1999; Kuhlthau & McNally, 2001).

1.2.1.2 Conceptions of information literacy: Bruce's phenomenographic categories

Christine Bruce's writing confronts the dissonance between theory and practice - and between theory and research methods. She points out that surveys of skills and competencies, for example, might be more compatible with behaviourist approaches than constructivist (2000a; 2000b). Like Kuhlthau, Bruce acknowledges the need of a more solid theoretical base for information literacy education and she acknowledges, in much of her writing, the appropriateness of constructivism for the construct of information literacy (1995b). However, the problem she addresses in her doctoral research is that educators and librarians cannot be assumed to have the same perspectives as information literacy theorists. Bruce's PhD thesis, summarised in her book *The Seven Faces of Information Literacy* (1997), explicitly sets out to explore the meaning of the construct of information literacy by using phenomenographic theory to delineate conceptions of information literacy among a group of Australian academics. She, thus, was exploring the "collective consciousness" – a term she uses in a later

article, referred to above (2000b). Like Kuhlthau, she "borrows" from learning theory in applying the insights of relational learning theory, in which learning is seen as "a change from one understanding to another, qualitatively more complete one" (1997: 168). Thus, information literacy can be defined in terms of a transformation in people's conceptions of information – and its role in their lives. Her research led her to construct a "relational" model for information literacy that is based on people's conceptions of information and of information literacy. The outcome is a series of outcome space diagrams, one of which is given in Figure 2 on the next page, in which she analyses the differences and the relationships among the meanings of information literacy that her participants attributed to it.

Bruce groups her categories into three clusters:

- the information technology (IT) and information sources conceptions
- the information process and information control conceptions
- the knowledge construction, knowledge extension and wisdom conceptions (1997: 173).

Despite her initial refusal to evaluate participants' conceptions of information literacy, the outcome of her research is a kind of hierarchy in that she sees some conceptions as more "complete" than others. Thus, conceptions in the third cluster "contain" those in the first and second clusters. Bruce acknowledges that individuals or programmes are likely to favour one or other of these clusters; but she contends that a "*complete* information literacy programme needs to operate across the artificial boundaries of these groupings" (p. 173).

Her analysis confirms the significance of how people conceive of information. Categories One to Four see information as objective, something "out there"; whereas Categories Five, Six and Seven and Eight see it as subjective - an internal process of knowledge building and transformation. New information can be transformed as people use their existing personal knowledge base to reflect and decide. In its turn, it can be transforming.

The significance of Bruce's work for this doctoral study is that it implies the need for a flexible methodology that allows for exploration of the participants' conceptions of information, information literacy, information literacy education and learning. The research questions must probe more than whether public librarians are ready for information literacy education but also what *kind* of information literacy education they might be ready for, in terms, for example, of Bruce's clustering.

ENHANCED KNOWLEDGE BASE &
INSIGHT =>
NEW IDEAS
(Category Six)

ENHANCED KNOWLEDGE BASE &
VALUES =>
WISE USE
(Category Seven)

INFO SEEKING & CRITICAL ANALYSIS =>
PERSONAL KNOWLEDGE BASE
(Category Five)

KNOWLEDGE GAP & PROCESS =>
ACTION, SOLUTION etc
(Category Three)

INFO RECOGNITION & CONTROL =>
FUTURE RETRIEVAL
(Category Four)

KNOWING WHAT & KNOWING SOURCES =>
SUCCESSFUL RETRIEVAL
(Category Two)

=> = enables

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY =>
INFORMATION AWARENESS
(Category One)

**Figure 2: Outcome space depicting meaning structures of information literacy
(Bruce, 1997: 113)**

It is true that research within educational environments provides the theoretical framework for information literacy rather than in public libraries. Although this research has focused on conditions in schools and universities, it is clearly significant for the study of the capacity of public libraries for information literacy education. If public librarians take on a more active role in the education of school learners, they will need to examine the theoretical background

and research insights of information literacy to see how they might apply them in their own situations.

1.2.2 A theory of developmental public librarianship

In her survey of research in public librarianship, Durrance (1991: 284) warns that, without continuous research in the needs of their customers, public librarians might be accused of relying on outdated and limiting assumptions. Criticism, closer to home, has been that librarians in South Africa are philosophically naïve, operating unconsciously from within a positivist paradigm and so seeing libraries as objective neutral realities isolated from their political and economic contexts (National Education Policy Investigation, 1992: 4; Dick, 2002a: 29).

The PhD study follows the example of the Public and Community Libraries Inventory of South Africa (PACLISA) report (Van Helden & Lor, 2002: 2) in making no distinction between public libraries and community libraries. As the PACLISA report points out, public libraries are increasingly taking the name "community libraries", which in the 1980s denoted libraries set up by NGOs and community based organisations as part of the struggle against apartheid. The adoption of the name "community libraries" could signal a new conceptualisation of the role of public libraries in society, with a stronger emphasis on the community participation of the 1980s community resource centres (Stilwell, 2001: 203).

Perhaps one of the first signs of shifts in mainstream thinking on the social role of the public library in South Africa was the so-called "Zaaiman report" – an investigation into public libraries, commissioned by the South African Institute for Librarianship and Information Science in the late 1980s (Zaaiman, Roux & Rykheer, 1988; Zaaiman & Roux, 1989). It recommended that public libraries revisit their social mission and take on an actively developmental role. The authors define development as the "process of improving the quality of all human lives" through raising living levels, nurturing growing people's self-esteem and giving people more control over their lives and choices (Zaaiman, Roux & Rykheer, 1988: 6). They describe underdevelopment in terms of the lower levels of Maslow's hierarchy of needs, referring to people whose most acute needs are for basic survival and security. The role of a development agency, including the public library, is to create instruments and opportunities for development for people at this level (p. 7). The report warns that, if librarians are to gain credibility as agents of development in touch with the real needs of their communities, fundamental changes in attitudes and approaches are required (p. 251) – for example, acceptance of the need to expand library services beyond the developed literate minority.

Although making no mention of the *Zaaiman Report,* the National Education Policy Investigation (NEPI) report on libraries in 1992 made similar arguments. It recommended a "radical" philosophy for libraries, which might prioritise the information needs of the working class (National Education Policy Investigation, 1992: 55-56). A key element of NEPI's radical philosophy of public librarianship is acceptance of a "developmental" model, in which information is seen as a "key element in the implementation and sustenance of democracy and the education and empowerment of people" (p. 55).

The optimism of the early 1990s might well have been dampened by the stringent cuts in public library spending which followed South Africa's adoption of the values of the global market economy (Stilwell, 2001: 203, 204; Dick, 2002a: 30; Kagan, 2002: 1). Dick criticises the naiveté of South African librarians, who, he claims, continue to promote the "myth" that libraries create social change (2002a: 29) – with no reference to changes in the political economic climate. However, Dick's arguments, in themselves, perhaps refer rather to librarians' complacency than to doubts over the developmental social mission of the public library - in fact he, himself, claims that "books in libraries can inspire social movements" (p. 30).

In 2001, the School of Human and Social Studies at the University of Natal (Pietermaritzburg) revisited the documents of the early 1990s, when they published a collection of articles which explore the connections between development and information (Stilwell, Leach and Burton, 2001). The book provides a more sober analysis with the editors warning in their introduction that the two notions, "information" and "development", are contested ones and that information is not a quick fix for under-development (p. v). There is no simple cause and effect relationship between information and development (Leach, 2001). Or is it perhaps that research has not, as yet, convincingly documented the socio-economic impact of information on a community? In response to this question, Mchombu (2001: 237) contends that his research in community information centres in rural Malawi and Tanzania, indeed shows that a developmental model for libraries is possible, in which a positive relationship between development and information and library is constructed. The model depends, however, on the library staff's being prepared to offer more than passive reading room services. Elsewhere in the book, Leach echoes Mchombu's comments in his arguments that rural librarians need to be educated to be skilled "communicators" of information, rather than mere organisers and retrievers of information (2001: 179).

The emphasis on communication in the developmental model of public librarianship connects it to the information literacy theory that was discussed in the previous section – and to the

PhD study's social constructivist frame. The communication model that is appropriate for the developmental model is not the Shannon-Weaver linear transmission of information from source to passive recipient. In the information literacy theories of Kuhlthau and Bruce, information users are assumed to be active agents in their construction of meaning and knowledge. Similarly, in the developmental model of libraries, the agency of information users in the communication process is assumed. Clearly, this vision for the information work of public libraries depends on the capacity of their staff to offer responsive and flexible services that are more about constructive and interactive communication than the mere storing and handing-on of print-based information. Strangely, the sole allusion to information literacy education in Stilwell, Leach and Burton's book on the role of information in community development, which was referred to above, is to a project in the university libraries of the Western Cape (Karelse, 2001: 154). The gap might be evidence of the lack of cognizance of the concept of information literacy in public library circles. Nonetheless, the stance of much of the writing in the book implies the need for information literacy education in the context of public or community library services. These services are not just about providing information in accessible formats and languages, a service which the book continually alludes to; they are, also, about educating people in lifelong information skills.

As Witbooi (2001: 7) points out, the developmental model of public library implies the acceptance of a strongly educational philosophy. The rise of the notion of "social capital" in the 1990s - the stocks of social trust, norms and networks that people can draw upon to solve common problems (Civic Practices Network, 2004) - might provide public librarianship with a renewed philosophical framework. Recent South African government thinking has made much of the concept of the "developmental state" and its role, especially at local government level, in the growth of social capital. Echoing the thinking evident in recent speeches by South African political leaders (for example Radebe, 1998; Mbeki, 2004, 2005), in her speech to the National Council of Provinces in 2004, the Deputy Minister for Provincial and Local Government pointed to the role of local government to build social capital:

> In tandem with the development of human capital is the development of social capital. Local Government should therefore encourage and develop the presence and capacity of all relevant collective stakeholders in the local economy, for example, chambers of commerce, co-operatives, NGOs, CBOs, development agencies, etc.... Local Government should also play a leading role in organising a network of local actors for preparing and elaborating projects and initiatives, which can have access to the provincial, national and international resources that are available (Hangana, 2004).

Whether or not the Deputy Minister includes a public library as one of the "development agencies" she refers to, her words would resonate with those who argue for the model of the developmental public library.

The theorists of social capital – as well as South African education authorities - have identified education as a powerful tool to be used by government in the development of a community's social and human capital so that a community builds its capacity to take informed decisions, to take responsibility for the improvement of its members' lives, and to participate actively in existing social and economic institutions (Glaeser, 2001: 390; Western Cape Education Department, 2005: 23). This kind of thinking recalls that in the South African book discussed above which argues the power of information services to provide ordinary people with access to the economy and social support structures (Stilwell, Leach & Burton, 2001: vii). However as above [1.1.1], a distinction between "physical" access and "intellectual" is necessary. Education in information literacy - or what Dudley calls "community informacy" (2000: 31) - encapsulates the developmental and educational mission of public librarianship.

Given the nature of South African society, the acceptance of the developmental mission implies a more active role in adult basic education and in formal school education than might be the case in the traditional Western model. Parallel to the debates in South Africa, in recent years librarians in other African countries have been questioning inherited Western models. Issak's survey of the literature on public libraries in Africa, including 10 commissioned reports from various African countries, leads her to call for new approaches that take into account that the majority of public library users in Africa are young people - school pupils and students (2000: 12, 19). Sturges and Neill (1998) also point to the demographics of African countries in suggesting that the needs of youth should take precedence in library planning.

It is noteworthy that a survey of the literature of public librarianship, even in the West, reveals a strand that re-examines its educational role in society with some commentators recalling that public libraries began in the 19th century with a strongly educational bent (for example Martin, 1998: 4). The most recent UNESCO Public Library Manifesto (1995) has a strongly educational and developmental flavour. It labels the public library immediately as the "gateway to knowledge" and its opening philosophical statement is that "constructive participation and the development of democracy depend on satisfactory education as well as on free and unlimited access to knowledge, thought and culture and information". It goes on to say that the public library provides "a basic condition for lifelong learning and cultural development of the individual and social groups". This kind of language is reminiscent of that found in the literature of information literacy education – for example the stress on the need for "access". In the light of information literacy thinking, "access" must imply more than the mere provision of a building and information materials. And, indeed, the document explicitly

lists the "facilitating of information literacy skills" as one of the key missions of the public library (p. 2).

This discussion will be returned to in Chapter 3 as conceptions of the social role of public libraries and consequent notions of staff competencies are clearly pertinent to the study. Here it is enough to state that the philosophical stance of the PhD study is to adopt the words of Stilwell, Leach and Burton, who, despite their cautioning against simplistic linkages, still contend that information for ordinary people can empower them to take their place in democracy and the economy by creating "possibilities for action", "opportunities for interaction" and a "platform for participation" (2001: vii).

1.2.3 Social constructivism

Social constructivism provides the overarching theoretical frame for the three pillars of theory discussed in the preceding two sections– and for the PhD study. The constructivist paradigm understands reality to be "subjective and multiple" as opposed to the positivist view of reality as "objective and singular" (Creswell, 1994: 5). Constructivist researchers set out to explore how phenomena are viewed and interpreted by participants (Dick, 1993: 56) and prefer, therefore, qualitative methodologies, which describe, analyse and interpret personal constructions. The empirical work of both Kuhlthau and Bruce is rooted in this world view.

Social constructivism allows for the interplay of individual and his or her social context as it explores how personal constructions are shaped by the processes of social exchange (Schwandt, 1998: 240). According to its proponents, an individual's use of information to make meaning of his or her world has to be viewed in the context of social relationships (Tuominen & Savolainen, 1997: 83; Burton, 2001: 223). Social constructivism thus allows for the blending of the research perspectives of phenomenological interpretivism and those of engaged critical research, which aims at transforming the world and making a difference to people's lives (Quantz, 1992: 447). One of the implications of the social constructivist frame for the PhD research project is its interest in, what Dervin calls, the "unruly beast" of context (1997: 13). Dervin, whose research is seminal in the cognitive sense-making school of information science (including Kuhlthau's ISP modelling) (Pettigrew & McKechnie, 2001: 67), towards the late 1990s has recognised the social nature of information use and the resulting need to examine the context of research. She refers to both the need for reflexivity on the part of the researcher, who should be continuously aware of the context in which he or she "swims" and to the need to consider the social context of research participants (1997: 32).

1.3   Research problem

The argument that public libraries should intervene in providing for the curricular needs of school learners rests on assumptions that require examination. It assumes that public libraries have the capacity and readiness for a more direct educational role. Possible questions are: whether public libraries are equipped in terms of resources and staff to take on responsibility for information literacy education; whether, in an era of what Lor, former head of South Africa's National Library, calls "crippling" budget cutbacks (1998), they can be asked to take on increased responsibilities; and whether they have the will to step into a new demanding role. A close look needs to be taken at the libraries that are already providing services to schools in order to identify the conditions favourable and unfavourable for information literacy programmes.

The question about the readiness of librarians to be educators has already been raised. A more specific question is whether public librarians have the capacity to teach information literacy. The question is not only relevant to South Africa. In their review of international writing in this area, Bruce and Lampson comment that there is very little research that focuses on librarians' views on information literacy (2002: 82). In their investigation of more than 2000 information professionals, including 800 public librarians, in the State of Washington, USA, they concluded that information professionals cannot be expected to be advocates for information literacy if they themselves are not educated about its importance and viability. They also found widespread unease with regard to teaching and suggest that librarians need to be taught how to teach others (2002: 103). Nkosi's study in the Eastern Cape found 75 percent of the 96 youth librarians to have no training in working with youth (2000: 247). The researcher's study of children's librarians in 67 libraries in Cape Town in 1999 led to questions about their education and training in what might be assumed to be their own discipline (Hart, 1999b). Only 43 percent of the 69 respondents had a professional qualification; 49 percent had no post-school qualification. The information literacy of educators in schools served by public libraries will of course be significant in the planning of information literacy programmes. Again, the researcher's previous research in Cape Town has found that teachers' information literacy cannot be taken for granted (Hart, 1999a; 2000b). And, in a study of 91 Australian teachers, Henri (2001: 126) found them to "demonstrate much of the impoverished information behaviour shown by senior school students". The questions relating to the information literacy of educators and the capacity of public library staff for education and specifically for information literacy education are obviously significant for the research problem at the heart of this thesis.

The discussion of the research problem and the preceding background discussion suggest questions to be answered by the study. The review of existing research and professional practice, which will be reported on in Chapters 2 and 3, also generate pertinent questions. Chapter 4 will return to the research problem and its questions.

1.4   Research design

The study investigates the research problem in a two-phase empirical study of the public libraries of the province of Mpumalanga. The title of the dissertation makes explicit that the study is confined to one of the nine provinces of South Africa. The choice of Mpumalanga as research site will be discussed below and again in Chapter 4. In Chapter 9 it will be argued that the rigour of the study's methods and reporting might allow its findings to be "abstracted" and "generalised" or "transferred" to other settings (Klein & Myers, 1999: 75) and found "useful" or "applicable" to decision-makers and practitioners in other contexts (McClure, 1991: 256).

The theoretical framework discussed above and the research problem imply the need for, what Creswell (1994: 178), calls a two-phase and mixed methods study – a macro-level survey of the libraries using an interview questionnaire that informs the second-phase qualitative case or field study of one site. The two phases of the study are interdependent. The first phase survey frames the qualitative field study as it identifies key themes which serve to scaffold at least the early stages of the field study of the second phase. As will be reported in Chapter 4, the personal visits to the libraries in the course of the Phase 1 survey enriched the data-gathering process. However, the short visits gave only brief impressions. The second phase case study, conducted over the period of one month in one small town, allowed for relatively-long term observation and for in-depth interviewing. The second phase study, thus, both deepens and broadens the first phase survey. It focuses on the two libraries in the town, both of which were included in the first phase survey; then it widens the view by including the educators in the surrounding schools, who are clearly key role-players in information literacy education. As will be explained in Chapter 4, each of the two phases favours one dominant methodology; but, in reality, both phases are both qualitative and quantitative.

1.4.1 Research methodology

The constructivist framework of the study implies an interpretive and relativist view of reality as opposed to the "objective" static world view of positivism. However, just because the researcher favours the qualitative paradigm, does not mean that she might not use the methodologies associated with positivism. According to Creswell (1994: 176), purists might

not approve of this mixing of methods from two different philosophical paradigms, quantitative and qualitative. However, post-positivism has brought more pragmatic approaches, which agree that, to understand social phenomena, methodological pluralism is acceptable (Glazier, 1992: 209; Creswell, 1994: 176; Guba & Lincoln, 1994: 109; Dervin, 1997: 23; Flick, 1998: 258; Sawyer, 2001: 166).

As pointed out above, the research project has a design structure of two interdependent phases. The first phase of the study is a broad survey of the public libraries, gathering both qualitative and quantitative data by means of interviews based on a semi-structured questionnaire. The aim was to gather quantitative data on the resources and facilities within the libraries and their services to schools – and, by means of several open-ended questions, qualitative data on library staff attitudes towards the impact of Curriculum 2005 and possible changes in their role.

The first phase led into the next phase – a more focused case or field study of the information literacy programmes in two public libraries in one small town. In this phase, an added emphasis was on teachers' use of the library – and on their beliefs about learning and libraries. The second phase case study employs the methodologies of ethnographic or participant observation field work. Thus, the researcher is "present to participate, observe and/or interview" (Wolcott, 1992: 32). Chapter 4 continues the discussion of the research methodologies of the two phases.

1.4.2 Choice of site

Mpumalanga was chosen as the research site for several reasons. Firstly, the Director of Mpumalanga Provincial Library and Information Service welcomed the study. In 2003 he approached the Centre for Information Literacy at the University of Cape Town to establish a training programme for the public librarians in his province. The mission statement of the Mpumalanga Library and Information Service resonates with the philosophical framework of the study. Its choice of words implies an awareness of the role of the public library in the development of information literacy in the individual and the community:

> Bringing people and information together to create knowledge and improve personal well-being in Mpumalanga.

The vision statement suggests a belief in a role beyond mere information provision in its highlighting knowledge creation and personal development. Therefore, the researcher had the promise of a favourable climate to work in.

Apart from the above pragmatic reason, the province of Mpumalanga lends itself to the research problem for a number of reasons. Its social and economic characteristics throw into relief the critical issues that will be highlighted in the literature review in Chapters 2 and 3. It is one of South Africa's five "new" provinces, having amalgamated two apartheid era "homelands". Only 18 percent of its schools have a library, according to figures provided by the national Ministry of Education in 2002 (Bot, 2005: 6).

Another reason for the choice of site was that the researcher would like to build on earlier studies conducted in metropolitan Cape Town (1999b; 2000c; 2003b). The projects together will, she believes, provide an important contribution to knowledge in the area and to future information literacy programming.

1.5   Significance and limitations of the study

In 1991, in one of the standard texts of research in librarianship, Durrance suggested four areas for research to prepare and strengthen public libraries for the 21st century:

- access to information
- information needs and uses
- library funding and economy
- libraries and education (1991: 280).

The PhD study relates to all four.

The two-phase study will, it is hoped, make a substantial contribution to the building of new knowledge in a relatively uncharted field. As stated earlier, information literacy research internationally has largely been confined to the education sector – of school and academic librarianship. Moreover, there is hardly any research in the attributes of information literacy educators, with much of the international writing assuming that library staff shares the perspectives of information literacy researchers and theorists. A further point is that the existing journal and conference literature of information literacy education in South Africa includes little solid empirical research. It comprises mostly advocacy statements.

The study will have practical benefits as one of its main motivations is to provide insights for the design of information literacy education in Mpumalanga Province. It is believed that the case study of Mpumalanga has insights for the larger public library sector in South Africa – and indeed for the even broader educational sector.

The discussion of curriculum change in South Africa in Chapter 2 since 1995 and of its impact on public libraries that follows in Chapter 3 highlights the timeliness of the project. It seems that South African learners and teachers urgently need access to learning and information resources - and to information literacy education. Yet it is clear that the shortage of school libraries will continue for years and the pressure on public libraries to provide for curriculum needs will continue. To respond to these demands, public libraries need to plan effective interventions and educational programmes. This planning will rely on information on the staff responsible for the implementation of information literacy programmes and on the needs of school educators and learners.

One limitation is that the project is confined to the information literacy education of school learners. Nkosi shows how urgent the needs of *non*-school-going youth in South Africa are (2000). She expresses concern that libraries are preoccupied with the needs of school learners and are failing in their responsibilities by not reaching out to the large numbers of undereducated and unemployed youth in their communities. Taking note of Nkosi's point, the study gathers data on all activities in the libraries that might support lifelong learning, involving any sector of the community. It thus follows the example of a study of New Zealand public libraries in 2001 (Koning, 2001). Internationally, public librarians are more involved in the information education of adults than of children, as will be shown in Chapter 3; and it is true that the need for adult information literacy education in South African libraries is urgent. However, in South Africa at this time, it seems to the researcher that the needs of youth should take precedence. And her particular focus is the needs of school-going children and youth. The context of much of the research in information literacy education in the international literature is academic projects within the school programme. However, this does not mean that the information and life-skills needs of youth out of school are ignored. The articles of Millward (1994) and Stilwell and Bell (2003) and Nkosi's doctoral thesis (2000) bear witness to the huge challenges facing South Africa youth. Despite its focus on the curricular needs of school-going youth, the study in Mpumalanga is mindful of the need for survival and coping information, as well. And it is hoped that the project's findings will provide valuable information for the design of programmes for other sectors of the community.

1.6 Delineations of key concepts

1.6.1 Information literacy

Section 1 above covered some of the definitions in the literature. The preferred definition for the study is the one that came out of a series of focus interviews with tertiary level librarians in Cape Town, which was first quoted above in Section 1.1, and which is used verbatim in the National Council for Library and Services Act of 2001:

> Information literacy refers to the ability of learners to access, use and evaluate information from different sources, to enhance learning, solve problems and generate new knowledge (Sayed & de Jager, 1997: 12; South Africa, 2001).

It is a South African definition; it is applicable at school and tertiary level; it is inclusive in that it does not assume sophisticated ICT; and it is compatible with a constructivist interpretivist philosophy. In its stress on learning and the building of knowledge, it echoes the more recent international statements that see information literacy in terms of a learning process and problem-solving. Perhaps, ideally, it should include an explicit reference to lifelong learning as the key argument for information literacy is that it empowers an individual by teaching him or her how to learn.

1.6.2 Information literacy education

Information literacy education refers to programmes designed to teach information literacy. Some critics of the term prefer terms like "study skills" programmes or "research skills" education, arguing that educators are more likely to understand these (Eisenberg & Brown, 1992: 106). The choice of the term "literacy education" over "skills instruction" indicates a belief that information literacy is not a set of skills that can be taught mechanistically.

Moore's description for the gathering of worldwide experts on information literacy in Prague in 2002 serves to bring together some of the theoretical and pedagogical threads of this chapter. She follows the example of school library associations in the United States and Australia by equating information literacy education to learning, critical thinking and problem solving. She places it:

> at the confluence of resource-based learning practice, constructivist and metacognitive theories, and the practice of developing thinking skills through modelling and scaffolding. Its central processes draw on critical thinking, problem solving, and the development of extensive understanding of information functions and systems in the context of the curriculum and beyond (2002: 2).

Moore's emphasis on the high-level cognitive skills of information literacy points to the key distinction between information literacy education and traditional library education, which teaches students about *the* library and its information sources, as typified, perhaps, in the book

education and media studies, which were timetabled subjects in South African schools throughout the 1980s (Beswick & Beswick, 1981).

There has been much debate in the literature of school and academic librarianship on the most effective ways to teach information literacy. But, there is consensus that a process approach is essential, in which learners learn to see information seeking and information use as a process of building knowledge. The traditional library skills or "sources" approach in which librarians demonstrate the use of library materials has been found to be ineffective, largely because they do not teach students *why* and *when* they should be using the sources. The emphasis is on the sources or tools rather than on the problem-solving cognitive processes the tools are used for, and so learners are unable to transfer the skills they are "taught" in the library to other situations (Bertland, 1986; Kuhlthau, 1987: 24). Several process models have appeared in the professional literature, which embed the skills and source instruction in the learning process of school assignments and projects (Loertscher and Woolls, 1999: 84-113).

Information literacy education, moreover, does not assume that its aim is to teach about information resources in the library only, or that it is the sole responsibility of librarians. Its purpose is to empower people to use information in whatever formats and sources are available and appropriate – ranging from oral sources in the immediate community to electronic databases or networks such as the Internet.

1.6.3 Public libraries

A public library is a library set up by government authorities, at local, provincial or national level, to serve a geographic area or community. The *UNESCO Public Library Manifesto* (1995) states that in principle the public library shall be free of charge. It also suggests that public library services must be adapted to the different needs of rural and urban areas and that the public library network must be designed in relation to other kinds of libraries, including those in schools, colleges and universities.

At present in South Africa there is some ambiguity over the standing of public libraries, there being no national legislation obliging local authorities to offer library services (Nassimbeni, 2001: 33). South Africa has a three tier system of government: national, provincial and local. Chapter 3, Schedule 5, of the 1996 South African Constitution defines public libraries as a provincial responsibility and ignores the status quo, dating from pre-1994 provincial ordinances, that their staffing and building costs are shared by local governments. It makes no explicit mention of libraries in the section on the responsibilities of the third tier and, in theory, money spent by local authorities on libraries is unauthorised expenditure in terms of

public finance legislation (The Print Industries Cluster Council Working Group on Libraries, 2005: 17). A sense of insecurity will prevail until this anomaly has been attended to – perhaps through changes to the Constitution or to provincial legislation (The Print Industries Cluster Council Working Group on Libraries, 2005: 87). Almost certainly, it will be addressed by the National Council of Library and Information Services, which was established in October 2003, since one of its functions is to advise Government on legislation affecting libraries (South Africa, 2001).

In the meantime, Mpumalanga Province's public libraries are typical of other South African provincial services in that they have a provincial organisation with a head-office and six regional centres, which are responsible for selecting and supplying library materials across the provincial network. Each "affiliated" public library has a large amount of autonomy, with its buildings and staff being paid for by local government structures, the municipalities. Mpumalanga Provincial Library Service falls under the Province's Department of Sport, Recreation, Arts and Culture. This is in common with four other provincial library services, the other four falling under their respective Departments of Education (Leach, 1998: 4).

1.6.4 Public librarians

The IFLA/UNESCO guidelines for public libraries distinguish four categories of staff:: qualified librarians, library assistants, specialist staff and support staff. They also spell out the responsibilities of each category (International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions, 2001: 62). The PhD study, however, defines a public librarian as someone who works in a public library – apart from cleaning and security staff. It makes no distinction between professionally qualified staff and so-called "unqualified". This is in response to the author's previous research in public libraries in Cape Town, which found what might be regarded as "professional" work, in some contexts, to be shared by a mix of professionally qualified graduates and school matriculants (Hart, 1999b).

The issue of professional education and status is of interest to the purpose of the study, however. The *UNESCO Public Library Manifesto* states unequivocally that "professional and continuing education of the librarian is indispensable to ensure adequate services" (1995). And, the American academic, Kagan, suggests that stronger insistence on the professional status of librarianship in South Africa would provide a more credible position to negotiate a new social role for public libraries (2002: 2). Internationally, professional library associations lay down minimum competencies for public library staff, with separate statements for children's and youth staff. Typical of such statements is that of the Association for Library

Service to Children, a division of the American Library Association, which categorises competencies into areas of expertise such as:

- knowledge of client group
- communication skills
- administrative and managerial skills
- materials and collection development,
- advocacy, public relations and networking
- programming skills
- professionalism and professional development (1999).

At the time of writing, the Standards Generating Board of the South African Qualifications Authority is still in the process of producing standards statements for the library sector in South Africa which might well result in similar lists of competencies.

As stated in the preceding section, public libraries in South Africa are a joint responsibility of local and provincial authorities. The relationships between staff in the provincial library structures, based in the provincial capitals or in regional offices, and the staff on the ground, in the municipal libraries, are of interest to the doctoral study, since they might conceivably either enhance or inhibit information literacy education. Therefore, although the focus of the study is primarily on staff working in the municipal public libraries, it does include interviews with certain key informants in the provincial offices and with the six provincial regional librarians.

1.6.5 School libraries

The study chooses the term "school library" in preference to other possible terms found in the international professional literature – for example "media centre", "resources centre", "learning resources centre", "school library media centre", "resource collection". They all refer to a collection of literature, information and learning resources, within a school or close-by, organised for the use of teachers and learners. Usually the school library implies a central collection, although other models include decentralised classroom collections and "virtual libraries", which provide access to resources via the Internet and other networks.

1.6.6 Teacher-librarians

The study uses the term "teacher-librarian" interchangeably with "school librarian". Some commentators reserve the term "teacher-librarian" for part-time school librarians who also engage in subject or classroom teaching. In some contexts, the term "school librarian" might refer to a qualified librarian without teaching qualifications (Le Roux, 2001: 20). From time

to time, there are attempts to find another name like "media specialist" or "information specialist".

1.6.7 Educators and learners

A short explanation of the terms "educator" and "learner" might be helpful to readers outside South Africa. One of the indicators of shifts in thinking in South African education since 1994 is the use, in official documents, of "educator" for "teacher" and "learner" for "pupil" or "scholar" or "student" (at school level). The aim is to signal a shift to a more learner centred ethos where the teacher is a facilitator of learning, rather than someone who gives knowledge to a passive pupil.

1.6.8 Historically advantaged / disadvantaged

Similarly, non-South Africans might not understand such terms as "historically or previously advantaged" and "historically or previously disadvantaged" when referring to schools, libraries, geographic areas and even individuals. The terms are one of the legacies of apartheid, where all areas of society were racially labelled. In post-apartheid South Africa, "historically advantaged" refers to whites and to the institutions that were reserved for them in the past; and "historically disadvantaged" to blacks – including Africans, Coloureds and Asians, all of whom were discriminated against in the past. In recent years, a Black middle class has emerged but it is still true that class is impacted on by the country's history with the average white household earning six times as much as the average black one (Butler, 2004: 70).

While the PhD study does not accept the scientific validity of racial labels, the legacy of apartheid in town-planning, schools and libraries means that it quite often has to refer to race. It follows Butler's example in using "African" to refer to those officially classified as "Native" or black under apartheid and "black" to refer more widely to all those who were not classified as white (2004: xii).

1.7 Outline of chapters

The dissertation is structured as follows.

Chapter 1 sketches the background to the study, gives its theoretical framework and introduces the research problem and research design.

Chapters 2 and 3 provide the background to and rationale for the project by means of a literature survey. They analyse the professional, research and official literature with the aim of demonstrating the need for the project and uncovering its key questions. Chapter 2 first explores the implications of educational change internationally for school libraries and information literacy education. The focus then turns to educational change in South Africa in the form of Curriculum 2005 – in the light of the need of South African youth for information literacy education and the shortage of school libraries. Chapter 3 turns to the literature of public librarianship, exploring its educational role in society and its specific role in information literacy education. It also looks for evidence on the impact of educational change in South Africa on public libraries.

The focus in Chapter 4 is on the research design and methodology. The Chapter first describes the research site, Mpumalanga Province. The bulk of the chapter explains the methodologies of the two-phase study – giving details of the first phase macro-level survey and its instruments and the subsequent participant observation case study. The Chapter also articulates appropriate evaluative criteria for the project and its research ethics.

Chapters 5 and 6 summarise, analyse and, to some extent, interpret the data gathered in the macro level survey. The focus in Chapter 5 is on the first two sections of the questionnaire and involves a fair amount of quantitative analysis. Chapter 6 concentrates on the more subjective questions in Section C of the questionnaire. There is however no rigid barrier between the two chapters. Where necessary, data across sections are compared.

Chapter 7 consolidates the first phase in interpreting the findings of the previous two chapters in light of the research problem, the research questions, the research framework and existing research. It then proceeds to lay the ground for the second phase case study.

Chapter 8 reports on the second phase in-depth case study. It is scaffolded by three vignettes, which provide rich description of the case and highlight the theoretical issues. It also analyses the data gathered in the observation and interviews in the schools.

Chapter 9 links the two phases of the study. It returns to the tentative findings of Chapter 7 and views them in the light of the second phase case study. It articulates common theoretical threads across the two phases and draws conclusions.

Chapter 10 discusses the implications of the study in terms of recommendations for various sectors and for further research. It concludes with some reflections on the research study.

CHAPTER 2
EDUCATIONAL CHANGE AND THE NEED FOR INFORMATION LITERACY EDUCATION: A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Chapters 2 and 3 have three aims:

- to explain the rationale for the PhD study and locate it in its historical background and present context

- to explore the professional and research literature for insights that might throw light on the research problem

- to provide insight into the theoretical framework of the study, described in Chapter 1.

The nature of the research problem means that a wide range of literature has to be examined across the fields of school and public librarianship and education. The survey includes professional reports from librarian practitioners, research papers and theses, official government documents, position papers of professional associations and reports of various committees. The bulk of published research in information literacy has come from the USA, Canada and Australia. The advent of Curriculum 2005 has focused the minds of South African librarians on the need for information literacy education, as will be shown in this chapter. However, much of the resulting publications are advocacy documents rather than reports of empirical research.

The underlying assumption of the project, as explained in Chapter 1 [Section 1], has to be made explicit immediately – namely that information literacy education is a key mission of both educational and public libraries. This belief is the justification for the study and explains the thread of argument in Chapters 2 and 3. The analysis of educational change in Chapter 2 leads to a discussion, in Chapter 3, of its impact on public libraries and on the information-seeking behaviour of school learners.

2.1 Introduction

Chapter 2 begins with an examination of the links between educational change and information literacy education. It then moves to a focus on South Africa's new curriculum, Curriculum 2005 and its revision, the Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS). The argument is that a contradiction exists between the resource-based and "library friendly" curriculum and the reality, as described in Chapter 1 [1.1.2], that very few schools have libraries. Yet, the lack of urgency in educational circles in confronting the shortage of school libraries suggests that education authorities and educators have not grasped the significance of

this contradiction. Throughout the chapter, explanations for the gaps in understanding are sought.

2.2 Educational change, school libraries and information literacy education

Educational reform internationally reflects recognition of the need for information handling competencies in today's knowledge economies (Pennell, 1999: 196). Curriculum statements across the world, including South Africa as will be shown below, now explicitly list information skills as a crucial outcome of schooling. Pennell, in discussing the Canadian Students' Bill of Information Rights, lists the characteristics of the information age and points to information literacy as a survival tool that every school leaver has a right to:

> Students must be able to sift through the massive amounts of data available and select what is current and relevant for their purposes, internalize it and make it meaningful. They must become information literate (Pennell, 1999: 189).

Apart from explicit mentions of information skills in desired outcomes statements, information literacy is implicit in shifts in learning philosophies and in pedagogies. As Doyle (1999: 99) points out, "Knowing how to ask the right questions may be the most important step in learning". Various commentators have described the changes in education in terms of shifts from behaviourism and "chalk and talk" towards constructivism. Education systems today value independent inquiry learning that presents learners with authentic problems to be solved. Table 1 summarises shifts in education as garnered from the literature (Fullan, 1991; Marsh & Morris, 1991; Brooks & Brooks, 1993; Brown, 1999).

Behaviourism	Constructivism
Teacher isolated	Team and collaborative teaching
Teacher expert	Learner centred. Teacher facilitates active discovery, inquiry and problem-based learning
Content over process	Process as important as content
Group instruction	Individualised instruction
Textbook reliance	Variety of resources
Assessment by examinations	Continuous & formative assessment e.g. by projects & portfolios of work

Table 1: Educational change in the literature

It has to be said that this summary of trends represents what is found in the prescriptive and philosophical literature - not necessarily what is happening in classrooms. Loertscher and Woolls (1999: 57) warn of a gap between the professional literature and school practice.

Indeed, there is a thread of research evidence, including the researcher's own work in South Africa (Hart, 1999a), that shows that these shifts cannot be taken for granted. Loertscher and Woolls (1999: 57) point out that the implication for information literacy educators is that they should be flexible enough to work in either environment.

Librarians, internationally and in South Africa, have been quick to see that educational reform has brought an opportunity for an enhanced role, which might recognise that the mission of librarianship is central to education and lifelong learning - and consequently to social development. They have seen educational change in terms of shifts to resource-based or inquiry learning – in which learners construct their knowledge through engaging with a variety of sources to answer problems and questions (for example Metcalfe, 1994; Breivik & Senn, 1998: 21; Pennell, 1999: 197; Metzger, 2000: 1). The need for libraries, which provide access to a collection of learning and information resources, is obvious – or so it seems to librarians. The effect of educational change for school librarianship internationally has been a strong focus on the educational role of a library in terms of information literacy education – as evidenced in library associations' statements, standard texts, conference proceedings and the research literature. The most recent standards statements of the school library associations in the USA and Australia, arguably the two countries with the best developed school library systems, highlight the changes in thinking. They no longer specify quantitative criteria but rather present the school library as a crucial tool in the learning programme (American Association of School Librarians & Association for Educational Communications and Technology, 1998; Australian School Library Association, 2001). Similarly, the basic texts of the field are preoccupied with integrating the library in the school programme: thus, the focus in Haycock's landmark text, in all its 38 chapters, is on the development of "a strong integrated program that will have a positive effect on student achievement" (1999: xii). Since the 1990s, the conference proceedings of the International Association of School Librarianship, as well as the contents of its journal, *School Libraries Worldwide,* are further testimony to the preoccupation with learning and with the integration of the school library's information literacy programme into the broader curriculum (for example Lighthall & Howe, 1999; Hughes & Selby, 2001; Zinn, Hart & Howe, 2003). Overall, the argument for school libraries is not that the provision of a library in itself improves school quality. Mere access to resources does not improve learning (Moore, 2002: 6). Rather, the primary argument of school librarians is that the mission of school libraries in enabling information literacy contributes to high quality education.

The literature of academic librarianship, at both school and tertiary level, includes a strand that highlights the connections between libraries and curriculum (for example Breivik & Gee,

1989; Stadler, 1991; Diepraam & Bester, 1993; Brown, 1999; Asselin, 2001). The contention is that libraries thrive in certain pedagogical climates. Research in what distinguishes these library-friendly climates in schools has found that key factors include:

- a shared learner-centred philosophy of education among a school's principal and its educators
- the flexible scheduling of information skills instruction so that the skills are encountered "just in time", as students engage in real-life learning
- collaborative partnerships between teacher and librarian
- allowance of time for the early stages of a project when learners need to explore a topic and relate it to prior learning (Kuhlthau, 1993a; Limberg, 1999; Lance, Rodney & Hamilton-Pennell, 2000; Asselin, 2001; Henri, Hay & Oberg, 2002):

Henri (1999: 6) provides a list of 23 benchmarks that might be used to assess a school's progress towards a culture of information literacy. Some of these, like the existence of an Intranet, are unrealistic in the South African context. However, there are others that might be useful: for example, formative assessment tools like students' portfolios and preliminary drafts, explicit mention of information skills in school policy statements, and recognition that teachers are learners as well as students.

As mentioned above, the international literature of school librarianship in recent years is dominated by arguments for the vital contribution of libraries, via their information literacy programmes, to educational change. The International Association of School Librarianship (2003) provides links to many of the American, Australian, British and Canadian studies that prove that school libraries "make a difference" to the academic programme. Perhaps in response to calls for "evidence-based" advocacy (Todd, 2001), there is less rhetoric and more empirical research in support of these arguments. Todd's study in an Australian school (1995c) found that information literacy education, when built into a science project, led to deeper learning and higher scores. Lance's two large studies of high schools in the American state of Colorado are significant for South African educationists as they indicate that access to libraries and information literacy education is a strong predictor of academic success that overcomes any differences among schools in terms of class size, and socio-economic context (Lance, Welborn, Hamilton-Pennell, 1993; Lance, Rodney, Hamilton-Pennell, 2000: 9). The evaluation of the huge *Library Power* project in the 1990s that injected library resources, over a period of 10 years, into hundreds of American schools, including some of the poorest, provides insight into the background factors which enabled the improvements in learning evident in many of the schools (Wheelock, 1999). The added resources in some schools are shown to be a catalyst for reforming teaching, learning and professional culture – but only if

teachers' beliefs and assumptions about student learning and resource-based learning are supportive. The largest research study of students' own perceptions of the role of libraries is the *Student Learning through Ohio School Libraries* project, which from October 2002 surveyed more than 13,000 students in Ohio in order to examine how they benefit from libraries (Ohio Educational Library Media Association, 2004). Its central finding is that the "effective school library led by a credentialed librarian plays a critical role in facilitating learning, in general, and information literacy, in particular". The proviso that the libraries that improve learning are those staffed by qualified librarians echoes research in New Zealand which found a correlation between rating of school library quality and number of teacher-librarian hours (Slyfield, 2001: 45). In the South African context, it is too easy perhaps to think of libraries as collections of resources and to ignore the evidence that they will be wasted if they are not managed by dedicated staff. As Moore (2002: 6) warns, children do not learn information skills "by osmosis", just by being given learning resources.

An obvious response to claims of positive learning outcomes for information literacy interventions is to ask what exactly is improved. In answer to such questions, Kuhlthau (1999b: 95) identifies 10 indicators of improved learning among students in her assessment of the *Library Power* schools, ranging from increased enthusiasm for learning to higher marks. Recognising the need for more precision in the kind of claims discussed in this section, the Centre for International Scholarship in School Libraries at Rutgers University in the United States has recently embarked on a project to design instruments and procedures for assessing student learning through information literacy education (Todd, 2003).

In South Africa as well, over the years, there has been a thin strand of research and comment, which looks beneath the visible provision and uses of library resources to examine the deeper connections between libraries and prevailing attitudes to learning (for example Kistan, 1992; Diepraam & Bester, 1993). Overduin and De Wit's major study of South African school libraries in the 1980s (1987) concluded that school libraries, in those schools that had them, were underused. Other commentators agreed (for example Kistan, 1992; Le Roux, 1992; Olën, 1993). Libraries were perhaps seen as luxuries – add-ons to the educational programme. There was a tradition of weekly "book education" classes in the library but little attempt was made to integrate this education into the rest of the learning programme (Beswick & Beswick, 1981). Teaching and learning styles within a school are clearly linked to the prevailing educational ethos, which, in its turn, is linked to the country's political economy (Fredericks, 1993: 7; 317). Stadler (1991) explains the stunting of school library development in South Africa's "black" schools in terms of the apartheid ethos that blacks were destined to be unthinking cogs in the labour machine, in no need of libraries.

In reading the information literacy research studies in the international literature, it is at times intimidating to see that they assume facilities and resources beyond the reach at present of most South African schools. However, there are a few studies in South Africa that demonstrate the value of information literacy education within typically disadvantaged circumstances. Zinn's Masters Degree project in a school in Cape Town (1997) shows how, with creative thinking, knowledge of information literacy theory and, significantly, a public library within reach, an integrated information literacy project can be achieved within relatively disadvantaged circumstances. The case studies that came out of the *Library Project for Young Learners* (LPYL), a Swedish-funded school library intervention, confirm the importance of the human aspects of information literacy (Naiker & Mbokazi, 2002). The project donated just R5000 to the libraries in the three pilot study schools, all historically disadvantaged; and then concentrated on developing the designated teacher-librarian's knowledge of information literacy and on nurturing an information literate culture in each school, via library committees for example. The case studies report positive results in terms of changing participants' outlooks and practices, but find that sustained progress will depend on systemic change – the finalising of a national school library policy, for example (Naiker & Mbokazi, 2002: 36). The researcher's own Masters Degree study of project work within a disadvantaged school in Cape Town in 1999 concluded that the most significant factor in information skills education in the school was not shortages of resources but rather teachers' beliefs about learning and about information (Hart, 1999a). Any new idea or recommendation from the new curriculum was filtered through these deeply-held, often unexamined, beliefs. One belief that prevailed among the participants in the study was that they were "serving a disadvantaged community who have nothing" so "we can't do it here" (p. 145). The effect was that the potential resources, inside and outside the school building, were not exploited.

This finding lends support to some international research in the significance for information literacy education of teachers' and principals' beliefs about the use of libraries and information resources (for example Meyer & Newton, 1992; Hara, 1999; Asselin, 2001; Moore, 2002: 8). As Brown (1999: 180) points out:

> To ask teachers to change the materials they use for teaching, and the teaching approaches they use, is to require a change in their basic beliefs about how students learn.

The school library is dependent on its parent school's "culture", its prevailing assumptions, beliefs and values – which are notoriously difficult and slow to change (Moore, 1999: 105).

2.3 Educational change in South Africa in the 1990s: a new climate for libraries?

From the early 1990s, South African education has been undergoing reform and transformation. The advent of democracy in 1994 brought the needs to merge the 19 education departments of the fragmented racially-based apartheid system and to redress the inequities in the provision of education in South Africa. The reform also reflects the international trends referred to above, which aim to develop school leavers who are lifelong learners, able to compete in the information or knowledge society.

The shifts in education, on both fronts, seemed to promise a favourable climate for school libraries (for example Zinn, 1999). It was believed that fairer provisioning might redress the unequal distribution of school libraries across previously advantaged and disadvantaged sectors. And the recognition of the need for lifelong learners seemed to indicate recognition of the need for information literacy education – the mission of school librarians, as discussed in Chapter 1 [1.1.1].

2.3.1 Educational change in South Africa

A discussion of the implications of educational change in South Africa in the 1990s for information literacy education must weave together at least three strands:

- the think-tanks in the early 1990s of the government-in-waiting, the African National Congress, which resulted in several documents that were meant to shape future policy

- the systemic and structural changes in the schools and education departments from the early 1990s, which grappled with the merging of 19 racially based education departments and the design and implementation of the Interim Curriculum

- recognition that educational change has less visible, but crucial, facets - for example the subjective beliefs and "scripts" (Hamilton, 1993: 90) of educators through which curricular changes are filtered and which were referred to in the preceding section.

All three have impacted on libraries in South Africa and on information literacy education in schools.

From the late 1980s, there were several initiatives that looked forward to post-apartheid South Africa and came up with alternative education systems. Many of these came out of the influential People's Education movement, which was born out of the struggle against the Bantu Education and Christian National Education of the time (Kallaway, 1990). People's Education brought together a powerful grouping of students, teachers, parents, academics and political activists, which shaped the thinking of African National Congress (ANC) policy-makers.

Future directions for education were spelled out in the ANC's Reconstruction and Development Programme's policy framework, published just before the party came to power in 1994 (African National Congress, 1994). This document described the ethos and governance structures that were to be established for education in the next few years. It promised to set right the wrongs of the past by building a non-racist, non-sexist and democratic system. It also promised a statutory South African Qualifications Authority to administer a national qualifications system that, by ensuring recognition of prior learning and articulation among levels and qualifications, would nurture skills development and lifelong learning (p. 60-68). Its section on information policy concentrates on the publishing media. In that section, entitled *A Democratic Information Programme* (p. 133), it claims that "without the free flow of accurate and comprehensive information, the RDP [Reconstruction and Development Programme] will lack the mass input for its success". However, there is no mention of libraries. The gap is puzzling, given the ground work carried out by NEPI, referred to in Chapter 1 [1.2.2], which recommended a "radical" mission for libraries in social development (National Education Policy Investigation. Library and Information Services Research Group, 1992) and also the similar suggestions from the Centre for Education Policy Development (CEPD), another influential think-tank.

By the early 1990s, the CEPD had set up projects in various sectors, including education and libraries, to investigate future directions. The report of its Task Team on Library and Information Services, in 1994, linked libraries firmly to the Research and Development Programme and to a national information policy. It thus describes information as "a valuable and strategic resource in the process of social development" and contends that access to information is a basic human right (Centre for Education Policy Development, 1994: 1). The report also views libraries as central to education at all levels. It warns that without libraries "student-centred and resource-based learning, which liberate students from authority-centred and textbook-based rote learning, are doomed to fail" (p. 2). With the benefit of hindsight, it is interesting to contemplate its recommendation that libraries, school and public, be placed within one ministry, namely the Ministry of Education. Its argument is that libraries in South Africa should be, in the first place, instruments of lifelong education. The CEPD report, moreover, outlines a framework for an integrated public and school library system within the Ministry of Education. The significance of this recommendation – followed by only four of South Africa's nine provinces – is highlighted by the frequent references in this dissertation to the separation of the governance structures of public and school libraries.

As these future policies were debated, the government of the day grappled with a continuous crisis in education. Education budgets were cut - and teacher-librarians, in those advantaged departments that had them, were losing their posts (Job, 1993; Stopart, 1995). However, a certain amount of optimism was evident as the school library sector looked forward to curriculum change, believing that it might bring a more favourable climate for information literacy education. Two PhD theses were completed in 1993 that examined the impact of change on school libraries and that looked ahead to curriculum change (Fredericks, 1993; Job, 1993). They both assumed that the school library is necessary in a progressive modern education system and, indeed, both saw the school librarian as an "agent of change" within a school system. Job argued that the information age was bringing a new paradigm in education, one that demands information handling skills and hence school libraries. Fredericks argued that democracy would bring People's Education, which values the kind of critical thinking and independent learning that is nurtured by school libraries. In keeping with the thinking of NEPI's Library and Information Services Research Group, he argued for joint use school/community libraries as a solution to the existing shortages of libraries. Both Job and Fredericks used similar methodologies - surveying teacher librarians, principals, teachers and education department officials to investigate the educational role of teacher-librarians. Despite working within different milieus and from different philosophical standpoints, both reached similar conclusions – that the role of the school library is not appreciated. Despite the initial rhetoric and optimism in the two theses, their empirical data and findings are sobering, especially when read some 10 years later, when school libraries are perhaps in an even more dire situation [See 1.1.2]. Job conducted her survey in 1992 across seven education departments and found the position of the teacher-librarian to be deteriorating as staff cutbacks had meant that teacher librarian posts were being retrenched and dedicated librarians were being expected to do more and more classroom teaching (p. 308). She found a kind of vicious cycle as the more classroom teaching librarians were doing, the less they could perform their true work, and the more difficult it was for their colleagues to see them in their "true" role as change agents. Fredericks's findings relate also to the deficiencies of the school library system, although his empirical work was done in 1989 in House of Representatives schools (the so-called "Coloured" schools) before the teacher-librarian retrenchments. He found his respondents, even the librarians themselves, to have little awareness of the potential contribution of libraries to progressive education. They were only "half convinced" of their importance (p. 318). Given his findings in 1989, perhaps the drastic library cutbacks in Cape Peninsula schools that were to come in the next few years are not surprising (Stopart, 1995; Hart, 2000b). Arguably, it was easy to cut libraries and librarians when their educational function was misunderstood.

The significance of teachers' understandings and conceptions was highlighted in a study in 1995, which was commissioned by the new Western Cape Education Department to investigate the value of a proposed scheme of teachers' resource centres (Borman, 1995). The survey of 2975 teachers in 185 schools set out to examine the information needs of teachers and was explicitly placed within the context of the need for information literacy in the anticipated new educational climate (p. 2). Its findings highlighted a puzzling contradiction between teachers' stated preferences and their classroom behaviours. Whereas teachers, on the whole, claimed to welcome the proposed resource centres, they gave little evidence of using resources in their classrooms, even when they had access to them. The report concluded that more training in the use of learning resources was required to build teachers' understanding of resource-based learning (Borman, 1995: 52). Without this understanding, the potential of the proposed resource centres would not be fulfilled. Apart from its findings on the importance of allowing for teachers' personal attitudes, the significance of the study lies in its anticipation of educational change in South Africa. It was mentioned earlier that the old educational ethos and pedagogies might be blamed for the evident under-use in the 1980s of the school libraries in the advantaged sectors of South African schooling [2.2]. The "old" system did not *require* access to libraries as learning depended on textbooks, the teacher and examinations.

After the democratic elections in 1994, the new government designed an interim curriculum for the transitional period, thus allowing itself time for the restructuring process. The Interim Curriculum, at least as implemented in the schools of the Western Cape Education Department, allocated space to information literacy education in the form of the *Information Skills Core Learning Programme* first published in 1994 (South Africa. Department of National Education, 1994). This Core Programme had evolved out of the old Book Education and Media Studies curricula of the pre-1994 fragmented education departments, but clearly incorporated the most recent developments in American and Australian information literacy education. For example, in 1996 the Western Cape Education Department described information skills as "process skills which are applied to attain learning objectives". It says that "the overall aim of the subject is to expose learners to the process of purposefully finding information, handling it, assessing it, synthesising and applying it, and to enable them to evaluate their own results" (Western Cape Education Department, 1996: 1). In keeping with the international thinking described above, it goes on to contend that information skills "should not be restricted to a fixed period per week but should also be an integrated part of a teaching and learning approach in which, for example, continuous assessment plays a fundamental part". Perhaps to forestall the obvious immediate question over the shortage of school libraries, the Interim Curriculum claims that information skills can be taught in schools

without libraries. It advises schools to create an "effective information and learning environment", using the wide range of information sources that every community has. Here, perhaps, it echoed the recent Namibian information skills curriculum (Namibia. Ministry of Education & Culture, 1994; Marais, 1996).

The new South African government, in the meantime, had set about restructuring South Africa's education system – beginning with two White Papers. The first of these, a draft policy for comment and consultation, echoed the thoughts of the ANC's Reconstruction and Development Programme's policy framework document of 1994, stating that education must redress the inequalities of the past and contribute to the reconstruction and democratisation of South African society. It also signalled a new ethos of lifelong learning that would nurture initiative, mobility and critical thinking rather than the rote memorisation of the old system. Curriculum and teaching methods, it was said, should encourage "independent and critical thought, the capacity to question, enquire and reason, to weigh evidence and form judgements, to achieve understanding, and to recognise the provisional and incomplete nature of most human knowledge" (South Africa. Ministry of Education, 1994).

School librarians were quick to welcome this language, pointing out that libraries would be essential to achieve what they saw as student-centred and resource-based learning. They, however, expressed disappointment that no explicit mention was made of school library services and their role in learning (South Africa. Department of Education & Training. Media Centre Services Section, 1994). The 1995 White Paper does include one mention of school libraries, but only in terms of the physical provisioning of school buildings, describing them as an "educationally necessary facility", together with laboratories and workshops (South Africa. Department of Education, 1995: 77). Karlsson (1996) saw the absence of any mention of the educational role of school libraries in the White Papers as evidence of the failure of the NEPI initiatives of the early 1990s, which had promised a better climate for libraries. The NEPI documents had been, she suggested, perhaps just librarians "talking solely to themselves" (1996: 101).

2.3.2 Curriculum 2005 and information literacy

The South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) and the National Qualifications Framework (NQF), legislated for in 1995, established the framework for a national integrated education system of three bands: General Education and Training (Grades 1 to 9), Further Education and Training (Grades 10 to 12) and Higher Education. It firmly placed education within national human resources development and spelled out the critical learning outcomes desired for the national education system.

In 1996, the *South African Schools Act* was passed (South Africa, 1996), which is significant for school libraries and hence for information literacy education for two reasons:

- As Le Roux (2003b) points out, the Act fails to pick up on the mention of libraries in the 1995 White Paper and, indeed, it makes no explicit mention of libraries.
- It devolves decision-making to schools' Governing Bodies. In keeping with the ideal of democratisation of education, a school's Governing Body has control over its budget, including the allocation of funds to its library. The Act describes the role of the Governing Body as ensuring "quality education" in the school. Librarians have used this phrase as an argument for the provision of a school library, for example in the preambles to the draft school policy documents, to be discussed below. However, the relationship of education "quality" with "libraries" in the minds of school management bodies cannot be assumed.

Also in 1996, the government launched a national curriculum development process, centred in the National Curriculum Development Committee. The process resulted in the adoption of an outcomes-based model, *Curriculum 2005*, in which the focus shifts from teacher input to learner outcomes (South Africa, Department of Education, 1997a) – in keeping with the international trends, mentioned above, from content to process. The eight generic cross-curricular outcomes chosen by SAQA for South African education are as follows:

- communicate effectively using visual, mathematical and/or language skills
- identify and solve problems by using creative & critical thinking
- organise and manage themselves responsibly
- work effectively in a team, group or community
- collect, analyse, organise and critically evaluate information
- use science and technology effectively and critically
- understand the world as a set of related systems
- show awareness of the importance of effective learning strategies, responsible citizenship, cultural sensitivity, education and career opportunities and entrepreneurial abilities.

The list of critical outcomes explains why librarians believed that the new ethos might recognise their educational role. As discussed above, throughout the literature of school librarianship, there are comments that school libraries depend on their surrounding environments and approaches to learning. One of Curriculum 2005's first products was a booklet in 1997 that included a comparison of "old" and "new" pedagogical approaches,

clearly reflecting the international trends already outlined. Table 2 reproduces that given in the booklet (South Africa. Department of Education, 1997a: 6).

Old	New
Passive learners	Active learners
Exam-driven	On-going continuous assessment
Rote-learning	Critical thinking, reasoning, reflection, action
Content-bases syllabus	Integration of knowledge; learning relevant to real-life
Textbook bound; teacher- centred	Learner-centred; teacher as facilitator; lots of group work and teamwork to consolidate learning
Rigid syllabus	Learning programmes are guides – teachers are to be creative & innovative
Emphasis on teacher's objectives	Emphasis on outcomes – what learner becomes & understands
Curriculum designed by Education Department	Curriculum open to wider community

Table 2: Curriculum 2005's new pedagogy

In the late 1990s, Curriculum 2005 was often described as "library–friendly" in its valuing of problem-solving, critical thinking and active discovery learning. Librarians assumed that its stress on assessing learning by means of projects and portfolios of work, rather than by examinations, opened the way for resource-based and enquiry learning. As stated in Chapter 1, in the international arena, this ethos of learning assumes access to libraries and to information literacy education (for example Breivik & Senn, 1998). The Department of Education itself seemed to share this assumption, as de Vries (2002: 10) points out in his quotation from a Department of Education publication explaining Curriculum 2005 to teachers in 1997, that says that "adequate resources [for the new outcomes-based approaches] are essential" and, in the next sentence, that "adequate provisioning of libraries" was being accelerated.

The fifth critical outcome above, the ability to "collect, analyse, organise and critically evaluate information", signals the acceptance of information literacy as an essential learning outcome and opens the door to information literacy education. At school level, it led to the Information Skills Learning Programme contained within the first of the eight Learning Areas, Language, Literacy and Communication (LLC) – developed by information skills and school library advisors in the national and provincial departments of education and others in the school library sector, including the researcher herself. This Learning Programme has much in common with the Department of National Education's *Information Skills Core Learning Programme* (1994), designed for the Interim Curriculum of the transitional period between 1996 and 1998, as mentioned above.

A significant difference between the Interim Curriculum and the first version of Curriculum 2005 in 1998 is the positioning of the information skills programmes. The Interim Curriculum published its *Information Skills Core Programme* as a separate booklet, signalling that it was a generic cross-curricular programme, and explicitly linked it to libraries. As mentioned above, after much debate, a decision was made by Curriculum 2005 designers to place its information skills programme into the Language, Literacy and Communication Learning Area (LLCLA). A place had to be found within the eight Learning Areas out of fear that it would be marginalised otherwise. The LLCLA was chosen in preference to the Life Orientation Learning Area, again after much debate. With the benefit of hindsight, this decision, perhaps, is regrettable. It meant that what is regarded, across the world, as the educational raison d'être of school librarianship became just a thread in the complex documentation of the huge Language, Literacy and Communication Learning Area. The pages in the Learning Area devoted to detailed descriptions of the performance indicators of information literacy made no mention of libraries or librarians. It might be argued that, contrary to their hopes, librarians in fact lost their footing in the curriculum. Indeed, the revision of Curriculum 2005 in 2002 excised the Information Skills Learning Programme all together.

Whatever its future, the new Information Skills Learning Programme was welcomed by school librarians. At the 1999 annual meeting of the Library and Information Association of South Africa (LIASA), Zinn (1999) provided a comparison of the Information Skills Learning Programme in Curriculum 2005, as contained in Specific Outcome 4 of the LLCLA, with the influential Big Six Skills approach of Eisenberg and Berkowitz (1990) and with the American School Library Association's most recent standards statement on information literacy (1998). Zinn also traced other explicit references to information skills scattered throughout the other Learning Areas. The outcome that formed the basis of the Learning Programme was that learners "access, process and use information from a variety of sources and situations". The related performance indicators were that they:

- define the need for information
- choose an appropriate source
- select relevant information from the source
- evaluate it for its relevance and accuracy
- structure information in a meaningful way
- discuss and formulate an opinion from the information obtained
- present a synthesis of the information in a variety of formats
- integrate it in and apply it to real life situations and finally
- make informed decisions (South Africa. Department of Education, 1999b).

The similarity to the 1994 Core Learning Programme for Information Skills in the Interim Curriculum is clear, as is its debt to international thinking.

2.3.3 School library policy making

Recognising the opportunities and challenges of educational change, Jenni Karlsson of the Education Policy Unit (Natal) – an evolution of the ANC think-tanks of the early 1990s - convened a meeting of a wide range of role-players at the School Learners & Libraries Conference in Durban in 1995 (Karlsson, 1996). The conference was to influence the process of school library policy for the next few years. Its agenda to explore *alternative* models of school library rested on two assumptions:

- Curriculum reform would demand improved access to learning resources for all South African learners and educators.

- Providing every South African school with its own library was unfeasible (Karlsson, Nassimbeni & Karelse, 1996).

Following the conference, in 1996, the unit responsible for school library policy within the national Department of Education initiated a process of building policy for school libraries. A national policy statement, it was believed, would act as an impetus for provincial education departments to recognise and act on the need for improved access to resources. It would also persuade schools' Governing Bodies that schools should develop their own library policies and that expenditure on school libraries was legitimate, if not mandatory. The result of nationwide consultation was two discussion documents in 1997 and 1998, written by Jenni Karlsson of the Education Policy Unit (Natal), and presented by the Department of Education's Directorate: Centre for Educational Technology and Distance Education as drafts to the provincial Heads of Education and then to the national Ministry of Education. They laid out a national policy framework for school library standards. The two documents were followed in 2000 by a draft implementation plan that suggested strategies, goals, and costs over a four year time frame. (South Africa. Department of Education. Directorate: Centre for Educational Technology and Distance Education, 1997; 1998; 2000).

The three documents acknowledge the shortage of school libraries, the outcome of decades of unequal spending among South Africa's divided education departments. They place school libraries firmly within outcomes based education, contending, for example, that " to access the curriculum and to achieve these critical cross-field and specific outcomes, educators and learners will have to interact with learning resources" (South Africa. Department of Education. Directorate: Centre for Educational Technology and Distance Education, 1998: 6).

They maintain, however, that the library is far more than a collection of resources within one school; rather it is a pupil-centred learning centre where independent learning is nurtured. It, moreover, provides access to the national information network, knowledge of which is needed if citizens are to play an active role in society (p. 6).

Given Karlsson's role in their writing, it is not surprising that they reflect the thinking that was evident at the School Learners and Libraries Conference in 1995. The draft school policies, thus, tacitly accept that providing every school in South Africa with a school library is not affordable. The approach in the draft policies is to avoid prescriptive but unattainable quantitative standards and to offer rather "generic" guidelines, such as:

- Every school has a library committee and a library policy.
- Every school assesses its resource requirements.
- The school's annual budget includes the library as a cost item.
- All educators and learners have access to library resources, on site or within easy reach.
- Every school has at least one educator responsible for the collection.
- Adequate space should be set aside for a comfortable library.

Pragmatically, the documents suggest a range of seven models of school library service - including classroom boxes, a library shared by a cluster of schools, a joint-use community/school library, the centralised school library and the virtual library offering access to global information networks. It is suggested that school communities adopt a model that suits their present circumstances and gradually move up the scale, in response to the evolving demands of their learning programmes.

The influence of Jenny Karlsson and the Education Policy Unit (Natal) continued in 1997, with the *Library Practice for Young Learners* (LPYL) project – an outcome of the 1995 conference in Durban (Wettmark, 2002). The project, sponsored by BIS, a Swedish Library Association, and SIDA, the Swedish Agency for International Development Cooperation, drew together key education officials and practitioners across all provinces. The connections to the *National Policy Framework for School Library Standards* of 1997 are clear, as one of the explicit aims of the LPYL was to test the models provided in the framework document (Wettmark, 2002: 14). Three case studies of test sites were published (Naiker & Mbokazi, 2002), one of which reports on the Makhuva Information Centre, a resource centre set up in a garage by a few community volunteers to serve the community as well as a number of schools. The case of Makhuva illustrates the problems caused by barriers between

government departments but also how these barriers can be overcome, once people from the various sectors recognise the need to collaborate.

The pragmatism in the two draft policy documents is understandable, given evidence of the past under-use of school libraries in teacher-centred climates. It is true, after all, that all the education departments of the past era had detailed quantitative standards and specifications for a "standard" library (Overduin & De Wit, 1987); yet, on the ground, very few of the Department and Education and Training (DET) schools, the so-called "African" schools, had any library at all. However, perhaps the subtlety of thinking in the documents presumed too much since they were not approved by the Ministry of Education. No reasons were given; but there were suggestions that the inclusion of the joint community/public model and the shared "one-library/one-cluster-of schools" model offended those who believe that, in post-apartheid South Africa, every school deserves its own library.

Support for this explanation is the rejection of these models in the third school library policy document that came out in 2001, after a change in personnel in the school library unit at the Department of Education (South Africa. Department of Education. Directorate: Centre for Educational Technology and Distance Education, 2001). It presents a less ambiguous and more assertive statement of advocacy for on-site school libraries, perhaps in reaction to the complexity of the first two policy frameworks. It rejects the shared use models, offered in the earlier documents, contending that every school has the right to its own library. Its endorsement of the "one-school-one library" model perhaps comes out of an understandable fear that a kind of a double standard might persist, in which advantaged schools have good libraries and disadvantaged "historically black" schools have to tolerate shared libraries. The document insists that only by applying uniform minimum standards in every school will past inequalities be redressed. It turns to the 1995 White Paper for support in its contention that the physical provision of a library in every school is a government responsibility.

Le Roux labels this document as "unexpected" (2003b), as it had not gone through the nationwide consultative processes of the earlier two. She criticises it as "vague, unrealistic and poorly researched" and suggests that it is "ideologically based". Some of Le Roux's comments are justified; but they might well be influenced by her own allegiance to joint-use models, as evidenced by her study and writing over the past few years, beginning with her paper at the School Learners & Libraries Conference in 1995 (Le Roux, 1996). She is the editor of the UNESCO funded report of an investigation into the potential of joint use libraries in South Africa (National Committee for Library Co-Operation, 2000), which came out in strong support of joint use libraries, as will be shown in Chapter 3. In addition, she

completed a Masters Degree thesis in 2001 that surveyed the international experience of joint-use community libraries and recommended them for South Africa (Le Roux, 2001).

Whatever its merits, apparently the third policy draft met the same fate as the earlier two documents; thus stalling again the school library policy process. [1] This has evoked widespread frustration among school librarians. In 2002, the Education Library Information and Technology Services (ELITS) of the Department of Education and Culture KwaZulu Natal, hosted a conference with the telling title of *Ghost Libraries and Curriculum 2005*, in which the contradiction between the resource-based learning of the new curriculum and government's failure to address the shortages of libraries was frequently alluded to (for example Lombo, 2002; Zinn, 2002). The same comment was voiced at the International Association of School Librarianship's Conference in Durban in July 2003 (for example Karlsson, 2003).

In 2002, the Department of Education and Culture of Mpumalanga's neighbouring province, KwaZulu Natal, took the initiative and drafted its own school library policy, on the understanding that, in the absence of national policy, it could only be provisional (KwaZulu Natal Department of Education and Culture. Education Library Information and Technology Services, 2002: 5). The draft prefers the term "resource collection" to "library", presumably to avoid the connotation of expensive facilities. It endorses the value of a range of cost-effective models, arguing that a mobile library, for example, can serve between 10 to 20 schools. Its central argument is that Curriculum 2005 is a resource-based learner-centred system, in which access to a resource collection is integral. It describes the resource collection as the major mechanism to develop the information literacy of educators and learners in a school (p. 6).

From the start of Curriculum 2005, throughout the draft policy documents and in paper after paper at the various gatherings of South African librarians, the assertion has been that, for it to succeed, learners need access to libraries and to information literacy education. Yet the lack of urgency in the framing of school library policy – a process begun in 1996 and still not complete in 2005 – surely points to a gap between librarians' thinking and educationists'. As mentioned above, even before the new curriculum was implemented, in 1996, Karlsson (1996: 101-102) speculated on the reasons for the already evident gap in understanding between librarians and educationists with regard to the educational role of libraries. She

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[1] As mentioned in Chapter 1, a new draft national school library policy was circulated for comment in May 2005 (South Africa. Department of Education, 2005). It claims to be "informed" by the 1997 draft policy framework (p.5). It provides only two models of school library, the one school one library and the one cluster one school library; but, at the same time, it "recognises" the existence of the other five models in the 1997 document (p. 5.).

wondered if it was due to the conservative image of librarians or to librarians' stressing the library as a collection rather than a learning tool. She suggested that librarians should deepen their knowledge of contemporary understandings of the learning process and persuade educationists of the need for libraries in language they would understand. This seems to have been the approach of, at least, the first two policy documents described in this section, which she, in large part, authored – and which, as has been shown, failed to meet the approval of educational policy-makers. Obviously, explanations have to be looked for in further research.

By 2000, it was clear, that the new curriculum was faltering in the vast majority of South African schools and a revision was called for. Librarians had another chance to put their case, as will be seen in the following section

2.3.4 Curriculum 2005 revised: the Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS)

The review of Curriculum 2005 in 2000 by a committee appointed by the Minister of Education came after widespread concern over the failure of the curriculum, especially in the disadvantaged sector, which of course includes the majority of South Africa's schools. As the curriculum was being rolled out, the Department of Education, via the President's Education Initiative (PEI), commissioned a number of research projects to assess its progress, which were summarised in Taylor and Vinjevold's book *Getting Learning Right* in 1999. The book's analysis of 35 PEI research projects across more than 300 schools persuaded the government to revisit Curriculum 2005. Indeed, one of its authors, Vinjevold, was appointed to the Review Committee.

Taylor and Vinjevold's fundamental conclusion, having examined the research findings, was that teachers were ill-prepared for the changes in teaching and learning styles in Curriculum 2005. They found that teachers lacked the knowledge base to implement the new curriculum with the result that many just superficially carried out the recommended pedagogies, such as learner-centred activities, group work and discussion, without understanding the learning theories that underlie them (1999: 230). The result is that the development of higher order skills is being stunted. They commented, also, on learners' poor reading abilities. Their comment has since been supported by nation-wide testing of the literacy of South African children (Smith, 2004). The new studies show, for example, that Grade 6 children in Western Cape schools lag behind in their reading by one to three grades.

Chapter 7 of *Getting Learning Right* summarises research in the use of "learning materials" and therefore is pertinent to this study. It first surveys existing research on the effects of

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learning materials on learning, and then moves on to examine some of the PEI projects. There is one allusion in the chapter to resources other than textbooks, workbooks and worksheets, in a comment on a study of the availability and use of learning materials in Grade 1 and Grade 7 classrooms in 19 schools. Taylor and Vinjevold extract from this study only the data on textbooks but, in passing, they make a tantalising reference to several teachers in "well-resourced schools", who did not use textbooks, preferring to "direct learners to textual and other resources". Presumably, these are library materials. Having failed to include library resources in its investigation of learning materials, the chapter concludes with a call for better availability of textbooks and stationery claiming that these are what will most effectively and economically "develop learners' conceptual knowledge structures" (p. 184). Indeed, the authors warn that "learning materials that are not structured into a comprehensive learning programme are severely limited" (p. 182).

The authors return to the theme of textbooks in their conclusions in the final chapter, where they recommend that "the value of textbooks be re-established in the minds of teachers, teacher educators and school managers" (Taylor & Vinjevold, 1999: 233). It seems that teachers have thrown out their old textbooks, believing this to be expected of them; but lack conceptual knowledge of the subjects they teach, so struggle to design, on their own, meaningful learning activities. The worksheets that they design, in place of the old textbooks, provide ad hoc activities that do not nurture higher order thinking and are not woven into a systematic learning programme (p. 233). A finding of interest to librarians, who might assume that resource-based approaches are now entrenched, is that teachers do not welcome books in their classroom, out of a sense of insecurity. The suggestion is that they fear that their control over the knowledge in circulation in the classroom might be diluted (p. 232). This comment echoes the warning in 1984 by an English resource-based learning authority, Norman Beswick, that the "tyranny" of the worksheet was replacing that of the textbook (1984: 17). The researcher's Masters Degree study in a school in Cape Town in 1999 certainly found that, even though the teachers themselves sincerely claimed to be progressive and in touch with Curriculum 2005 reforms (Hart, 1999a: 142), they were, in reality, engaged in, what Beswick calls, resource-based *teaching*. Moreover, many of the worksheets in use in the study's classroom were based on outdated textbooks and consisted of low-level cloze-type questions (p. 127).

Much of the research in the implementation problems of Curriculum 2005, which is reported in *Getting Learning Right*, resonates with librarians in their role as information literacy educators. From a librarian's perspective, it presents a persuasive case for a system of school libraries and for supportive information literacy programmes that will build learning resources

into teachers' everyday classroom work. The fact that Taylor and Vinjevold's review, despite its preoccupation with learning resources, makes no mention of libraries suggests that the library profession has to engage more vigorously with educationists – spelling out what a library contributes to the curriculum – as Karlsson suggested in 1996, as mentioned above. Recent thinking has underlined the need to provide supporting evidence. Morrill's analysis of the ambivalence of many so-called progressive movements in American education towards libraries shows that, just because the prevailing ethos is "progressive", librarians cannot assume that they will gain a better footing in education (1981). As mentioned above [2.2.1], Fredericks (1993) makes a similar point in his doctoral thesis when he finds inconsistencies between the professed progressiveness of his respondents in Cape Town schools and their conservative views of libraries. The proponents of "evidence-based" advocacy warn that only empirical research evidence will convince educationists of the educational role of libraries (Todd, 2001; Zinn, 2002: 11). Both Maepa and Mhinga (2003) and Karlsson (2003) make the point that only a small proportion of South African teachers and curriculum planners will have experienced libraries in their own education at school and college or university.

In 2000, in response to Taylor and Vinjevold's report and other pressures, the Department of Education established a committee to review Curriculum 2005. It invited submissions, examined evidence and made site visits. Its report echoes many of the points made by Taylor and Vinjevold. The Review Committee's report acknowledged that Curriculum 2005 was faring well in the "former Model C schools" "because of being better resourced" (South Africa, Department of Education, 2000: 35). Despite again the absence of any mention of libraries in the report, librarians, perhaps, would assume the existence of functioning libraries in these "well-resourced" schools. The report of the Review Committee, itself, highlights research that shows that Curriculum 2005 depends on the provision of resources. It refers, for example, to a case study comparing two schools within five kilometres of each other, one using resource-based learning and one using the "lecture method"; and comments that "teachers within well-resourced classrooms were clearly reflecting C2005 principles" (p. 77). Throughout the Review Committee's report there are allusions to problems with "learning support materials", attributing problems in the implementation of the new outcomes-based curriculum to lack of learning support materials and to lack of training in the use of these materials (for example pages 23, 24, 26, 28, 31). Teachers had been expected to move away from their reliance on textbooks and "chalk and talk" methodologies, and even to develop their own learning materials; but had not been provided with the support they needed to make the change. The comment on the "lack of training" resonates with the comment by the New Zealander, Moore, that teachers' information literacy and their capacity to teach it cannot be taken for granted (1999: 105).

Scrutiny of the use of the term "learning support materials" (LSM) in the Review Report might go some way to explaining gaps between educationists and librarians. It seems that, in South Africa, educators and librarians define LSM differently (Lombo, 2003: 5; Zinn, 2002: 11). Lombo refers to research that shows that educators interpret the term in a "minimalist" way – as teaching aids (2003: 5). To librarians, learning support materials can refer to anything that helps teaching and learning, thus to anything that helps learners to achieve learning outcomes - including knowledgeable community members, chip packets, rock paintings, novels, phone directories, newspaper cuttings, web sites (Lombo, 2003: 5). Traditional libraries might stock mostly print resources but the advent of audiovisual technologies and ICT gave birth to the concept of the media centre, the resource centre and now the virtual library, all of which provide access to so-called "non-print" resources. As discussed above, the seven innovative models of the school library policy framework documents, work-shopped by librarians all over the country, show the flexibility of the term "library" and, also, the progressiveness of South African librarians. As Karlsson (1996) points out, a library, especially in the South African context, need not denote a centralised room. As mentioned earlier, the KwaZulu Natal Education Department suggests the term "resource collection" rather than "library", perhaps to highlight its essential function (KwaZulu Natal Department of Education and Culture. Education Library Information and Technology Services, 2002). What is important is that learners get access to a wide range of appropriate resources and to education in how to find information in them and use it to identify and solve problems.

The Review Committee, on the other hand, has a far narrower interpretation of the term "learning support materials". Throughout its report, whenever it uses the term, it refers to textbooks, teacher support materials and workbooks from education departments and NGOs, worksheets, readers and reading schemes. The thrust of its recommendations with regard to LSM is that Curriculum 2005 went too far, too soon, in discouraging teachers from using textbooks. The Review criticises the unrealistic expectation that teachers would prepare their own resources, pointing to their large classes and superficial grasp of the curriculum. Of course these arguments are valid. Information literacy education does not preclude the use of textbooks. Rather it allows for the use of textbooks to provide core or background knowledge; but assumes that a good textbook points the way out of itself to further questions and problems. Arguably, the blinkered definition of LSM is a major weakness in the Review Report. It means that a fundamental issue in the implementation of Curriculum 2005 is avoided. The well-resourced schools that apparently thrive in the new climate have access to more than the materials - textbooks, worksheets, workbooks - as defined in the Report. Their

learners are fortunate to have access to resources that challenge them to build their own interpretations and perspectives, a defining characteristic of information literacy, as discussed in Chapter 1 [1.1.2]. The use of the word "fortunate" here has some irony, as the argument in this thesis is that this kind of access is in fact *necessary* to access the curriculum.

The publication of the Review Committee's report in 2000 gave librarians another opportunity to put their case for a more explicit recognition of the educational role of libraries in curricular documentation. In November 2000, the School Libraries and Youth Services Interest Group of LIASA submitted an advocacy document to the Chairperson of the Review Committee (Library & Information Association of South Africa. School Libraries and Youth Services Interest Group, 2000). This was followed up in a meeting in April 2001 with an official and a consultant, both of whom were charged with examining the role of learning support materials in the curriculum (Library & Information Association of South Africa. School Libraries and Youth Services Interest Group, 2001). The effect of these submissions is dubious, as will be shown below.

The result of the Review is the *Revised National Curriculum Statement* (RNCS) (South Africa. Department of Education, 2002). It endorses the original ethos of Curriculum 2005 but simplifies its language to make it accessible. It lists the following attributes of the learner that are implied by our constitution. The desired learner:

- has the linguistic skills needed for multi-lingual and multicultural South Africa
- is curious and ready for scientific and artistic discovery
- can adapt to an ever-changing environment
- has a problem-solving bent of mind
- can gather, analyse, organise, evaluate and communicate information
- is able to take decisions in a complex technological society
- is equipped for the social, political and economic demands of South Africa in our local and global context.

The fifth attribute refers specifically to information literacy; but a dynamic library system can contribute to each of the others. Together they imply an educational ethos in which libraries should thrive.

These attributes are reflected in the list of critical and developmental outcomes that follow. The seven Critical Outcomes are the same as the first seven in the first version of Curriculum 2005; however the eighth original outcome is now expanded to five Developmental Outcomes, which aim at enabling learners to:

- reflect on and explore a variety of strategies to learn more effectively
- participate as responsible citizens in the life of local, national and global communities
- be culturally and aesthetically aware across a range of social contexts
- explore education and career opportunities
- develop entrepreneurial skills (p. 15).

As Bundy comments on a remarkably similar list of attributes demanded of university graduates in Australian policy documents, all these attributes imply high-level information skills (1999: 238).

At the 2003 Annual Conference of LIASA, Le Roux presented a thorough analysis of the revised Curriculum, combing each Learning Area for any references to information literacy 2003a). She demonstrated that many of the critical and developmental outcomes and the learning outcomes contained in the eight Learning Areas are, in reality, information literacy outcomes. Examples are:

- the ability to listen for information (Languages)
- the ability to make informed decisions ... (Social Sciences)
- the ability to collect, summarise, display and analyse data in order to draw conclusions (Maths)
- the ability to use enquiry skills (Social Sciences).

Despite Le Roux's analysis and librarians' expectations, the RNCS makes no more mention of libraries than the original Curriculum 2005. It holds the same contradiction as Curriculum 2005 in that it demands information literacy outcomes, as shown by Le Roux, without providing for school libraries and information literacy education. The section in Chapter 5 on the "provision of good learning support materials" shows no broadening of the limited vision that was evident in the Review Committee's report, the year before. Moreover, as mentioned above, its new Languages Learning Area omits the specific information skills outcome that was before included in the Languages, Literacy and Communication (LLC) Learning Area and that provided the hook on which the Information Skills Learning Programme was hung. The loss of the outcome means the loss of the Information Skills Learning Programme, which means that information literacy education no longer has an explicit presence in curriculum documentation.

In response to the dropping of the Information Skills Programme, the School Libraries and Youth Services Interest Group of LIASA in 2002 decided to follow the example of countries like the United States, Australia and New Zealand and draw up, what Zinn calls, "generic

information literacy guidelines" (2002: 10). These build on the fifth critical outcome, given just above, and on the research outcomes spelled out for each Learning Area as analysed by Le Roux. Among its aims are to help educators understand the relationship between information literacy education and the outcomes of the curriculum and to promote a whole-school approach to information literacy education (Library & Information Association of South Africa. School Libraries and Youth Services Interest Group, 2005: 3).

Given the lack of urgency of Government to attend to policy for school libraries and given the lack of recognition of the role of libraries in its curricular documents, despite the strong advocacy from the library sector, the standing of this kind of guidelines statement is questionable.

2.4 Conclusion

This chapter has traced the process of curriculum change in South Africa from the perspective of librarians as information literacy educators. It has described the expectations it brought of a better climate for information literacy education, the central mission of school libraries, and its disappointments.

The argument has been that Curriculum 2005 and its successor, the Revised National Curriculum Statement, will not succeed if learners and educators do not have access to learning and information resources and to education in how to use them to learn – in other words to information literacy education. The argument rests on evidence from across the world on the relationship between libraries' information literacy programmes and the kind of constructivist learning that the RNCS endorses.

The question has to be asked whether South African librarians have misread the curriculum – given the evident lack of urgency in school library policy-building. Does the new curriculum *really* require access to libraries? Does it, indeed, need information literacy education? To look for answers to these questions, the next chapter will turn away from curriculum documentation and the school library sector. It will examine the impact of Curriculum 2005 on public libraries in South Africa.

CHAPTER 3
INFORMATION LITERACY EDUCATION IN THE PUBLIC LIBRARY:
LITERATURE REVIEW CONTINUED

Having justified the study in terms of the ethos and pedagogies of the new curriculum, the author's purpose in Chapter 3 is to examine the role, actual and potential, of public libraries in the information literacy education of school learners. The Chapter has three parts. The first examines the situation on the ground in South African public libraries. The second revisits the educational role of public libraries, arguing that information literacy education gives new life and vision to its social mission. It also examines the joint-use school/community library model that was put forward as a useful model in the school library policy frameworks, discussed in Chapter 2. Finally, the Chapter reports on examples of public libraries' information literacy programming in other countries, since these might throw light on the research problem and help identify the factors that contribute to effective programmes.

3.1   The impact of Curriculum 2005 on public libraries and on the information seeking behaviour of South African school learners

The discussion of the impact of educational change on libraries has two directions. It explores:

- evidence of librarians' experience of Curriculum 2005. This includes a strand of comment in professional journals and gatherings of librarians, at the annual LIASA conferences for example, and some research evidence.

- research outside the confines of libraries, which explores young South Africans' information needs and information seeking behaviour.

Of course the barriers between these two are blurred. Some research, even if within the context of a library, focuses on the *user* of the library; other research might be inside a school but aim at measuring the *use* of the local library.

Since it is not possible to report on formal "before and after" studies to measure the impact of Curriculum 2005 on public libraries, it is necessary to rely on studies of use and of librarians' experience of educational change since 1995. Evidence of shifts in public library budgeting might also throw light on the question, as will be shown.

3.1.1 Impact of Curriculum 2005 on public libraries

It might be useful to begin this section with a mention of a South African study conducted in 1994, before the introduction of Curriculum 2005, since it highlights the possible impact of educational change post 1994 on the role of public libraries. In it, Fourie examined 500 school pupils' use of the public library in a Pretoria suburb (1995). She found little cooperation between the schools in her sample (all belonging to the Transvaal Education Department (TED) and all schools with media centres) and the public library, and subsequently drew up a model for communication between public libraries and schools (1996: 211). Given its timing, as South Africa left behind its racially-based education system, the model could make little impact on professional practice, perhaps for two interlaced reasons. Firstly, it assumes the existence of school libraries and school librarians. It, thus, secondly can assume that the pupils' needs for information skills education are being met in their schools in the media studies classes prevalent at the time in the TED schools. It has to be said, however, that there is no explicit mention of this assumption; indeed, in Fourie's articles on the project, she makes no allusion to any shortcomings in pupils' competencies, her emphasis being wholly on provision of resources. According to the model, the most pressing form of cooperation is for teachers to communicate, via their school librarians, the subjects of school assignments so that public librarians might gather relevant materials in good time. The role of the public library, as conceived by the model, is to supplement the stock of the school library, found to be inadequate for the needs of senior students.

Since the late 1990s, there has been some comment in the South African professional and conference literature that the shortage of school libraries across the educational spectrum has put increased pressure on public libraries. The pressure is, however, not only to provide enough materials but also to cope with learners' lack of skills. The complaint is that, just as Government introduced a resource-based curriculum, restrictive economic policies at national and local government levels hit public libraries hard (Leach, 1998; Lor, 1998; Hooper & Hooper, 2000). The cutbacks in the school library sector, from the early 1990s onwards, have already been referred to [1.1.2]. Whatever the view of educationists, it seems that librarians have experienced Curriculum 2005 as a resourced-based system that expects learners to "research" topics independently through engaging with learning and information resources in their libraries.

Public librarians have responded to the situation by calling for funds from provincial education departments to alleviate the pressures of increased school learner numbers (for example Hendrikz, 1998: 5; Shaw, 2000: 149). Lor, then Head of South Africa's National

Library and Chair of the Transitional Executive Committee of the new professional association LIASA, contended in 1998 in a submission to Parliament that budget cut-backs were "crippling" libraries (Lor, 1998). He described deterioration in all sectors of libraries – school, public and academic – but concentrated on the challenges facing the public library systems. Leach (1998) undertook a follow-up survey of provincial public library services to confirm Lor's findings. He found widespread rationalising and downsizing of staff by means of the freezing of posts. All but one public library service reported a reduction in their funding, with resulting cuts in materials budgets, staff, and training. Another finding was an increase in spending on educational materials in an effort to provide for the needs of students and scholars.

In their comment on Government's tepid response to such library advocacy in the late 1990s, Hooper and Hooper suggest that it might be due to a perception that the ICT of the information society will make libraries redundant (2000: 157). The researcher's own experience (Hart, 2000b), as well as that of Shaw (2000: 80), might support this suggestion, both having evidence of school libraries in Cape Town being closed to be turned into computer rooms. This is surely an issue for the school library sector to confront as one of its central functions is to provide for the skills needed in the information society. Supporting evidence of this crucial function comes from the recent survey of 13,000 school learners in Ohio, who overwhelmingly report that their school library developed their ICT skills, especially those involving the effective use of the huge resources of the World Wide Web (Ohio Educational Library Media Association, 2004).

Hooper and Hooper's rather bleak picture of South African public libraries in 2000 concludes with a comparison of post-apartheid South Africa with the fall of Rome. Rome fell, they claim, because it was swamped by large numbers of people in search of the advantages of a structured society. Rather controversially, they contend that that the "problems of the South African public library system are merely reflective of this situation" (2000: 162). An alternative conclusion might be that the recent "swamping" of public libraries is evidence of the huge need of South Africans for education and of the urgent need for public libraries to rethink their mission statements – as argued in Chapter 1 [1.2.2]. As in other parts of Africa (Issak, 2000), public libraries in South Africa traditionally have been under-used with about 10,8 percent of the population belonging to a public library - compared with 1,8% in Turkey, 49,2% in Iran and 58% in the United Kingdom (Van Helden & Lor, 2002:17). On average, South Africa libraries lend 1.9 books per person a year, compared with 7.2 in the UK. Le Roux (2001: 194) lists some possible reasons for the low figures in this country:

- perceptions that the library is for an elite middleclass

- a lack of reading culture and of literacy
- the irrelevance of existing library collections
- the lack of study space in public libraries
- the shortage of materials in African languages
- the shortage of libraries in rural communities
- the lack of school libraries, which develop a library and reading culture.

There are some empirical studies that lend support to public librarians' claims that the curricular use of their libraries has increased with the introduction of Curriculum 2005 (for example Hart, 1999b; Nkosi, 2000: 262; Shaw, 2000; Hart, 2003; Maepa & Mhinga, 2003). These include two studies in Cape Town's public libraries by the researcher, herself. The first of these is a study of 69 children's librarians in Cape Town in 1999, which found evidence of increased use of public libraries by school learners and of low morale among staff, as they struggled to cope with no concomitant increase in resources (Hart, 1999b; 2000a). Sixty-one of the 69 respondents claimed that Curriculum 2005 had put increased pressure on their resources. A constant refrain in the interviews was: "We are doing the work of school librarians". The conclusion at the time was that children's and youth librarians in Cape Town's public libraries were feeling unprepared for the new curriculum – and indeed victimised by it (Hart, 2000a). The second study in 2002 examined school learners' use of two public libraries, Vista and Vista East (pseudonyms), in a disadvantaged township on the outskirts of Cape Town (Hart, 2003b; 2004). The study began with interviews with staff and observation over some weeks. Then over 800 interviews were conducted with learners as they entered the libraries over four afternoons. Photographs document the problems the high numbers bring, especially for the smaller Vista Library. Every chair in the afternoons at Vista Library is occupied; indeed children sit on the floor. Large queues form at the single photocopier and crowds of children congregate around the bank of personal computers. Both libraries eject school learners at 5.00pm every afternoon, which means that use by schools learners is telescoped into a few short hours after school. It is probable that many of the respondents will not be formally registered members as membership requires parents' signatures. Witbooi (2001), in her study of the membership of a library in a nearby suburb, suggests that high levels of adult illiteracy, together with perceptions that the library is for the educated middle class, mean that many children in a disadvantaged community are not signed up library members. Of the 799 respondents included in the data analysis in the Vista study, 623 (78%) said that they never use any other library. Only 27 (3%) said they also use a school library. The most common reason for coming to the library is to work on a project; the second is to sit in the library to do homework; and the third is to use library materials to complete an

assignment. The study of the Vista Libraries documents quantity of use - it does not however examine *quality* of use. For example, it does not follow up whether the information needs of the learners are in fact being met or whether the experience in the public library is developing the information literacy of the learners. The quality of learning in the public library is something that hopefully the in-depth case study in Mpumalanga will shed light on.

One of the threads running through the studies within libraries is the shortcomings of educators, who fail to inform libraries in good time of their assignments, set unrealistic topics for research, or do not come to the library (Fourie, 1995; Shaw, 2000; Maepa & Mhinga, 2003). This comment echoes the international studies of teachers' information seeking behaviours and attitudes within the literature of school librarianship that have been referred to earlier. In her Masters Degree study, Shaw, a public librarian in Cape Town, conducted two surveys of adolescents – one in her library and one in a school close by (2000). At the time of her study, the school had a library "on paper" but the school librarian was a subject teacher as well and used the library as her classroom, thus barring access for most of the day. The result, Shaw found, was that pupils turned to the public library – and indeed 77.4 percent of her respondents used the library mainly to work on projects. Shaw points out that teachers do not keep the library informed of the current assignments and that scores of learners descend on the library all looking for the same information at the same time. Most of the learners lack the skills needed to find relevant information; many have difficulty understanding the predominantly English texts; and library staff are too busy to offer the kind of information literacy education needed. It is noteworthy that in her conclusions, Shaw focuses on the shortcomings of the school's library and of the school library sector in general – drawing up a long list of recommendations for education authorities. For example, she suggests that the Education Department appoint school librarians to public libraries to assist the overextended staff. It is interesting that she betrays no wish to take on a more active role in information literacy education herself. Her conclusions and recommendations indicate that she sees the present situation in her public library as a problem that will go away once the Education Department sees the light about school libraries. Perhaps, she still sees the curricular use of the public library as inappropriate to the "true" mission of public libraries, which, in the Western model, assumes the existence of school libraries.

Nkosi's PhD study (2000) of the provision of information to non-school-going black youth in the Eastern Cape and Maepa and Mhinga's project (2003) in a public library in the largely rural Limpopo Province are of particular interest since these provinces might be more easily comparable to Mpumalanga than urban Cape Town. Nkosi's study operated both inside and outside the confines of libraries. She interviewed librarians to find out what provision they

make for the needs of illiterate and semi-literate black youth who, as a result of the discriminatory polices of the past, are alienated from the mainstream education systems and the economy. Her conclusion is that their needs are being ignored, as librarians believe that their primary function is to serve the needs of the educated. Relevant to this study are the comments she records that reveal that librarians feel overwhelmed by the demands of school-going youth.

Maepa and Mhinga's purpose was to explore the obstacles in the way of the Seshego Community Library in Limpopo as it tries to establish "outreach" services to the 28 schools in its surrounding community, having received generous funding to build up its curricular collection. No school is more than three kilometres from the library. Only one of the six high schools has a functioning library; some of the primary schools have boxed resource collections. The collections in the schools are unutilised and obsolete, owing to, the authors say, the fact that there are no teacher librarians to manage them (2003: 271). Unlike the Cape Town libraries in the studies above, the central problem facing the Seshego library is not overwhelming over use by school learners but rather *under use* and *quality* of use. Library staff struggle to cope with the ill-defined and inappropriate topics the learners are given to "research" by their teachers. In its in-depth study of teachers' and principals' attitudes, the methodology of the study might act as a model for the second-phase case study in Mpumalanga. Maepa and Mpinga echo some of Shaw's comments on Cape Town teachers. They find evidence of low motivation and morale among the Seshego teachers, which explains, they suggest, their reluctance to exploit the public library's resources in their teaching. Their educator respondents are apparently unwilling to regard the library as a partner in the teaching and learning process, even after much active marketing of their services by the librarians. The reasons given by the teachers for not using the library give insight into the problems likely to face all public libraries who wish to set up information literacy programmes. Teachers report that they themselves went through university or college successfully without ever using a library; they do not have time; the library is too distant; they do not want to take on "more responsibility".

This last comment is revealing. As the authors point out, it suggests an acknowledgment that the use of the library will transform the teaching and learning in their schools but that it will lead to an increased work load (p. 275). They will have to visit the library to agree on suitable assignments, for example. "Chalk and talk" classrooms are certainly less demanding than constructivist – for both teachers and learners, as international experience has found (for example Gordon, 1996; Brown, 1999). Maepa and Mhinga find that the school principals in Seshego share many of their teachers' perceptions. There has been recently an increasing

recognition of the crucial role of principals in information literacy programming as reported in a theme issue of the journal *School Libraries Worldwide* in 2002. In this journal, Hartzell (2002) analyses four factors that shape principals' perceptions: their own school careers, their training, the invisibility of school librarians' work which usually involves working with teachers behind the scenes, and the low-profile that school libraries and information literacy have in the literature that school principals are likely to read.

Clearly if public libraries are to take on information literacy education, public library staff will need to be willing to shift their priorities, if only to gain control over the manifest disorder in their libraries in the afternoons. (The researcher has heard a public librarian stand up at a conference and say that her library is like a "beer hall" in the afternoons. One of Nkosi's librarian respondents in the Eastern Cape talks of children "sitting on the doorsteps and crying because they can't get in" (2000: 260)). In the absence of school librarians and with questions over the capacity of teachers and principals, they have de facto responsibility for information literacy education. But it is suggested that, on the whole, their work is improvised in reaction to the sudden increase in numbers of children descending on them. Nkosi, whose research focus is the information needs of South Africa's black youth, suggests that public librarians are only now responding to the needs of black school learners because they cannot avoid any longer the crisis-like situation (2000: 303). Perhaps they still hope that the "problem" will go away as soon as education authorities get their house in order, which is unlikely in the short term, given the existing backlog in school library provision that was discussed in Chapter 1 [1.1.2].

Once the willingness is there, another prerequisite might be changes in policy and mission statements, which, as Witbooi (2000) points out, do not always reflect the reality on the ground. They often persist in portraying the Western ideals of a public library, supportive of education rather than actively responsible. Another requirement might be better communication and cooperation between provincial education departments and the departments that manage public libraries. There are several warnings, scattered throughout the studies discussed above, that divisions between sectors might be hindering progress. The growing recognition of the need for collaboration was shown in the initiative of the Pretoria Office of UNESCO, the National Committee for Library Co-Operation, which established a task team in the late 1990s to examine the identified need for better cooperation between the public library sector and the school library sector. The preface to its report states that "collaboration between school and public library systems would seem for everybody the way forwards, particularly in rural areas, where availability of books is limited and trained librarians are scarce" (National Committee for Library Co-Operation, 2000: 5).

The consensus of these studies is that learners come to the library ill-prepared, with teachers failing to understand the role of the library. This kind of use of libraries has clearly affected public library staff morale. Experts on the management of change in organisations warn that rapid change brings a sense of loss of control (Venter, 2003). The researcher's recommendation after her study in the Vista Libraries, where staff expressed anger and frustration at the daily onslaught of pupils, was that the library should concentrate on setting up a structured systematic programme, focused on just a few nearby schools in the quieter mornings (Hart, 2004). This, it was suggested, might offer the library staff a more satisfying work experience as they could make a measurable difference in the learning programme of a manageable number of learners.

The conclusion in this section is that, despite the lack of any acknowledgement of the curricular role of libraries in the educationists' documents discussed in the previous chapter, it is clear that the shifts in curriculum in the last few years have had a large impact on libraries, specifically public libraries. They have had to step into the gap caused by the lack of school libraries. Research studies indicate that public librarians are coping with the needs of school learners in ad hoc improvised ways, getting little recognition for their curricular work from their own governance structures or from education departments (Hart, 1999b; Witbooi, 2001; Hart, 2003; Maepa & Mhinga, 2003).

3.1.2 The information needs of young South Africans

The studies discussed so far have been within the context of libraries. There are a few others outside the walls of libraries that examine the information needs and information seeking behaviour of young South Africans, which might throw light on the question of the need for information literacy education. As Nkosi, whose study is of black youth, points out, despite an evident increase in interest in the information needs of black adult South Africans, there is little existing research in the needs of youth (2000: 63). This same dearth might apply in the international arena (Todd, 2004: 39).

Even the studies that take place outside library walls are conducted with the aim of building a library collection relevant to people's needs. In common with overseas studies, they rest on the assumption that school and public libraries can be a powerful force in young people's decision-making and lifestyle choices (Todd, 2004: 39). Thus, although ostensibly not library oriented, Nkosi's interviews of young people take them through a list of topics - education, health, sex education, careers, for example – asking them if they need information in that area and, if so, where they go to get it. She then compares their responses with librarians' reports

on what they have in stock (2000: 175). Of interest to this study is her finding that the need most often expressed by her young respondents is for education (p. 124). Another example is the KwaZulu Natal's Ethekweni Library community survey in 1998, described by Stilwell and Bell (2003: 334). The resulting list of the needs of youth reveals much about the traumas facing South African youth. Individual and focus interviews showed that they need information on topics like: anger, grieving, stigma, health risks, death, gangs, discrimination, date rape, sexuality, family violence, and drugs. Among the respondents older than 13 years, however, "information for school projects" was the most frequently cited wish (Stilwell & Bell, 2003: 337).

Some information needs studies within librarianship come across as shopping lists of what the library should stock – depicting information as something "out there". As discussed in Chapter 1 [1.2.1], research within the cognitive paradigm of information science has a different view of information – and thus of information need. There is no linear relationship between a well-stocked library and its effectiveness in meeting the needs of its users. People need to know when they need information and for what. They need to know where to go, how to distinguish useful information, how to relate it to what they know already and to what they have identified as their need – and how to apply it. Thus, "information need" is a complex concept that operates at different levels. Information science theory depicts the search for information to come out of an experience of a gap that needs filling or, as Kuhlthau's ISP approach contends (1993b), a state of uncertainty in need of resolution. Information-seeking is not like picking an item from a shelf. Rather, as discussed in Chapter 1, it is a subjective sense-making process. Information literate people have insight into their own need and how to go about meeting the need. Information science research has found information need as expressed and unexpressed, conscious and unconscious. Some South African research has confirmed how information illiteracy often is evident when people cannot articulate a need and are unaware of how information might give them more control over their situation (Fairer-Wessels, 1990; Kaniki, 1995). International research into the so-called "information poor" confirms these feelings of incapacity. They perceive the information rich to control access to information and perceive themselves to lack any information sources (Todd, 2004: 33).

To get to deeper levels of young people's information-seeking behaviour, Stilwell and Bell used a critical incident methodology in their study of the information need of 244 learners in a school in KwaZulu Natal (2003). They asked their participants to describe a recent information problem or information-seeking critical incident, to identify which information channels they had used to resolve the problem and to indicate the outcome. The top two

incidents chosen involved school work – "access to information" (the school library being found inadequate) and "difficulties with school subjects" (p. 337), with these two representing 42 percent of all the responses. None of the respondents mentioned using a library successfully. The most popular channel was interpersonal - teachers, friends, neighbours, relatives. The radio was the next most important source. Nearly 50 percent were not satisfied that their problem had been resolved – perhaps recalling Fairer-Wessels's comments on the risks in reliance on oral personal sources of information (1990).

Stilwell and Bell (2003: 334) refer to Rubushe's Masters Degree study in 2000 of 111 Eastern Cape young people, which found surprising ignorance on HIV/Aids, sex, drugs and alcohol. However Rubashe's project goes beyond the mere listing of gaps in information. According to Stilwell and Bell, Rubashe's respondents were found to be in urgent need of learning how to learn. They needed skills in decision making and problem solving. This study appears to be at a different level from other information needs studies, described above, as it looks into young people's heads. It acknowledges that information is more than a commodity – that, if provided and "taken", will solve problems. It takes into account that information demands cognitive processing - into personal meaning, sense and knowledge. It echoes Todd's study of the information processing of young drug users in Australia whom he describes as "active creators of knowledge, manipulating information selectively, intentionally and creatively to build opinions, viewpoints, arguments and explanations" (2004: 40). The implications for librarians who work with young people are that their work entails more than the provision of facts or resources. Young people developing their information literacy need support as they construct new perspectives and understandings – though interrogating and testing a variety of ideas, perspectives, beliefs and interpretations (Todd, 2004: 42).

The question for this PhD study is: Can public libraries provide for this kind of learning? Public libraries in South Africa are clearly providing learning support materials for youth but can they – with their limited resources – be expected to step into this kind of information literacy education? The study in Mpumalanga will, it is hoped, throw light on these questions.

3.2 Public libraries and education

The previous chapter documented the radical changes within South African education. An examination of the literature of public librarianship, both in South Africa and internationally, shows that it also has been re-examining its mission in the light of changed political and economic contexts. Any study of public libraries in South Africa has to acknowledge two

simultaneous and, perhaps, conflicting forces for change: the internal transformation to democracy in the early 1990s and the forces of the globalised market economy.

There is little research in the responses of public library staff to the new political economic climate. Stilwell's study in 1996 of the influence of socio-political change in South Africa on organisational climate within four provincial public library services (1996: 182) found positive attitudes towards the philosophical statements linking public libraries to education and community development of the early 1990s, which were mentioned in Chapter 1 [1.2.2]. However, her respondents are all professionally qualified staff working within "head-office" structures. Kagan's broader survey in 2002 found less optimism about change - perhaps because he included public library staff employed by local authorities. Also, by 2002, the negative impact of restrictive government economic policies on public libraries might have affected attitudes (Stilwell, 2001: 203, 204; Dick, 2002a: 30; Kagan, 2002: 1).

Across the world, ideologies have shifted towards "smaller government", with resulting cutbacks in public spending (Martin, 1998: 171). In addition, the rise of sophisticated information technologies and the resulting explosion of information have forced libraries to redefine their role in terms of providing access to information rather than maintaining large stocks of materials. This redefinition has involved the following (Himmel & Wilson, 1998; Issak, 2000: 117; Kaniki, 2001: 188):

- a service oriented to specific planned-for outcomes
- shifts to services tailored more closely to users' needs and demands
- more emphasis on the assessment of and profiling of the information needs of specific communities
- decentralising resources
- a "just in time" approach rather than a "just in case" approach in collection management
- assessing quality in terms of "access" not "size"
- a global focus.

Just as school librarians have had to provide evidence of what it is they contribute to learning in schools, public librarians have had to find measures of outcome – indicators that will demonstrate their impact on their communities. Durrance (2003: 542) points out that this awareness of their accountability in the United States comes out of threats of funding cutbacks in a political and economic climate where politicians and social researchers ignore the contribution of libraries to social development. Perhaps in reaction to the same kind of

cool climate, a similar awareness of the need to demonstrate usefulness is now visible in South Africa with the PACLISA project to find measures of performance for South African public libraries (De Jager & Nassimbeni, 2005).

Like Durrance, the British researcher, Kevin Dudley, links public libraries to the notion of social capital, which he describes as including communication and negotiating skills, and, what he calls, "informacy" – the awareness of the value of good information and the ability to access it and use it (2000: 31). According to Dudley, the development of informacy within a community might well be libraries' unique contribution to social inclusion. In arguing that information literacy is the "required" literacy for the 1990s and that it provides an enhanced role for public libraries, Curran says:

> Then there are the information poor whose choices are so severely limited that they don't get to participate much in the Information Society. ... In many communities where good information is valued and where citizens make a connection between that good information and what public libraries are about, public librarians get their tickets to ride (1990: 350).

But Dudley warns that the potential role of public libraries in developing social capital is not, as yet, generally accepted – libraries still have to show that they have the capacity for the role (2000: 30). Todd quotes research that shows that the so-called "information poor", people who are shut out from the information society, might not see libraries as places which might help them with their everyday problems and concerns (2004: 33). Given the ruralness of Mpumalanga Province, the role of libraries in the inclusion of rural communities in the information society is pertinent. Vavrek contends that the information age, in which society is "predicated on information access and use", brings the public library an enhanced role in narrowing the information gap between rural and urban and in lifelong learning. Yet, he warns, rural public libraries in the USA are "in crisis", owing to shortages of funds, the under-education of their staff, and neglect by other library agencies (1995: 1; 1997).

Issak's survey of public libraries in Africa concludes that their situation has deteriorated, owing to economic crises and a lack of definition of their role (2000: 12). There seems to be consensus in the country reports included in Issak's survey that public library services in African countries, as inherited from their colonial founders, are irrelevant. They claim to run community information services, yet only a small proportion of the community ever uses them. They do not take into account the social and economic realities of Africa. One of these realities is that the majority of public library users in Africa are students (Issak, 2000: 12). One of Stilwell and Bell's young South African respondents, in the study described earlier, explains why she does not think of using the library to solve her problems:

> In my mind libraries were for those special people, not for me, and the fact that there was no one library around, the appetite for using it was not stimulated (Stilwell & Bell, 2003: 338).

In Nkosi's study in the Eastern Cape, a young black person talks of her fear of the library:

> From the outside it is frightening. I don't think I'll ever get to the door (2000: 211).

These comments offer support to Sturges and Neill's judgement that libraries in Africa are "aloof" and "alienating" (1998: 135).

It seems that the main demand in Africa is for study materials and a place to study (Matare, 1998: 29). The need, moreover, is not unique to Africa. Todd and Tedd point to shifts in thinking in the United Kingdom where, in 1997, 86 percent of public libraries were supplying open learning packs for distance learning students, compared with 20 percent in 1992 (2000: 376). A nationwide survey in the late 1990s found that 52 percent of public libraries in the United Kingdom were running homework clubs, out of "a concern on the part of librarians that they were not adequately meeting the educational needs of children" (Elkin, Kimmell, 2000: 92). The report on the survey speculates that this concern emanates from changes in education towards continuous assessment and deterioration in the position of school libraries.

The issue of school use of public libraries is not new, as evidenced by the thread of concern in the South African library literature in the 1980s over the "problem" of school learners in public libraries (for example Van der Walt, 1981; Brooke-Norris, 1986; Niven, 1987). That they were described as a "problem" is significant. It suggests that the curricular use of a public library did not match its inherited Western mission, in which the public library *supports* formal education only. It is interesting to compare the reaction of American public librarians in the 1950s when, after a spate of school reforms, they experienced an upsurge in student demand. Martin (1998: 109) quotes the "concern" "alarm" and "panic" resulting from the "traumatic encounter with today's school population", as students turned to public libraries to cope with an increase in homework and project work. In the United States, the "problem" was solved by investment in school libraries in the 1950s and 1960s.

Chapter 1 made it clear that part of the philosophical frame for this study was a view of the public library as developmental and educational. The most recent UNESCO Public library Manifesto (1995) embraces this model. The first two core services it lists are "creating and strengthening reading habits in children" and "supporting both individual and self conducted education as well as formal education at all levels". The meaning of "support of education" is often not clarified in discussions of the social mission of public libraries. The IFLA/UNESCO guidelines for public library service, published in 2001, describe support for formal and

informal education in terms of the provision of materials, study space and Internet access for "lifelong" learning (International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions, 2001: 29). In recent years, however, the educational role has been encapsulated in the construct of information literacy education. The arrival of the information society, with its demand for lifelong flexible learning, has encouraged a growing awareness that the specific educational mission of the public library is to develop information literacy in its community. Indeed, another of the 12 core services listed in the UNESCO Manifesto is "the facilitation of the development of information and computer literacy skills". The public library is a unique community resource to develop this kind of literacy. According to Bundy, a role in information literacy education has revitalised public libraries throughout the world:

> Recognition is now needed that information literacy, not information technology, is the main requirement for an informed citizenry, lifelong learning and an information-enabled nation. Worldwide a renaissance of public libraries in response to these issues is occurring (2002b: 47).

However, the capacity of librarians for teaching has been questioned (Peacock, 2001; Bruce & Lampson, 2002; Clyde, 2002), as has been the readiness of educators to accept them as fellow teachers (Maepa & Mhinga, 2003).

3.2.1 Joint –use school/community libraries

Once the educational role of the public library is acknowledged in the context of a shortage of school libraries, the combined school library/public library is often put forward as an "alternative and achievable" model (Le Roux, 2001: 4). Martin's history of American public libraries traces how public library service to schools in the 1920s evolved into "school-housed branch libraries" that served both the general public and pupils and teachers (Martin, 1998: 63). The model was short-lived, he says, because neither community ultimately was satisfied and because of practical problems over who paid for what. However, the recent publication of a collection of case studies of joint use in the United States (Miller & Pellen, 2001) shows that the model is, in fact, still alive in that country. In a chapter of this book, Imhoff (2001: 18) attributes a renewed interest in joint-use in the United States to a convergence of goals between public and school libraries as public libraries increasingly orient themselves to information literacy education. Le Roux finds examples also in Canada, Australia, the United Kingdom, Scandinavia, Germany and Iceland (2001: 24).

Chapter 2 [2.3.3] alluded to the model of combined public library/school library, which was included as one of the seven models of school libraries in the first two South African draft school library policy documents (South Africa. Department of Education. Directorate: Centre for Educational Technology and Distance Education, 1997; 1998). The discussion of joint-use

libraries in South Africa goes back to the initiatives in the early 1990s that aimed at transforming the library landscape. Multi-purpose libraries were seen as a way to optimise resources (National Education Policy Investigation. Library and Information Services Research Group, 1992: 61). The UNESCO funded investigation into co-operation between public and school libraries (National Committee for Library Co-Operation, 2000), has already been referred to in Chapter 2 [2.3.3]. Although ostensibly set up to examine ways to encourage collaboration between the public library and school library sectors, the emphasis in its final report is, almost exclusively, on the shared use models identified in the school library policy framework documents of 1997 and 1998. This is perhaps inevitable given the weakness in the school library sector. It is hard to see how school and public libraries can "co-operate" when there are so few school libraries.

The report seems to have had little impact – perhaps because it tied its colours to the mast of the first two draft school library policy frameworks, which still have not received the stamp of government approval. Perhaps therefore, the report's timing was unfortunate; it could have been ahead of current thinking. After all, a joint-use library is what Miller calls the "*ultimate expression of cooperation*" (italics added) (Miller & Pellen, 2001: 1). It was suggested in Chapter 2 that the absence of combined models in the third draft school library policy in 2001 betrays a perception of shared models as a perpetuation of apartheid discrimination. An editorial comment in *School Library Journal* in 2000, in response to government endorsement of "joint-use" in California, shows that American librarians share similar unease. The editor quotes the Californian School Library Association's criticism of the endorsement: "a politician's dream solution, because it doesn't take any thought, and you're not actually talking to public and school librarians" (Glick, 2000). If these perceptions are widespread in South Africa, other approaches to what Bundy calls the school-public library interface might be more feasible (2002: 55). The term "joint-use" can cover many kinds of cooperative projects – shared systems, reading programmes, class visits (Glick, 2000). What is crucial is the recognition that public libraries are potential partners in the educational programme.

Le Roux's thesis provides a thorough survey of joint-use school/public libraries throughout the world, and of the preconditions for success (2001). Despite her finding that internationally the school-based model is preferred, she recommends that, in South Africa, services be based in public libraries because in rural areas there just are no school library facilities (p. 300). She suggests that joint-use public/school libraries be established within community centres and that they circulate book boxes to their schools. Perhaps, a gap in Le Roux's analysis is a focus on how such services might be intertwined with the learning programme of the school – found to be essential to effective information literacy education, as shown in Chapter 2. As she

points out, what is needed is a pilot study to test her recommendations (p. 303). Perhaps, the first step towards such a study is the conference paper she and Francois Hendrikz, Director of Mpumalanga Library and Information Service, gave in July 2003. The paper puts forward Maphotla Library in Mpumalanga, in a "rural tribal area" (Le Roux & Hendrikz, 2003: 258), as a prototype for piloting a joint-use community/school library – based on the model in Le Roux's Masters dissertation. Maphotla Library will be returned to in later chapters.

Problems with governance structures are evident in the *Library Practice for Young Learners* (LPYL) project, which provides a case study of a joint-use school/community library, Makhuva Information Centre, in Limpopo Province (Naiker & Mbokazi, 2002: 17-23). As mentioned earlier, the LPYL wished to test some of the models of school library service in the school library policy framework documents and Makhuva Information Centre is one of the three resulting case studies. Unfortunately, the focus in the case study is on the mechanics of setting up the centre rather than its role in the schools' learning programmes. In addition, it talks more of its services to the community than those to schools. It certainly gives insight into the effect of divisions between government departments. In the course of the project, Limpopo Province placed school libraries within the Department of Education and its public libraries in the Department of Sport, Arts and Culture. This slowed progress as each has different policies and approaches.

3.3 Examples of information literacy education in public libraries

One of the limitations of this study, as mentioned in Chapter 1 [1.5], is its exclusive focus on the needs of *youth*, specifically school-going youth, for information literacy education. The choice of an educational model for public libraries, of course, need not imply enhanced services to school learners, especially when good school libraries exist. The concern that the needs of school youth will swallow up library budgets and staff time is evident in the literature (for example Nkosi, 2000: 303; Bundy, 2002: 55). As mentioned above, Nkosi's doctoral study (2000: 305) makes a plea for information services geared to the needs of the huge numbers of semi-literate black youth between the age of 16 and 24 years who are not enrolled in formal school programmes. Throughout Africa, adults are in need of adult basic education, literacy programmes and developmental information services tailored to specific needs – all of which imply information literacy education (Issak, 2000: 114).

Although the concept of information literacy belongs predominantly within the literature of school and academic librarianship, there is some limited comment in the international professional literature on the need for public libraries to take on a more active role. As stated

above, the context is often the need to contribute to an information literate citizenry, able to cope with the demands of the information and communications technologies of the global information economy, rather than on school level programming. Both Todd and Tedd (2000) and Grassian and Kaplowitz (2001) suggest that the advent of the information society, with its ICT, might encourage a return to the 19th century "people's university" model of the public library. They see the public library as a socially inclusive place where it is natural for people in a community to come together and explore the new technologies. Weiner's comment (1997) that public libraries might contribute to the narrowing of the digital divide might resonate with South African librarians. He compares the new information elite with the educated elite that libraries served before the arrival of public libraries in the 19th century. In the UK, 89 percent of public libraries have public Internet access points; 75.6 percent provide public training terminals (Todd & Tedd, 2000: 377). Todd and Tedd explicitly connect new ICT courses in public libraries to their traditional role in informal and lifelong learning, which allows people to renew and expand their knowledge and skills to keep up with an ever-changing society (2000: 375). They describe the example of the *Learning Gateway Network* at Belfast Library, which allows users to study for various ICT qualifications. Another example is the EU funded DERAL (*Distance Learning in Rural Areas via Libraries*) project, which aims to provide access to formal courses of study to people in rural communities as well as the disabled, the elderly and the unemployed.

As soon as people use public library computers to access education courses and the World Wide Web, the question arises of their computer competencies and then of their information literacy – and whose responsibility it is to provide skills training and information literacy education. Academic libraries have certain advantages in the design and management of information literacy education, because they work with stable user groups within the framework of a curriculum and an institution. The challenge for public libraries' information literacy programmes is that people come and go in the library intermittently, on a voluntary basis (Grassian & Kaplowitz, 2001: 346). This means that information literacy education has relied on one-to-one guidance and on self-directed support materials, such as signs, posters, and videotapes. However, recently, more formal approaches have developed and there are several allusions in the professional literature to courses run by public libraries. Many of these are designed for specific segments of the community – for example business, the elderly, or job-seekers. In 1997, the South Ayrshire libraries in Scotland recognised the problem and, together with the School of Information and Media at the Robert Gordon University, designed an information skills intervention, available on the library's web site (Newton, Sutton & McConnell, 1998). A glance at the site shows that it follows a Kuhlthau-like process approach, using a cyclical model to develop insight into the generic information seeking

process. Each phase of the process asks certain questions and users can get to more detailed tutorials via hyperlinks. The report of the South Ayrshire Libraries initiative is unusual as it acknowledges that library staff themselves might lack the required competencies and that in-house education and training might be needed.

The emphasis so far in this section has been on ICT courses in public libraries – for all age groups. ICT skills are certainly part of information literacy and are relevant to the Mpumalanga study. The Mpumalanga public libraries are being provided with access to the Internet (Hendrikz & Smit, 2003); but it is not clear how many access points will be provided or if the public will be entitled to free hands-on access. There are, however, other studies within the public library context which take a broader approach to information literacy education than ICT and which focus on the needs of school learners. Some of these assume that school libraries will continue to be the major role-player; but they claim that public librarians need to be more in touch with pedagogical issues so that they might support their colleagues working inside schools and so that school learners might broaden their horizons out of the school library (Curran, 1990; Breivik & Senn, 1993; Bundy, 2002b). Others examine a more active and direct role for public libraries.

Bundy assumes that most school have libraries and librarians, perhaps owing to his Australian perspective. He argues, however, that shifts in Australian education to enquiry-based learning have meant that public libraries are used more heavily by school learners and that interaction between school librarians and public librarians should therefore be improved. In 2001, he surveyed 1496 public library branches and 2325 schools librarians to gather data on the school-public library interface. The survey concludes that school public library interaction has increased in the last 10 years and that there is a growing sense of a "shared endeavour" (Bundy, 2002b: 67). School librarians are on the whole less enthusiastic about this interaction than public librarians. Bundy identifies four factors significant for public library – school relations:

- differences between the two partners in understanding of and enthusiasm for enhanced relations
- acceptance that co-operation is a longstanding role for public libraries
- acceptance that relations are often informal and improvised
- the major constraints of funds, time and access.

These will clearly be factors to consider in the Mpumalanga study.

New Zealand provides several research studies of interest – perhaps, because it has a shortage of school libraries and a resource-based curriculum similar to South Africa's. Cooper, a children's librarian in New Zealand, acknowledges that the pressures of these two factors led her library to establish more formal ties with the schools in the area, hoping to manage better "the after school rush of students to the library" (1993: 51). The result is the "project power" initiative, which provides in-depth follow-up instruction to classes working on school projects. Her concluding comment is of interest. She admits that some might question whether it is reasonable for local authorities to support formal education to the extent they do, but then goes on to say that public libraries have no choice but to get involved in formal education, contending that "children who learn the joys of reading and discovering knowledge establish the foundation for lifelong learning and for future prosperity, and ultimately for the survival of the human race" (p. 51).

Some concern was expressed in 1999 after the New Zealand Council for Education Research (NZER) found many Grade 5 to 8 students to fail tests in six standardised information skills (McMillan, 2001: 4; Moore, 2002: 6). A quarter did not understand the difference between fiction and non-fiction; one in five Grade 5 students thought they could use the publisher's name to find a book in the library catalogue; and one in five thought the Dewey number in the catalogue referred to the number of pages in the book. In answer to queries on the need for such knowledge in the Internet age, the NZER contends that, if a child learns the problem-solving skills of retrieving useful information in the library, he or she will be able to transfer the skills to the Internet. The NZER report motivated McMillan's Masters Degree project (2001), in which she designed a series of activities to teach information skills to young users of a New Zealand public library and then tested them. The project is distinguished by its immersion in learning theory and its insistence on the need to assess the learning outcomes of the programme.

The lack of school libraries in New Zealand and the widespread adoption of resource-based learning in schools might explain the survey in 2001 by the Library and Information Association of New Zealand (LIANZA) into the nature and extent of information literacy education in public libraries (Koning, 2001). It followed the establishment of a taskforce to investigate the "issues, opportunities and challenges" of information literacy (LIANZA Information Literacy Taskforce, 1999). The preliminary investigation of the LIANZA taskforce suggested that public librarians are less likely to see information literacy in a broad societal context than other librarians. They are more likely to emphasise information technology skills in their definitions, for example, and so to place it within the province of more technologically advanced sectors – like school and academic libraries. There was little

evidence of information literacy programmes in public libraries, apart from a few Internet courses. The follow-up survey gathers quantitative data to verify these comments. It provides a snapshot picture of the current state of information literacy education in New Zealand's public libraries. Its definition of information literacy was "lifelong learning" - purposefully broad enough to catch any relevant activities. The survey aimed to find out:

- the extent and range of formal and informal programmes in the libraries
- the extent to which information literacy education programmes are formalised in libraries' planning and policy documents
- how the libraries plan to develop their information literacy programmes in the future.

The survey used a structured questionnaire of eight questions. It asks: what programmes are currently in place for individuals and groups; what partnerships are in place, for example with schools; how information literacy is reflected in policy statements; who is responsible for information literacy education, one designated staff member or shared among a few; how the staff are trained; and what would help to make progress. No details of content, teaching style or of good practice were gathered. The survey report groups responses according to size of library – found indeed to be significant. Small libraries face challenges since their needs are as diverse as bigger libraries but they have fewer resources.

The survey found rather high levels of awareness among its 57 respondents of the need for information literacy education. But, according to the authors, the study finds gaps with regard to key aspects of information literacy education - all pertinent to the PhD study in Mpumalanga, for example:

- the embedding of information literacy education in all areas of library functioning
- acceptance of a teaching role for the library
- librarians' preconceptions of what they do and do not do
- the difference between the old user education or library skills instruction and the broader learning of information literacy education, called "research" skills in the report.

Overall, the findings resonate with the purpose of this study in that it finds a need for improvements in "staff awareness, attitudes and skills" if public libraries are to make progress in information literacy education.

One of the "attitudes" that might need examination is the conception of information and information literacy prevailing among public library staff. Foreshadowing, perhaps, the theoretical work of Christine Bruce, which was described in Chapter 1 [1.2.1.2], Curran

contends that "liberal" conceptions are necessary (1990: 351). He suggests that many public librarians might belong to the paradigm that sees information as a "utility" – a commodity, which they organise and hand out to their clients. Thus, the domain of information literacy might well be new territory for public librarians who are more familiar with the acquisition, storage and dissemination of information than with its communication and use (1990: 351). Traditionally, they operate in a reactive way – waiting for clients to come to them; information literacy programmes, however, imply proactive strategising.

The discussion in this section, perhaps, indicates that the literature on information literacy education in public libraries is rather thin. It is significant that Moore's recent survey of information literacy education for the Prague summit on information literacy (2002), one of the most thorough surveys of information literacy education, has no mention of public libraries. The gap points to the central challenge facing information literacy education in public libraries – how to integrate information literacy education into the learning programme of students. Moore's stance is that information literacy is all about learning, critical thinking and problem-solving, and that this kind of learning is effective only when embedded in authentic problems. In this she is supported by widespread research. As far as the researcher can see, there are no explanations in the literature of how to achieve this in public libraries. The empirical study in Mpumalanga will, it is hoped, throw light on this critical issue.

3.4   Conclusion

This chapter describes international examples of information literacy education in public libraries. It seems that the demands of the information society might provide an opportunity for public libraries to take on an enhanced educational and developmental role – with information literacy education being their unique contribution to social inclusion and the building of social capital.

This chapter has found the answer to the question posed at the end of the previous chapter to be "No". Librarians have not "got it wrong". There is solid evidence that South African school learners have had to turn increasingly to public libraries for their learning and information needs, since they do not have access to adequate school libraries. Research outside library walls in young people's information needs provides evidence that Curriculum 2005 and its revision, the Revised National Curriculum Statement, do indeed demand access to resources and to information literacy education.

The fundamental arguments in Chapters 1 and 2 are that educational change, internationally and in South Africa, has given rise to the need for information literacy education for school learners and that, if schools cannot provide for this education, then public libraries might have to. Chapter 3 has pointed to evidence that they are already doing so, even if reluctantly and under pressure.

However, the review of literature uncovers three key questions over the information literacy education of school learners in public libraries:

- the capacity of librarians for teaching
- the preparedness of public librarians specifically for information literacy education
- and the challenge of integrating a public library programme into the school's curriculum.

The survey of documents and research in Chapters 2 and 3 serves to inform the research design and methodology of the study in Mpumalanga, to be reported on in Chapter 4. It is clear that a multi-layered approach is needed. The first phase survey, similar to the LIANZA study of public libraries in New Zealand, will give a snapshot of the state of information literacy education in Mpumalanga libraries. Existing research shows the need for insight into public librarians' attitudes to and conceptions of information literacy. The studies that ask respondents to describe their information problems and critical information incidents might be used as models. More in-depth exploration of the "quality of learning" issues is also required. The case study of the PhD study's second phase concentrates on specific circumstances. The case study observation and iterative interviewing enrich the insights of the first phase. It includes the perspectives of educators to explore the connections between what learners do in the public library and at school.

CHAPTER 4
RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this chapter is to describe and explain the research design and its methodologies. It has five sections. Firstly, it returns to the research problem, provides a concise problem statement and articulates the research questions that guide the study. Then it gives details of the site of the investigation, Mpumalanga Province. The third bulky section describes the methodologies of the two phases, the first phase survey undertaken in March/April 2004 and the second phase participant observation case study that took place some months later. It then discusses the evaluative and ethical principles that underpin the study.

4.1 Research problem

In Chapter 1, the research problem at the heart of this PhD dissertation was described as the readiness of public libraries in South Africa for information literacy education, with a specific focus on school learners. The question is: Are they able, willing and prepared to take on responsibility for information literacy education?

The preceding chapters have highlighted the dual meaning of the term "readiness". It refers, on one level, to physical conditions and facilities. On another, it refers to less tangible attributes - the attitudes, conceptions, perceptions and knowledge of library staff. These make up what might be called a person's "world view". Subjective beliefs and perceptions underlie the way things are done in an institution and are clearly crucial for the study in Mpumalanga. There is much international research in the field of education on how teachers' beliefs about their role impact on their teaching behaviours (for example Barnes, 1992; Hamilton, 1993). The author's own Masters Degree study found strong connections between teachers' beliefs about information and learning and their approaches in classroom project work (Hart, 1999a). In the field of library and information science, however, as Bruce and Lampson (2002: 82) assert, there is inadequate research in librarians' views on information literacy. Studies in information literacy education in libraries perhaps assume that the library staff share researchers' beliefs about its desirability.

The underlying premises of the PhD study are that, in South Africa, there is a need for information literate school leavers and that, given the shortage of school libraries, public libraries might assume an active role in the information literacy education of school learners. Previous chapters have served to elucidate these premises. They have demonstrated the

implications of the new curriculum, Curriculum 2005, for information literacy education and have described the present status of school libraries in South Africa. The point is that, in countries such as Australia, the USA and the UK, it is school libraries that have principal responsibility for information literacy education. There are, admittedly, shifts in the perceptions of the role of the public library in these countries, with the rise, for example, of homework clubs and formal courses in computer and Internet skills, as shown in Chapter 3. However, public libraries are still assumed to play a supportive role rather than one that is directly educational. In these countries, they sometimes work closely with the school library sector and provide a wide range of reading and information resources to support and enrich the learning of students; but there is no suggestion in the professional literature that they intervene directly in the curriculum. However, in less developed countries such as South Africa, where good school libraries hardly exist but where there are fairly well-established public library systems, the suggestion is that public libraries might be expected to intervene more directly in the educational programme. The argument is that children and educators cannot wait for the establishment of an effective school library system which, given the existing backlogs, will take many years. The challenges of a resource-based curriculum, designed to nurture the skills required by the information society of the 21st century, mean that they need access immediately to information literacy education.

This research project sets out to explore the role of public libraries in information literacy education. If public librarians are indeed taking on an active role in information literacy education, then surely there is a need for research in how they are undertaking this work. If it is true that the role has been thrust on them "willy-nilly", as suggested in Chapter 3, then there is a need for research in the inhibiting and enabling factors in the current situation. The research thus will throw light on the challenges that public librarians confront and will contribute to the development of effective information literacy education, which will meet the needs of South African youth.

4.1.1 Problem statement

The above discussion has argued the rationale for the PhD study, which investigates the readiness of public libraries in South Africa for information literacy education, using Mpumalanga Province as the research site. The word "readiness" refers to "capacity" which has two layers of meaning:

- the physical facilities and infrastructure available to public libraries to serve schools

- the will to take on an enhanced role in information literacy education. This refers to more intangible pre-requisites such as library staff's attitudes and their preparedness in terms of education and training.

4.1.2 Research questions

The research questions that emerge from the problem and the review of literature in preceding chapters are given in three categories. Firstly, there are those which examine what is happening at present in terms of information literacy education for school learners. This group documents existing information literacy programmes in Mpumalanga's public libraries:

- What programmes involving school educators and learners are being run at present?
- How are school educators using their local public libraries at present?
- What are the relationships at present between libraries and their local schools?

Secondly, there is the question that addresses the issue of physical capacity, thus:

- Do the libraries have the facilities and resources required to run effective information literacy programmes? The "facilities and resources", referred to, include space, staff, retrieval tools, and, so on.

The third category asks about the attributes of public library staff in terms of their experience of and attitudes towards information literacy, information literacy education, and, indeed, towards a stronger educational role for public libraries. This group includes the following:

- What are their conceptions of information literacy and information literacy education?
- What experience of and education in information literacy theory and practice have they had?
- How knowledgeable are public librarians about educational change and teaching and learning in general?
- What experience of and education in Curriculum 2005 and the Revised National Curriculum Statement have they had?
- What are the attitudes of public library staff towards an enhanced educational role?

There are, in addition, three more speculative questions, answers to which may well lie in the exploration of the preceding questions:

- What is inhibiting or what might inhibit information literacy education programmes in public libraries?
- What is facilitating or what might facilitate information literacy education in public libraries?

- What in-service education and training might be required to develop and enhance the participants' role in information literacy education?

4.1.3 Research design

Research theorists suggest that exploratory studies adopt open and flexible strategies. The aims are to gain new insight into a phenomenon, suggest future directions and priorities for research, clarify ideas and concepts associated with the phenomenon, and, perhaps, generate new theory (Dooley, 1995: 264; Powell, 1997: 58). They often gather data useful for practical applications although Powell points out that this cannot be counted on. Exploratory research often includes what Powell calls "experience surveys" and "analysis of insight-stimulating examples" (1997: 59). Experience surveys gather and synthesise the experiences of practitioners in a field; whereas analysis of chosen examples focuses on specific examples of a phenomenon which are deemed likely to provide sharp contrasts or striking features.

As outlined in Chapter 1 [1.4], a research design of two phases and a mix of qualitative and quantitative methodologies were decided on to explore the above questions. Some of the questions are answered by the data gathering of the first phase survey. The second phase case study is more useful in answering others. Moreover, the first phase leads to additional questions for the second phase, as will be shown in Chapter 7. Flick provides a useful diagram of mixed-method research designs in which she identifies four designs:

- parallel qualitative and quantitative strategies
- waves of quantitative surveys which shape continuous field observation
- a qualitative study (for example unstructured interviews), followed by a quantitative survey which is then followed by another in-depth qualitative study
- a quantitative survey followed by a complementary field study, both of which lead into experimental intervention (1998: 260).

The PhD study in Mpumalanga conforms most closely to the first and third categories, since it lacks the experimental intervention component of the fourth. In the longer term, as will be mentioned in the following section, it is hoped that the study will inform the design of information literacy programming in the Mpumalanga Provincial Library and Information Service; thus, Flick's fourth category is applicable.

Mpumalanga Province was chosen as the research site for the two phases of the PhD study for a variety of reasons, as explained in Chapter 1. A strong motivation was the interest in information literacy education of its Director of Library and Information Service. This interest suggests that the research project might well have an impact on professional thinking and

practice. As discussed in Chapter 1 [1.2], the philosophical framework for the study is social constructivism, which implies that it is *engaged* research, motivated by a wish to make a difference to people's lives (Quantz, 1992: 447).

4.2   Research site: Mpumalanga Province

According to its official web site, Mpumalanga Province is well-known for its tourist sites and for its agriculture (Mpumalanga Provincial Government, 2004). From east to west, its landscape changes from highveld grasslands to the mountainous escarpment and then to the bush of the lowveld. Its economy is dominated by the coal reserves and power stations situated to the west on the highveld (Butler, 2004: 43). Two reasons for the choice of Mpumalanga as research site are that Mpumalanga Province is often described as a "rural" province and it is one of South Africa's "new" provinces. Having conducted research previously within metropolitan Cape Town and in long-established library services (Hart, 1999b; 2000a; 2000c), the author desired to investigate the research problem in a different context.

One of the challenges facing Mpumalanga's libraries as *rural* libraries is to meet the diverse needs of their communities, in isolated situations, where there is little access to other information services. Most of Mpumalanga's libraries are what Vavrek (1995: 4), writing in the American context, calls "rural and small town libraries". Another challenge, peculiar to South African library services, is the footprint in land use and town-planning left by apartheid. Historically, each of the small towns of Mpumalanga has developed an adjacent township to provide housing for black workers. Typically, the township built for Africans, is at a distance of two or three kilometres from the commercial centre. It is often separated from it by a highway, railway line and a stretch of empty veld. Of course, as historians might point out, African settlements might well have predated the towns; but it is clear to any visitor to the Province that commercial development centred on the "white" towns. In apartheid South Africa, the libraries in these towns would have been barred to blacks. Some of the townships have their own libraries: for example, Phola, near Ogies; Lebohang, near Leandra; Emjidini near Barberton; Ethanda near Piet Retief; Kwazanele near Breyten; Embalenhle near Secunda. The larger towns of the Province, Ermelo, Middelburg, Witbank, Standerton and Nelspruit, include historically Indian, Coloured and African townships, several of which have libraries, regarded as branches of the central down-town library.

4.2.1 The socio-economics of Mpumalanga Province and library provision

The label "rural" has two connotations in South Africa when used to describe the country's provinces. Mpumalanga may be described as rural as it has no large metropolis – though it has a number of largish towns. It is also "rural" in the sense that it is characterised by poverty and under-development. Large numbers of its people are settled in the rural sprawl of its two former Bantustans or "homelands", KwaNdebele in the west, and Kangwane, to the east. Apartheid policies blocked for years the natural flow of people to cities as they confined millions of people within densely populated but still rural "homelands" (Butler, 2004: 39). Mpumalanga Province as a whole has a population of 3,122,990 people, living in a area of 79,490 square kilometres, representing 6.5 percent of South Africa's land mass *(South Africa Yearbook 2003/04,* 2004). Only 40 percent of Mpumalanga's people are urbanised. Gauteng, its immediate neighbour, the economic heartland of South Africa, has a population of eight million people with 97 percent urbanised and accounts for 40 percent of South Africa's GDP. Mpumalanga, however, accounts for only 7.2 percent of the national GDP. Almost 30 percent of its adults over the age of 20 years have had no formal education. According to the statistics given by the Municipal Demarcation Board, of the total labour force of 1,069,600 people in Mpumalanga in 2002, 439,425 were unemployed - that is 41 percent (Municipal Demarcation Board, 2002).

The provision of public libraries reflects the pattern of socio-economic development in the province, as is the case throughout South Africa. PACLISA, the Public and Community Libraries Inventory of South Africa, points out that the mean population served per library mirrors poverty levels and the distribution of other social agencies. The PACLISA report shows how, throughout South Africa, the areas where poverty is endemic are those short of libraries; yet, these are where, according to the report, "in principle libraries should be situated to support schooling, adult education, literacy work and the general well-being of the communities in which many people do not have the resources to acquire reading matter and information" (Van Helden & Lor, 2002: 9). According to the inventory, on average, Mpumalanga has a public library service point for every 28,673 people. The distribution of the libraries in the province is, as elsewhere in South Africa, uneven. The authors of the report point out that the significance of such figures depends on the relative size of urban centres within a province and the population density. A rural province with many small towns will need to have more libraries per capita than a compact and densely populated province like Gauteng, which needs fewer, often bigger, libraries. The Director of the Mpumalanga Provincial Library and Information Service, aiming to have a library within five kilometres of

every citizen, estimates that 98 new libraries are needed in his province (Le Roux & Hendrikz, 2003: 264).

The researcher's own observations within Mpumalanga provide confirmation of the urgent need for libraries in the rural but densely populated former homeland areas, where she spent a few days. The situation can best be illustrated by citing the example of the region of Kwamhlanga, in the former Bantustan of KwaNdebele. This region, estimated to have a population of some three-quarters of a million, had at the time of her visit only one functioning public library, the one in Kwamhlanga, which also serves as the regional library service. It is situated high up on the hill above the settlement of Kwamhlanga inside the complex of buildings that used to house the KwaNdebele government. Indeed it was the "national" library of KwaNdebele, which makes it, perhaps, ill-suited for its present role as town library. Its librarian is expected to run the library single-handed as well as initiate a regional box-library service to the villages in the surrounding region. Six box cupboards on wheels are being stocked with 600 books each and are being sent out to municipal offices, where they will be looked after by community volunteers. The other library in the region, some 60 kilometres away, is the new building at Maphotla. It was locked up when the author visited it on 6 April 2004, having been closed immediately after its ceremonial opening on 1 April 2004, as the local authority had allocated it no staff or operating budget, thus leaving its future uncertain. Local municipalities play a crucial part in the fortunes of public libraries and so will be returned to in the following section and often in the chapters that follow.

In common with the other provinces of South Africa, Mpumalanga is a multicultural and multilingual province – with 30.8 percent of its people speaking Swazi (or SiSwati), 26.4 percent Zulu and 12.1 percent Ndebele (*South Africa Yearbook 2003/04*, 2004). Other languages are Afrikaans and English. Local government reform, which will be discussed in the next section, is aimed at integrating historically divided communities and at improving basic services in the previously disadvantaged areas. The author's photographs document the present multicultural nature of the users of the libraries in the historically White, Coloured and Indian areas. However, it is apparent that the shifts in user groups have not been due to large numbers of Africans moving into these areas but rather to the abolition of apartheid schooling. As schools in these areas have opened their doors to all race groups, the public libraries within them have experienced a transformation in their user communities

4.2.2 Cooperative government in Mpumalanga and its public libraries

As a "new" province, established in 1996 when the newly elected democratic government in South Africa transformed the political landscape, Mpumalanga has had to build new

government structures. It has merged three disparate systems of the apartheid past, namely a section of the Transvaal Province and the two Bantustans or homelands of KwaNdebele and Kangwane. It thus has inherited huge backlogs in terms of basic services. Butler points out that the "quasi states" of the Bantustans were unable to deliver services (2004: 101). The Director of the Mpumalanga Provincial Library and Information Service describes the library services and infrastructure in these former homeland areas as "non-existent" (Le Roux & Hendrikz, 2003: 264).

The Mpumalanga Provincial Library and Information Service lies within the Heritage and Information Services Directorate of the provincial Department of Sport, Recreation, Arts and Culture. It is still in the process of establishing itself. It inherited some infrastructure from the library service of the former Transvaal Provincial Administration (TPA), for example the buildings of the provincial regional library services. However, it seems that many of the "TPA" staff left in the mid 1990s and were not replaced owing to budget restrictions, leaving the regional libraries inadequately staffed, as acknowledged by the Director (Hendrikz, 2004b). School library services fall under the provincial Department of Education and are also still in the throes of establishing their three regional structures (Ndawo, 2004). The headquarters of both services, public libraries and school libraries, are housed in adjacent buildings in the magnificent new government complex on the outskirts of Nelspruit, the provincial capital, within the local municipality of Mbombela.

South Africa's political system relies on cooperation among its three spheres of government: national, provincial and local. Chapter 3 of the South African Constitution spells out the relationships among the three spheres and the responsibilities of each. Various intergovernmental bodies exist in order to promote interaction between the three tiers which are described in the Constitution as "distinctive, interdependent and interrelated". National government determines policy while the nine provinces are expected to shape and implement it. The provinces are responsible for the implementation of major social services, including school education, health, social grants and welfare services as well as provincial roads and traffic, abattoirs, provincial planning and sport – and public libraries. Local government, consisting of 284 municipalities, is responsible for services like electricity, water sanitation, municipal infrastructure, streets, lighting, and refuse collection (South Africa. Department of Provincial & Local Government, 2002). Financially, the provinces are largely dependent on transfers from national government by means of equitable sharing and conditional grants. Local authorities also receive funds from national government but they raise, on average, 90 percent of their own revenue from property taxes and user charges. The status quo is that public library buildings, staff and operating expenses are funded by local government own

revenues. The anomaly in the Constitution over the responsibility for public libraries, as mentioned in Chapter 1 [1.6.3], is the cause of unease in library circles (Van Helden & Lor, 2002: 3).

The third tier of government, local government, has been mandated by the South African government in recent years to deliver social and economic development. Yet, it seems that it might be the Achilles heel of South Africa's reconstruction and development programme. Butler, Professor of Political Studies at the University of Cape Town, describes South African local government as having "the most troubled history" and as facing "the starkest challenges" of the three sectors (2004: 101). The largest increases in national government's spending year by year since 2001 have been on local government, rising by 18,3 percent a year from then until 2004 (*South Africa Yearbook 2003/04*, 2004: 348). Various projects and programmes have been initiated in the past few years to build the capacity of local government to collect its revenues and to fulfil its developmental mandate. These include the Consolidated Municipal Infrastructure Programme (CMIP), the Municipal Infrastructure Investment Unit (MIIU), and the Municipal Services Improvement Programme (MSIP). New legislation in 2000 obliged municipalities to draw up Integrated Development Plans, which, it is hoped, will serve as the vehicles for socio-economic transformation. However, concerns over their capacity firstly to draw up the plans and then to implement them have been expressed – for example, in the report of the study tour of municipalities undertaken in 2003 by the South African Parliament's Portfolio Committee on Provincial and Local Government (Portfolio Committee on Provincial & Local Government, 2003).

A central strategy in the transformation of rural and other historically disadvantaged [2]areas is the restructuring of local government into three categories of municipality: the six unicities or metropoles (Category A), the local municipalities (Category B), and the district municipalities (Category C) (South Africa, 2000). Each of the categories has its own elected councils but connections are built into the system to ensure that they work together. Mpumalanga has no Category A metropole. It has 17 Category B local municipalities. They cover large areas and absorb a number of formerly stand-alone municipalities. Thus, the local municipality of Mbombela in Mpumalanga merges the towns of Nelspruit, White River, Hazyview, Kaapsehoop and includes, to the north and east, some of the settlements of the old Kangwane homeland. Mpumalanga is divided into four Category C district municipalities. Nationally, the 47 Category C district municipalities are seen as the solution to the problem of the slow development of the rural areas that fall outside South African towns. They might be compared

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[2] See Chapter 1 [1.6.8] for an explanation of the term "historically disadvantaged".

to the old Regional Services Councils (RSCs); indeed, they have been most successful in areas where remnants of the systems of the old RSCs still exist (Portfolio Committee on Provincial & Local Government, 2003: 13).

Throughout the world, the fortunes of public libraries are closely intertwined with those of local government structures. For example, the fragmentation of unitary authorities in the early 1990s in the United Kingdom shook the foundations of public library services in that country (Midwinter & McVicar, 1994; Fry & Wallis, 2000). Public libraries lost the economies of scale implied by large authorities and had to cut back on their programmes – although developments in information and communication technologies (ICT) to some extent softened the impact. The experience of British public libraries suggests that the enlarging of Mpumalanga's district and local municipalities might eventually have a positive impact on its libraries. Together with the networking offered by the Carnegie funded Building Electronic Bridges (BEB) project, which will electronically connect all Mpumalanga libraries, the new larger structures might lead to enhanced library services.

Despite the mandate in the South African Constitution, it is apparent that it has taken time for Mpumalanga Province to assume its responsibilities. The first provincial budget allocation in Mpumalanga since 1996 came only in 2002, when 10 million rands was set aside for the Library Service. In an interview on 24 March 2004 in the course of the first phase of the research project, Francois Hendrikz, Director of the Mpumalanga Provincial Library and Information Service, expressed concern that the Province might think that the allocation of funds to libraries was a once-off or occasional event rather than an ongoing budgeting process (Hendrikz, 2004). However, in 2004 and again in 2005, the Province allocated about three million rands to the purchase of library materials (Hendrikz, 2005). At a speech he made at the opening of a new library in Kabokweni on 24 March 2004, Hendrikz made it clear that he sees libraries as a force for socio-economic development in the Province. Arguably, if he is to fulfil his vision, the challenge that confronts him is to consolidate the position of the Library Service within provincial government circles, while at the same time boosting its foothold in local governments.

Another challenge might be to achieve effective cooperation between his service and the department responsible for school library services in the Mpumalanga Education Department. As mentioned above, the headquarters of both services are situated close to each other in Nelspruit and, during separate interviews with the author on 24 March 2004, the heads of both services acknowledged a need for collaboration. Sam Ndawo, Head of the Education Library and Information Service and of provincial school library services, expressed a wish to "break

down barriers". He pointed out that, even if his service were to be given a billion rands to develop school libraries, it would always have to work with public libraries, saying, "Children will always need public libraries" (Ndawo, 2004).

4.3   Data gathering methodologies

As already mentioned, the research design consists of two phases: a survey of public libraries in Mpumalanga Province, using a semi-structured questionnaire as the base for personal face-to-face interviews with library staff; and a follow-up participant observation case study within one community. The project can be described as both descriptive and exploratory.

Some unevenness in the discussion of the two phases is inevitable in this section. Whereas the methodologies of the first phase are described in great detail, those of the second phase are described in broad terms only. Details of specific choices in the second phase field study are reserved for the end of Chapter 7, when the analysis of Phase 1 data in Chapters 5 and 6 is complete. The first phase informs the foci and methods of the second. Detailing them here would make little sense to the reader.

4.3.1   Phase 1: survey of public libraries, 16 March - 6 April 2004

The first phase gathered many quantitative data as it set out to describe and measure conditions and practices in public libraries in Mpumalanga with regard to information literacy education. However, it also gathered qualitative data - for example in its exploration of participants' conceptions of information literacy and of the educational role of a public library.

4.3.1.1   Phase 1 data gathering: semi-structured questionnaire / interview

The face to face interviews enabled this mix of approaches. Occasionally, respondents lacked any previous experience of the concepts and could not respond to the questions. The face to face interviewing allowed these occasions to be recorded – with the interviewer noting them and moving on. Copious notes were made by the interviewer and a tape recorder recorded all the interviews. In addition, a camera was used to gather some visual evidence.

As Nick Moore (1999: 121) points out, semi-structured interviews are a "halfway house" between the formality of a structured survey and the flexibility of a depth interview. They are used to collect both structured factual information and information about attitudes and beliefs. Personal interviews offer several advantages over mail questionnaires (Creswell, 1994: 116;

Powell, 1997: 116; Moore, 1999: 109; Leedy & Ormrod, 2001: 196; Bruce & Lampson, 2002: 90):

- A good response rate is assured.

- Data gathering is moderately quick, taking into account the time taken to set up the interviews and travel time. Relevant here is Creswell's point about the delays involved in mailing questionnaires (1994: 122). The Mpumalanga libraries could not be assumed to have efficient email facilities. Nick Moore (1999: 109, 117) adds that a personal interview can gather more data and more complex data more quickly than other methods. The longer a self-completion questionnaire is, the less likely a respondent is to complete it.

- Rapport can be built between interviewer and respondent.

- Lack of understanding due to "low education levels" of respondents (Powell, 1997: 116) can be addressed. For example, questions can be clarified.

- Answers are more spontaneous than in written questionnaires. Bruce and Lampson suggest that participants are less likely to turn to colleagues or the literature for answers to questions that probe their understandings and perceptions (2002: 90).

- As already stated, both closed and open questions can be asked. The PhD survey had to gather a large amount of factual information as well as more ambiguous, subjective data.

Powell's comment (1997: 116) that personal interviews allow for "low education levels" is germane, as respondents could not be assumed to have had much exposure to the concept of information literacy. The concept of information literacy, internationally and in South Africa, has received more attention in educational library circles than in public libraries. Moreover, formal professional qualifications could not be assumed. Indeed, several respondents, as will be shown in the next chapter, were found to be without school-leaving Matriculation certification. Another consideration was the need to negotiate language barriers. Chapter 5 will show that only six respondents were first language English speakers - with eight of South Africa's 11 languages represented in the group of respondents.

The chief benefit of personal interviewing for the PhD project was that it provides for the exploration of complex and perhaps ambiguous concepts (Moore N, 1999: 108, 118). It thus is appropriate for an exploration of the slippery concept of information literacy. Interviews, moreover, offer the flexibility required of an exploratory research project. They allowed for open-ended exploration, even of closed questions, for example, if the respondent wanted to comment or to add provisos or if the researcher wished to probe the thinking behind a

response. The use of the tape recorder facilitated this kind of conversation as nuances of meaning and seemingly off-the-point comments could be recorded.

The visits, although usually of no more than one and a half hours duration, also allowed for a certain amount of observational data. Physically visiting the libraries gave insights impossible to be gained from mail questionnaires or telephone interviews. The author took 225 photographs, adopting Gorman and Clayton's advice on the value of a camera in recording the physical appearance of a study site (1997: 121). For example, from the second interview, the author was alerted to the significance of physical space – something that became a question to be considered at each subsequent site. An example of a telling photograph is the one of a pot plant placed on top of the catalogue cabinet with its luxuriant tendrils impeding access to the drawers because, according to the respondent, "They [library users] make a mess of the cards" (Questionnaire 35) [See Appendix D].

Personal interviews, of course, have their drawbacks (Moore, N, 1999: 116):

- They are expensive because of travel costs and time away from "the office".
- Setting up appointments is time consuming.
- Call backs and follow-ups are awkward and time-consuming.
- Anonymity is impossible. (To counter the lack of anonymity, respondents in the Mpumalanga research were assured in the letters of introduction, given in Appendix A, that their names or their libraries' names would not be mentioned in the reporting of the project).

4.3.1.2   Phase 1 questionnaire / interview structure and content

The questionnaire / interview schedule (the post pilot version) is included as Appendix C. As will be made clear in the detailed description of each section below, it owes much to previous research studies, of the author and of other researchers, which have been referred to in earlier chapters, for example:

- the author's study of children's librarians in Cape Town in 1999 (Hart, 1999b)
- the survey of information literacy education in New Zealand's public libraries (Koning, 2001)
- Penny Moore's study of teachers' information literacy in New Zealand (1998)
- Todd's studies of information literacy in Australian schools (1995a, 1995b, 1995c)
- Bruce and Lampson's study of American librarians' views on information literacy (2002)

- Christine Bruce's work (1997) on the significance of conceptions of information literacy.

Kuhlthau's view of information literacy as a cognitive problem-solving process underpins the study – as it does all of the studies in the above list. The challenge is to see if respondents share her view of information-seeking as looking for *meaning* not answers (Kuhlthau, 2000) - even if they might never have heard of her work.

The questionnaire sets out to document the existing role of public libraries in Mpumalanga in the information literacy education of school learners and to explore what factors might be inhibiting or encouraging this role. It has five sections. The first two sections gather factual information on library resources, facilities and programmes, and were completed only once in each library by the librarian-in-charge. The other sections gather more subjective data and were completed by all respondents. Personal information about age, language, qualifications and training, previous experience, and computer skills is gathered towards the end of the interview, as this kind of questioning can leave respondents feeling vulnerable and might influence responses (Emroy & Cooper, 1991: 370). The questionnaire contains a mix of question types - closed, open, and Likert scales. Open-ended questions can at times reveal more about deeply-held beliefs and attitudes, as they catch people more unawares and allow for broader in-depth answers. They, thus, can serve as a check to the closed questions. There is some repetition of and returning to topics as this kind of redundancy might contribute to the reliability and indeed validity of the instrument (DeVellis, 1991; 56). The sequencing of questions aims to approach a problem from different angles, sometimes using what questionnaire design theory calls "funnelling" to explore an issue (Cavana, Delahaye & Sekaran, 2001: 143). Inverted funnelling is used when a sequence of closed questions is followed by an open-ended one – for example, Question 23, an open question on relations with teachers, follows Question 22's Likert scale statements on the same topic.

Section A has the title *Library Resources and Facilities*. Its aim is to collect figures on library membership, adults and children, circulation (adults and children), staff numbers and qualifications and resources – all of which might be important factors. Question 5 asks whether the library has a separate children's section and, if so, how it is staffed. The focus of the study, information literacy education of *school* learners, explains the interest in the libraries' provision for children. Information literacy education might well be seen as the responsibility of the children's or youth section of a public library (Cooper, 1993). The question and later ones like Question 8 reflect international concerns that children's needs for excellent facilities and service are in danger of being neglected in an era of public library

cutbacks (for example Library and Information Services Council (England), 1995; Elkin & Kinnell, 2000: xiii). The author's study of children's libraries in Cape Town in 1999 found that very few children's sections were continuously staffed and very few had their own catalogues (Hart, 1999b). Question 8 also asks about information retrieval and access tools – catalogues and indexes (to pamphlet collections for example). It is hard to imagine teaching information skills without these tools. A crucial information competency is the ability to find information independently. If learners learn how to analyse conceptually their information needs, identify key concepts and terms, match them to terms used in the catalogue or cuttings index, and use them to search for information, they are learning high-level thinking skills, applicable to all other information environments (McGregor, 1993). Question 10 documents public Internet access and Open Access Public Catalogues (OPACs). The author's study of children's libraries in Cape Town in 1999 found that computerisation was restricting public access to information by shutting down public card catalogues in many libraries and not providing OPACs. The work station at the circulation desk, for use by staff only, often served as the only catalogue (Hart, 1999b).

Section B, *Information Literacy and User Education Programmes*, investigates what information literacy programmes exist at present. The challenge here is terminology. Respondents could not be assumed to know the term "information literacy education" but might well be engaged in what they call "user instruction" or "library orientation" programmes. The evolution of information literacy is reflected in the literature in the progression from terms like "library skills" and "library instruction" to "information skills" and "information literacy education" (for example Behrens, 1994; California School Library Association, 1997). "User education" is a useful catch-all term likely to be understood by all participants. As mentioned above [4.3.1.1], one of the benefits of the personal face-to-face interviews was that terms could be discussed and negotiated. Question 11 lists a range of possible user education activities, distinguishing between isolated library orientation sessions and sustained structured programmes, which might support project work in a local school for example.

The Section then goes on to investigate the relationship between the library and its surrounding schools. It asks how many schools are within three kilometres of the library, how many of them have libraries, and if the library has a "special" relationship with any of the schools. Three kilometres was regarded as a reasonable distance for schools to access public libraries. The IFLA/UNESCO guidelines for public library service are rather vague with regard to access to public libraries in rural areas. After stating that public libraries should be easily reached by foot, public transport or by private vehicle, they suggest that every library in

urban and suburban areas should be available "within a journey by private vehicle of about 15 minutes" (International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions, 2001: 42). The motivation for these questions is that, within information literacy research, there is consensus that the most effective programmes inside schools are those that are integrated into the larger educational programme and that involve partnerships between school librarians and educators (Turner, 1991: 13; Kuhlthau, 1993a; Todd, 1995c; Henri, 1999; Loertscher and Woolls, 1999: 59). Curran points out that, once public librarians adopt what he calls "liberal" definitions of information and information literacy, they have to look for partners, in schools, in business, and elsewhere. Thus, if they accept their part in what Curran calls "the information literacy chain" of interpreting, synthesising, using and communicating information, they have to look for ways to forge alliances with educators (1990: 351). Bundy's study of the role of Australian public libraries in information literacy education highlights the importance of close relations between public libraries and their local schools. He suggests that the "shared endeavour" of information literacy education demands an end to the professional insularity he found among the librarians in his survey (2002b: 68). Question 13 asks about other partners that the library might be working with – businesses, the provincial library and information service, the Mpumalanga Education Department's school library services or curriculum advisors, other libraries, NGOs, government departments, clinics, and, so on. Nick Moore (1999: 28) warns that researchers should "collect only what is needed" and should not be tempted to stray from their purpose when gathering data. However, part of the motivation for this question was a wish to find out if the library was playing any kind of developmental role in its community, in keeping with the developmental model of public librarianship.

The last question in this section, which asks about policy documentation, has three sources: the study of information literacy education in New Zealand libraries (Koning, 2001), which stressed the importance for information literacy education of formal documentation; Witbooi's comment (2001) in her Masters dissertation on the gap between the daily lived reality inside the two Cape Town libraries in her study and their mission statements; and comments on the need for institutional support for information literacy programming from the public librarians in Bruce and Lampson's study in the United States (2002: 102).

Section C has the title *Perceptions of Information Literacy Education* and moves into more subjective territory, including a mix of Likert scale and open questions. "Perceptions" lead people to construct their world views, which influence their personal beliefs, values, attitudes – and behaviours (Cronau, 2001: 343). As mentioned above, the mix of question type aims to provide for what might be called triangulation – in offering different perspectives, allowing

for further probing, throwing light on the largely quantitative data gathered in the previous two sections, confirming tentative findings and confirming directions for follow-up study.

The Section is introduced by a short explanation of the project and its terminology, which the interviewer and interviewee read together. The aim is to allay any anxiety and indeed the researcher, on first meeting respondents, had often to field comments that revealed anxiety about giving "the right answer". The Section has four foci:

- respondents' conceptions of information literacy
- their views on the relationship of information literacy to lifelong learning
- their perceptions of the educational role of public libraries
- respondents' experience of educators' and learners' use of their libraries.

It first asks whether the respondent is familiar with the concept of information literacy and then asks those who replied positively to describe an information literate person. It thus confronts interviewees with the challenge of applying their knowledge of the rather abstract concept of information literacy in describing an information literate person. The question has its roots in three studies: Bruce and Lampson's study of American librarians' views on information literacy which asked respondents to describe an information literate person (2002: 84); Christine Bruce's research, described in Chapter 1 [1.2.1], which compares Australian higher educators' experiences of information literacy with the scholarly descriptions in the literature (1997: 160); and the focus group interviews conducted with academic librarians and academics in five tertiary institutions in Cape Town (Sayed, 1998: 8).

The purpose in the open Question 17 is to explore how respondents relate information literacy to lifelong learning. Kuhlthau's definition of information literacy was quoted in Chapter 1 [1.2.1] as "an ability for lifelong learning involving the use of information independently to build personal knowledge" (1993b: 16, 154). Bundy calls lifelong learning an "international policy icon of the 1990s" (1999: 238). Participants in Sayed's focus groups in universities and technikons in Cape Town agree that information literacy does not belong to an academic elite but rather comprises "life-enhancing skills that all students should be empowered to obtain" (1998: 8).

Section C holds three sets of Likert scale questions (Questions 16, 18, and 22), which are each linked to an open-ended question. They serve to pin down respondents' views on key issues. Likert scales thus help reduce the complexity of data (Powell, 1997: 98) by getting respondents to respond to statements and rating their responses on a scale. The Likert scales

in the questionnaire have five ratings – strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree. If the respondent just did not understand the statement, even after an explanation, then it was left unanswered. The statements in Question 16 investigate how respondents view the concept of information literacy, picking up on some of the themes in previous research. It follows the open-ended question on information literacy and is the most theoretical of all the questions. The two questions, 15.3 and 16, understandably, caused some uncertainty. However, they have to come early on in the interview in order to establish a base for the questions that follow. The Likert scale statements of Question 18 probe attitudes to the role of the public library in education – an issue debated in the literature of public librarianship, as shown in Chapter 3. Each statement, potentially, could provoke opposing views, in keeping with Likert scale design theory. Question 22 focuses on the respondents' experience of and perceptions of the use of their library by learners and teachers.

Questions 24 and 25 attempt to investigate respondents' awareness of information literacy as a process – thus these questions, it is hoped, might throw light on their own information literacy, one of the central questions of the study. As discussed in Chapter 1 [1.1.1], there is recognition in the literature that information literacy is hard to measure and to assess (for example Arp, 1990; Snavely & Cooper, 1997). The difficulty explains why so much research in the field veers towards qualitative case studies. Through observing people's behaviour and engaging in in-depth interviews and sometimes using "think aloud" methods, their information literacy is inferred. Another technique is to present participants with so-called information problems and then assess their responses to see if they show the attributes of information literacy. In her Masters thesis (Hart, 1999a), the researcher replicated Todd's methodology (1995a; 1995c) in posing her teacher respondents an information problem. They were given a hypothetical situation that called for a search for information for its resolution. Following Todd's study, their answers were analysed using Kuhlthau's Information Search Process (ISP) model [See Section 1.2.1] – to see how many phases of her model respondents mentioned. As discussed in Chapter 1, the assumption is that information literate people, even if they are not familiar with Kuhlthau's terminology, conform to the phases of her model in their information seeking. Question 24 in this study makes the question less threatening by adding distance - in posing the question in terms of library users doing a school project. There is consensus in the literature that project work is the most effective arena for information literacy education, since in undertaking a project learners *need* information skills. Most information literacy research takes place within the context of project work, since observing learners engaged in project work throws into relief their skills (for example Kuhlthau, 1983; Todd, 1995c; Gordon, 1996; Zinn, 1997; Branch, 2003). Indeed, a perusal of the literature of

project work in the field of education reveals the overlap with that of information literacy education (Hart, 1999a: 11).

The question that follows, Question 25, in fact would prompt respondents to give an excellent answer to Question 24 – if it came before it. It is modelled on Penny Moore's research in the information literacy of teachers in four New Zealand schools (1998), in which they assess their pupils' skills in terms of the tasks demanded at each phase of a school project, as identified in information literacy research. The question presents respondents with a sequence of tasks, and asks respondents to say whether their clients have problems "usually", "often", "sometimes", "rarely" or "never" at each stage.

Section D, *Your Personal Details,* gathers personal information - respondents' age, home language, gender, education, experience, experience of in-service-training and computer skills. The kinds of in-service training listed in Question 28 are based on the competencies generally accepted by professional associations to be essential to public library work [See 1.6.4].

Then Section E consists of one open-ended question, which asks interviewees to make final comments on the role of the public library in information literacy education. The aim was to finish the interview on a less intimidating note than the previous section. Many respondents used this question to reiterate some of their earlier comments; and a few confided feelings about their job situation.

4.3.1.3 Piloting

The above section describes the questionnaire as in Appendix C, in its final version. However, before being finalised, it went through a process of pre-testing or piloting. The draft questionnaire was examined on 24 February 2004 by two information literacy experts at the Centre for Information Literacy at the University of Cape Town, the researcher's PhD supervisor, Professor Mary Nassimbeni, and her colleague, Dr Karin de Jager. Their insights resulted in some modifications – for example some of the Likert scale questions were found to be ambiguous. It was then piloted in interviews in Cape Town between 1 and 9 March 2004, in five libraries, Grassy Park, Langa, Milnerton, Belhar and Gugulethu. In South African terms, they lie within one historically white suburb, two historically Coloured townships and two historically African townships. The researcher abandoned her plan to pilot the questionnaire outside the city of Cape Town since she was expected in Mpumalanga on 16 March for a workshop on information literacy, one month earlier than her original plan. This

workshop, arranged by the provincial library and information service, was an opportunity to introduce the PhD project to public library staff in Mpumalanga.

In the course of the piloting of the questionnaire, some adjustments were made as follows:

- A question on whether the library had "unfilled" or "frozen" positions was added, since each of the pilot sites brought this up.

- The Likert scale statement on teachers' not preparing learners adequately before they come to the library was changed to a more neutral statement that "learners are not adequately prepared".

- To compensate for the above change, an open-ended question was added to probe the relationship between the library and local educators.

- A statement on the impact of Curriculum 2005 on materials selection was added to Question 22, since three of the pilot site respondents stressed this as an issue.

- The Likert scale statement on the availability of resources in "the home languages" of users caused some debate in one site. The intention in the question was to find out if librarians felt they needed more materials in South Africa's indigenous African languages. However, one librarian pointed out that, in her library, learners are not demanding materials in their home language, Afrikaans, but rather in English. It seems that schools in her area are choosing English as the medium of instruction. The result was the decision to change the wording from "home" to "appropriate" languages and to add informally a follow-up question on what is "appropriate" in the respondent's situation.

4.3.1.4 Sampling frame

As the questionnaire was being compiled and piloted, the researcher was also deciding which libraries to visit in Mpumalanga and who to interview in the libraries. She could not visit every library service point and so had to select the sites she would visit. She had two lists of libraries in Mpumalanga: the PACLISA inventory (Van Helden & Lor, 2002) and the list of 82 libraries emailed to her by the Director of Mpumalanga Provincial Library and Information Service on 19 February 2004. Neither list reflects the recent changes in municipality demarcations that were described above. Many formerly independent small town libraries now sit within new larger local municipalities: the example of Mbombela, which now includes Nelspruit, White River, Hazyview, Ngodwana, Kaapsehoop, Kaboweni, and Matsula has already been cited. It was decided to work from the Director's list - as it arranged libraries by library region thus facilitating stratification, and perhaps might be more current than the PACLISA list of 2002. The Director's list included 10 depots in prisons and mines, open for a few hours a week. These were not included in the sampling process for two reasons: firstly, a

depot that is open to the public for one afternoon a week is unlikely to be able to play a meaningful role in the information literacy education of school learners and, secondly, it just proved too difficult to fit in visits to scattered depots in the two hours in the week they might be open. During the researcher's survey, three new libraries were opened in rural areas – at Kaboweni, Daggakraal and Maphotla – timed to open in the annual National Library Week. Maphotla, as one of the only two libraries in the Kwamhlanga Region on the Director's list, was visited and its prospective librarian-in-charge interviewed, although on arriving there on 6 April 2004 the researcher found it to be locked up and the small building it had replaced to have burned down [See 3.2.1; 4.2.1]. In the course of interviews, she heard subsequently of three more libraries due to open in rural areas. However, she also heard of two libraries, branches in the historically Indian townships of the largish towns of Ermelo and Piet Retief, which had closed because of under-use.

The term "library" is open to different interpretations as it can refer to a library service of several branches, for example Witbank Library with its branches of KwaGuqa and Lynnville, or to the individual service point, which might be an independent library or a branch of a larger service. The list sent by the Director proved subsequently to be rather inconsistent, as, sometimes, it includes just the central service while, at other times, it lists service points that are branches of a larger service. The relationships among the libraries on the list were impossible to gauge before visiting the region; so the decision was made to treat each library as an independent library, as listed.

The principle of sampling is that information about the characteristics of a group can be generated by collecting data from a subset of that group (Moore, 1999: 104). Mpumalanga's libraries are divided into six regions, each with a central regional library and with a varying number of libraries. The regions were used as the basis for stratified sampling (Moore, 1999: 106) which ensured an even geographic spread. The Director also listed "big" and "small" libraries. The big libraries, defined by him as those "with collections of more than 45,000 books and more than three or four members of staff" (Hendrikz, 2004a), are Middelburg, Secunda, Ermelo, Witbank and Nelspruit, all of which were included in the survey. The Director listed only three small libraries, Burgersfort, Emjidini and Machadodorp – which he described as having only one staff member. Table 3 shows the analysis of library by region, based on the list received from the Director of Mpumalanga Provincial Library and Information Service.

Region	Big	Small	Other	Libraries in Region (minus depots)
Middelburg	2	1	11	14
Kwamhlanga			2	2
Lydenburg		1	10	11
Nelspruit	1	1	10	12
Standerton	1		20	21
Ermelo	1		11	12
Total	5	3	64	72

Table 3: Regional Breakdown of Mpumalanga's Public Libraries

To ensure an unbiased selection of sites, a sample of libraries from the frame of 72 remaining libraries on the Director's list was constructed. In addition to library region and size, other variables of geographic position and socio-economic situation were considered in the sampling frame. The author's previous research in the metropolis of Cape Town had uncovered significant differences in resource and staffing provision between so-called suburban libraries, situated in historically white areas, and township libraries, historically serving black communities (Hart, 1999b). Therefore, it was felt that the survey in Mpumalanga had to include adequate numbers of libraries within formerly black disadvantaged areas, which are labelled historically disadvantaged libraries (HDLs) in Table 4. In addition, in the course of the preliminary phone conversations with library staff, the author came to realise that "small" was not a meaningful category, since so many libraries appeared to have only one staff member. Indeed, as will be seen in Chapter 5, the survey revealed many more libraries with staff complements of one than the three listed by the Director. Size and geographic position are clearly related – small libraries are often as well *rural* libraries (Vavrek, 1995; 1997).

Region	Libraries in Region, minus depots	Big	HDL	HAL
Middelburg	14	2	3	9
Kwamhlanga	2		2	
Lydenburg	11		2	9
Nelspruit	12	1	6	5
Standerton	21	1	7	13
Ermelo	12	1	4	7
Total	72	5	24	43

Table 4: Researcher's Sampling Frame or Population

HDL   Historically disadvantaged libraries   HAL   Historically advantaged libraries

It was not possible to visit all 72 libraries and a random sample was decided on, stratified by both region and the characteristics of "Big", "HAL" and "HDL". The principles adopted were to sample all five big libraries, sample almost all HDLs and select roughly 50 percent of the HALs. Table 5 depicts the final sample. The five big libraries are all in historically advantaged white areas and it was felt that over sampling of HDLs might compensate for the likelihood that they are less resourced in terms of staff and programmes. In the analysis that follows, the results of most questions are looked at separately for the HDL and HAL subgroups. The disproportionate stratified sampling facilitates testing for differences by increasing the smallest subgroups. .

Region	Libraries in Region (minus depots)	Big	HDL	HAL	Libraries in Sample	Percentage of Libraries in Region
Middelburg	14	2	4	4	10	71.4
Kwamhlanga	2		2		2	100
Lydenburg	11		2	4	6	54.5
Nelspruit	12	1	6	2	9	75
Standerton	21	1	5	6	12	57.2
Ermelo	12	1	4	2	7	58.3
Total	72	5	23	18	46	63.8
Percentage of Subgroup		100	95.8	41.8	63.8	

Table 5: Sample of Surveyed Libraries

The names of libraries visited are listed in Appendix B, in alphabetical order. Since anonymity was promised, their names are not used in the analysis of data in the following chapters.

To negotiate permission and to make appointments for the interviews, the procedure was to telephone each library, working with each region's list of libraries and a map of the Province. The aim was to achieve the sampling mix of libraries as discussed above. The interview schedule began in Middelburg Library, as the author was taking part in a workshop at that library on 16 March 2004. When one appointment was made for a specific day, the researcher tried to make others within geographic reach, aiming at about four interviews each day. If the municipal switchboard was not working, as was often the case, the researcher went on to phone a library in the next town. The researcher treated libraries in a town and local township as a pair. So if an appointment was made for one of the pair, time was set aside for an interview in the partner library and the researcher persevered with often shaky phone

connections until contact was made. In the course of the survey, two adjustments were made as two of the appointments failed to materialise and libraries of the same type and in the same region were substituted. By the end of the first phase on 6 April, the researcher had travelled 6930 kilometres.

Apart from the sampling of sites, choices over interviewees within the sites had to be made. The views of staff members responsible for information literacy education had to be sampled – and in some cases, for example the "large" libraries, this would be more than one person per library. This sampling frame, therefore, consists of the librarian-in-charge plus staff involved in this area, and excludes many of the staff in large libraries who are not involved in information literacy education of school learners. The plan was to interview, if possible, the senior staff member in charge and at least one other staff member who might be a decision-maker with regard to services to schools and information literacy education to children and learners. When phoning ahead some weeks before the survey began, the author enquired as to how many staff members were working in the library (excluding cleaning and security staff) and made appointments accordingly. The five "large" libraries had a total of 65 staff members. Many of these fell outside the sampling frame for interviewees, as they play no role in information literacy education to school learners or no leadership role. In all, 57 interviews were conducted in 46 libraries. Table 6 summarises staff complements in the libraries surveyed.

Staff complement	Number of Libraries
1	24
2 or 2.5 (part-time staff)	11
3 or 3.5 (part-time staff)	3
4 (Bethal & Standerton)	2
5 (Ermelo & Embalenhle)	2
11 (Middelburg)	1
12 (Witbank)	1
17 (Nelspruit)	1
20 (Secunda)	1
Total libraries surveyed	46

Table 6: Staff Numbers In Sample

The researcher relied on the librarian-in-charge to nominate who in her library would be interviewed. Three interviews were conducted in Secunda (the largest library) and in Ermelo - and two each in Middelburg, Witbank, Nelspruit, Barberton, Lebohang, Piet Retief, and Wesselton. The reasons for having three interviews in Ermelo and two in the tiny library at

Lebohang, and yet only two in the large library in Nelspruit, are explained by the situations on the ground at the time of the visits. The complete staff present at Ermelo, even the cleaner, expected to be interviewed. At Lebohang, the librarian-in-charge insisted that his assistant be included. The Nelspruit librarian-in-charge nominated her deputy to be interviewed – being preoccupied with the opening of Kabokweni Library and a function at Matsula Library.

4.3.1.5 Complementary interviews

Apart from these 57 interviews with public library staff, interviews were conducted with the six Regional Librarians, employees of the Mpumalanga Library and Information Service. They are clearly to be regarded as "key informants" – people with knowledge pertinent to particular questions (LeCompte, Preissle & Tesch, 1993: 166) and whose knowledge might contribute deeper insights to observations and interview data (Gorman & Clayton, 1997: 88). Their positions were assumed to connect public library staff on the ground and the Mpumalanga Library and Information Service. Hence, they were regarded as potentially influential in information literacy education. These interviews omitted the first two sections of the questionnaire and concentrated on Sections C, D and E, thus probing conceptions and experience of information literacy education and attitudes towards the educational role of the public library. The interviews also added free-ranging questions on the position of the regional library, functions of the regional librarians, their challenges, and, so on. The data gathered in these interviews are referred to where useful.

Three other interviews were conducted in the course of the first phase survey - with the Director of the Mpumalanga Provincial Library and Information Service on 24 March 2004, with the Head of the Education Library and Information Service in the Mpumalanga Department of Education on 24 March 2004, and a Department of Education regional school library advisor stationed in Ermelo, on 29 March 2004. These interviews were unstructured informal sessions, serving to introduce the researcher's project and to gather some basic information.

4.3.2 Phase 2: participant observation field study

In Chapter 1 the research design of the project was described as a two phase mixed-methods study [1.4]. The previous sections of this chapter have described how the first phase survey was planned and executed. The desired connections between the two phases were described in Chapter 1; and Chapters 5 to 9 will hopefully demonstrate these connections. As mentioned in the introduction to this section, the discussion in this section is more of principles than of in-the-field choices, as decisions made towards the second phase field study depended on the analysis and interpretation of the first phase data in Chapters 5, 6 and 7.

By definition, a case study is the study of a single entity or phenomenon, within a defined period and using a variety of data collection techniques. Several writers describe a case as a "bounded system" (Wolcott, 1992) indicating that the case should be an integrated system – "a specific, a complex, functioning thing" (Stake, 1995: 2). The case, however, need not be a place – it can be a programme, an event, a process, an institution or a social group (Creswell, 1994: 12; Gorman & Clayton, 1997: 51). The second phase "case" in the PhD study is the phenomenon of information literacy education in two branch libraries in a small Mpumalanga town. It thus might be described as an "instrumental" case study as its purpose is to understand a specific aspect of the life of the case site, in the hope that this might throw light on the bigger issue of information literacy education in public libraries (Stake, 1995: 3). The issue of generalisability of an instrumental case study will be returned to in the following section.

The field study is crucial to the aims of the PhD project, which has already been described as "exploratory", in that it examines the construct of information literacy in a context different from most previous research, as reviewed in Chapters 2 and 3. The first phase certainly suggests some answers to the research questions identified at the beginning of this chapter - as will be demonstrated in Chapter 7. However, the survey data highlight the need for further questioning, as will be acknowledged in the synthesis of the data in Chapter 7. There is a need to explore a site as a whole, to explore the relationships among its attributes and to examine how its world is experienced and constructed by its participants (Stake, 1995).

4.3.2.1 Choice of participant observation case study site

There are two aspects to the choosing of a case study site. Firstly, the number of sites has to be decided on and then an appropriate site or sites has to be identified. As mentioned earlier, the factors specific to the pseudonymous town of Woodsville as choice of site will be described in Chapter 7 [7.4.2].

The case study site, which was eventually chosen for the second phase of the PhD project, is the pseudonymous Woodsville, a small town in the east of Mpumalanga, which has two public libraries. The researcher's decision to avoid comparative or multiple case studies in favour of a single instrumental case study leads to the issue of "generalisability". The word "case" suggests, perhaps, that it is regarded as representative of a specific phenomenon and that the findings of a case study might be generalised to other manifestations of this phenomenon. Indeed, Gorman and Clayton's definition of case study includes the assumption that "it is possible to derive knowledge of the wider phenomenon from intensive investigation

of a specific instance or case" (1997: 15). Later on in their text, they, however, are less definite, as they acknowledge that many writers in the qualitative tradition dismiss the concept of generalisability as only of interest to the positivistic world view. They contend that the purpose of qualitative research is to look at individual units not at "frequencies, distributions or averages" (p. 83). Gorman and Clayton warn of the danger of choosing case sites for comparison only to find that the reasons for choosing them have no validity. Qualitative case study, after all, is meant to be open-ended and to avoid pre-conceptions. They conclude:

> The better approach, then, seems simply to choose a case that is accessible and interesting, allowing others to determine whether it is possible to generalise from this case (p. 84).

Stake echoes this kind of warning in pointing out that a small sample from a large number of possible sites is hard to defend, given the large number of likely characteristics (1995: 6). Thus, in the researcher's survey of 46 public library sites in Mpumalanga, which of them might be chosen to represent what in a comparative study? Stake points out that:

> The real business of case study is particularization, not generalization. We take a particular case and come to know it well, not primarily as to how it is different from others but what it is, what it does. There is emphasis on uniqueness, and that implies knowledge of others that the case is different from, but the first emphasis is on understanding the case itself (1995: 8).

Paradoxically, the in-depth understanding of one case can resonate with readers in different circumstances. In the study of one case, commonality can be discovered and theories across sites built (Delamont & Hamilton, 1984: 19; Stake, 1995: 7).

According to Marshall and Rossman (1995: 7), a case study site should have the following characteristics:

- Access is possible.
- Good relationships with participants are possible.
- The appropriate mix of features, according to the research purpose, is present.
- Data quality and research credibility can be achieved.

The demonstration of how Woodsville fulfils these criteria has to be deferred until the data, gathered in Phase 1, have been analysed and tentatively interpreted in Chapters 5, 6 and 7.

4.3.2.2 Case study methodology

Field study is often described as "naturalistic" and "interpretive". The qualitative researcher tries to immerse herself in the context under study in order to understand it as an insider. According to Sutton, the research instrument is the researcher's own consciousness (1993:

416). Although there is acknowledgement that the presence of an outsider within a social setting must always have some impact, the aim in naturalistic research is to examine the specific social context "as it is".

The aim of a field study is not merely to observe and record but to "interpret" (Stake, 1995: 9). The researcher is placed in the field as an interpreter to observe the workings of the case, to record objectively what is happening and at the same time to examine its meanings. The initial questions are informed by knowledge of existing theory and research and by the purpose of the research. Thus, the field study at Woodsville is informed by the earlier survey of Mpumalanga's public libraries, which, for example, led to questions on how learners are being prepared by their educators for project work in public libraries. The first phase survey was itself framed by the theory and research covered in Chapters 1, 2 and 3 – namely, Kuhlthau's information literacy theoretical framework, the developmental model of public librarianship, and previous research in information literacy education in public libraries. The examination of meaning is moreover progressive – as new issues crop up, questions are discarded and new ones introduced. Meaning-making thus has to change direction, accept modifications and refinements - in the course of the study (Stake, 1995: 9).

Participant observation relies on three data-gathering techniques to achieve this interpretive work: observation, interviewing and document analysis, or, in Wolcott's words, experiencing, enquiring and examining (1992: 19). The study in Woodsville began with observation in the two libraries, interspersed with informal and more formal interviews with the staff and other key informants. The focus was on the use of the library by educators and school learners. However, the wider context is also included in its gaze as the impact of the educational role of the library on its other services has to be examined. Within the first week, contact was made with educators in the nearby schools and appointments were made for interviews. The documents analysed are the teaching materials in the classrooms and the project work of the learners.

4.3.2.2.1 Observation

Observation aims to determine the status of a phenomenon by "watching attentively in a scientific or systematic manner" (Powell, 1997: 117). It records any behaviour or event which is relevant to the research questions being investigated. As a data gathering technique, it offers several benefits (Gorman & Clayton, 1997: 105- 113; Powell, 1997: 117-121):

- It records behaviour as it occurs. Observation as a technique is a continuum with the two extremes of detached observation and complete participation at the two ends (Bailey 1996: 8). It can be unstructured and structured.

- It observes people in a natural setting. However, it would be naïve to believe that the researcher's presence had no impact on the participants. The reflexivity, that is characteristic of constructivist research, demands an acknowledgement that all research inevitably involves relationships of power and hierarchy (LeCompte, Preissle & Tesch, 1993: 147). The constructivist research frame accepts that even quite straightforward questions from the researcher can lead participants to clarify their thinking and even to shift it (Pope, 1993: 23).

- It allows a researcher to compare what people say with what they do. One of the central findings of the author's Masters Degree research, for example, was the gap between the teachers' statements of belief about their teaching and their real behaviour in the classroom (Hart, 1999a).

- It can record behaviour and actions that might otherwise be missed because respondents do not consider them to be important.

- It records behaviour of people who might not be able to give verbal reports – such as children.

- It gives insight into the behaviour of people who might be unwilling to be interviewed or to tell the truth, although certain ethical questions might arise as both Powell (1997: 117) and Gorman and Clayton warn (1997: 106).

- In common with other qualitative methods, it allows for on-going iterative and accumulative data analysis as new understandings are constructed.

The observation in the Woodsville libraries, in Gorman and Clayton's terms, might be described as more "observer as participant" than "participant as observer" (1997: 107). It began with fairly unobtrusive participant observation in which the author "hovered" in the library, with some attempt to share in the library routines and tasks, at the same time as observing what was going on and taking field notes. As Wolcott (1994) points out, even seemingly straightforward description is "theory-laden". Thus, in the Woodsville libraries, the author's "consciousness" (Sutton, 1993: 416) chose what observations to jot down in the note book that she carried with her. She sifted out what might be of potential significance for her research. The notes were typed up every evening and another layer of analysis and speculation was thus engaged in. Within a few days, this led to interaction with participants, library staff and library users, to verify and clarify observations.

4.3.2.2.2 Educators' interview / questionnaire schedule

Chapter 8 presents the description, analysis and interpretation of the Woodsville field study. The study relies on continuous interviewing of Woodsville library staff – in both formal sit-

down interviews and informal conversations. As mentioned above, the interviewing and observation of the participant observation field study complement or triangulate each other. Some interview questions serve to clarify observational data and to follow up the data gathered in the first phase survey. Other interview questions record beliefs and opinions which are followed up in observation. All of the more formal interviews were tape recorded and transcribed. Notes were taken in the less formal conversations. The interviews with library staff began in the first two days and aimed to find out more about the history of the libraries and the library staff – in order to understand the social and historical background of the case site.

The focus in this section, however, is on the fairly structured interview schedule used in the Woodsville schools, which is given in Appendix F. One of the purposes in the second phase field study is to widen the focus of the first phase survey of public librarians by including interviews with educators, whose classes are observed to use the library, and also with principals in the Woodsville schools. The first phase survey raises questions on the preparation of learners for their project work in the public libraries and on educators' perceptions of the information gathering undertaken in the public libraries by their learners. The interviews with educators set out to answer some of these questions.

The interview schedule was examined by the author's PhD supervisor and then piloted among a group of four curriculum advisors of the Western Cape and Mpumalanga Education Departments, who were gathered for the annual LIASA conference in late September. Some minor changes to ensure clarity were made as a result. It might be described as "fairly structured", as it consists of a prepared set of open-ended and closed questions. The choice of questions in the interview has its roots in both the earlier first phase survey of public libraries and in two earlier studies of project work in a circuit of schools in Cape Town, which were conducted by the author in 1999 and 2000 (Hart, 1999a; 2000b). The interview schedule has six sections:

- Sections A and B document details of the educators and their schools' "information climate" in terms of library and Internet provision.
- Section C has the title *Your Library Experience.* It consists of five open questions which ask teachers to tell the story of their experience of libraries from their childhood until the time of the interview – based on the premise that literacy behaviours, such as use of the public library, are socio-culturally constructed (Pretorius & Machet, 2004: 59). The aim is to try to explore their attitudes to, perceptions of and conceptions of libraries, in the light of the consensus among respondents in the first phase survey that educators lack insight into the educational

role of libraries – as will be reported in Chapters 5, 6 and 7. There are comments in the research literature on the shortcomings of educators in terms of their use of libraries (Fredericks, 1993; Karlsson, 2003; Maepa & Mhinga, 2003). In 1993, Olën estimated that only one quarter of South African teachers had exposure to libraries in their own education.

- Section D, *Views on Curriculum 2005 and Libraries*, asks the educators if the introduction of Curriculum 2005 has influenced their use of information and learning resources in their teaching. It has its roots in the notion that the new curriculum is "resource-based", as was discussed in Chapter 2 [2.3.2]. The Section also includes two questions on the use of public libraries by learners, which echo those in Section C of the first phase survey of public librarians. They ask respondents if they think school learners' use of public libraries might have increased with Curriculum 2005 and then ask them to explain their answer.

- Section E focuses on educators' views on and experience of project based learning – found to be characteristic of Curriculum 2005 and the Revised National Curriculum Statement. It includes two questions that repeat Questions 24 and 25 of the first phase questionnaire/interview. The aim is to explore educators' insight into the information seeking process that is demanded in project work and their conceptions of the competencies required – thus echoing Moore's research in four schools in New Zealand (1998). The section includes some general questions on their views on project work as well as some more focused questions that gather specific data on the last class project undertaken by the respondents. The aim is to ensure that the interview uncovers possible contradictions between bland statements from received wisdom and classroom realities. The last few questions in this section return to the use of and views on public libraries by educators. They ask if and how teachers consult with public libraries in planning their project work – in an attempt to provide another perspective on the comments by Mpumalanga's public librarians on their relationships with educators that were highlighted in the first phase survey and that are discussed in Chapters 5 and 6.

- Section F, *Conceptions of Information Literacy*, explores educators' conceptions of information literacy and information skills. As mentioned in Chapter 2, information literacy is defined as a cross-curricular critical outcome of South African schooling. The questions in this section echo Questions 15.2, 15.3 and 20.1 of the questionnaire/interview of the first phase survey. Chapter 6 examines the findings of the first phase survey and speculates that certain conceptions of information and information literacy among public librarians might influence their information

literacy programmes. This speculation informs the questions in Section F, which set out to uncover common ground and possible differences. The suggestion is that effective information literacy education might well depend on shared conceptions of learning and of information literacy among librarians and educators.

4.4   Evaluative principles

Evaluating a mixed methods study is especially challenging. Traditionally, the positivist paradigm evaluates the quality of research in terms of its validity, generalisability, reliability (or replicability) and objectivity. And indeed, these are the criteria borne in mind throughout the first phase of the study, the survey of public libraries in Mpumalanga. The statistical methods used in it will be shown to conform to quantitative standards. For example, the stratified sampling of the first phase and the analysis of the quantitative data allow the quantitative findings to be pronounced "valid", and generalisable to the whole province. Yet, even in its first phase, the analysis of the quantitative data is supplemented and enriched by analysis of pertinent qualitative data.

As already stated, social constructivism is the overarching world view of the study. Over the years, there has been debate in qualitative circles on what criteria might be applicable to the constructivist and interpretive world view. Guba and Lincoln (1994) suggest that the above four constructs be replaced with the four notions of credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability:

- Credibility is gained when there is demonstration that statements about the constructions of the social world under study are believable, as they are based on visible systematic procedures such as rigorous data gathering methods, triangulation, searching for alternative interpretations, and, so on.

- The transferability of qualitative research is much debated because of its insistence on the particular. An "instrumental" case study, nonetheless, can explicitly set out to aid theoretical generalising and theory enrichment (Stake, 1994). And in turn, that theory building can provide insight into other cases and contexts – thus, contributing to more theorising and generalising. Atkinson and Delamont (1985) argue that it is the rigour of the methodology and reporting of a good case study that allows its reader to transfer its interpretations to other settings.

- Dependability in qualitative research refers to its coherence, rather than its replicability. It comes from its researcher's status, the choice of informants, clear

reporting, generous provision of verbatim accounts of conversations and interviews in order to support interpretations (Le Compte, Preissle & Tesch, 1993: 332).

- Confirmability parallels the positivist notion of objectivity. It contends that a shared view of a social world can be negotiated, despite the qualitative acceptance of the existence of multiple realities within a site. Research reflexivity can only help this kind of objectivity as it brings to the surface the researcher's own preconceptions (Bradley, 1993: 437).

All four criteria serve to measure the "trustworthiness" of a study.

Klein and Myers (1999) provide seven "principles" for guiding the conduct of interpretive research and for assessing its quality. The principles are not individually new; indeed, they echo much of what has been discussed above. But their article is seminal in information systems research in that it synthesises a set of criteria for both doing research and evaluating it, which, moreover, does not look over its shoulders to the positivist tradition. The seven principles are as follows:

- the hermeneutic circle - an understanding of a whole comes from an understanding of its parts and of how they interrelate with one another and with the whole. This is the fundamental principle and underlies the other six, as will be evident below. The use of the word "circle' indicates the iterative nature of research. Preliminary interpretations are revisited and reworked – to form a complex web. The authors point out that the terms "whole" and "part" must be given a "broad and liberal" meaning (p. 71). The whole can be the historical and political context, for example. Or, the parts might be the preliminary interpretations of the researcher and of the participants, so the whole will be the shared meanings emerging from the research. The two-phase mixed methods design of the PhD study, to be described in the following section, might be seen to conform to this fundamental principle.

- contextualisation – the social and historical background of the research setting cannot be ignored. Here the authors echo the words of the information scientist, Dervin, whose writing on the importance of context has already been cited (1997) [Section 1.2].

- the interaction between researcher and subjects. Research is a social interaction between researcher and subjects – in a social context. One implication is that researcher reflexivity should be part of the research process. Another is the recognition that the "horizons" of both the researcher and the subjects or participants are changed in the course of a research study (p. 74).

- abstraction and generalisation – specific findings are viewed in the light of theoretical general concepts, through the application of the first two principles, the hermeneutic circle and contextualisation. Findings in specific contexts are generalised to theoretical constructions of interest to the wider research community. The PhD study is a case study of the public libraries in one South African province and its second phase is a case study of one small site within the larger case. It is hoped that the study will contribute to the development of information literacy education theory, which in turn might be applied in different settings.

- dialogical reasoning – research should be alert to possible contradictions between theoretical preconceptions that might have guided the research design and the actual findings. Thus, the theoretical frameworks chosen for the study should not constrict the study in Mpumalanga. The second phase, although informed by the first, has to start afresh to ensure it is open to new themes and, perhaps, contradictory meanings.

- multiple interpretations – research has to be sensitive to possible differences in interpretations among participants. The Mpumalanga study includes a wide range of respondents – librarians in various social environments, regional librarians, Mpumalanga Provincial Library Service and Education Department officials, teachers, school principals and local government officials. The aim is to document and understand how they make sense of their worlds – how the participant public librarians conceive their social role in society, for example. Klein and Myers point out that this will involve confronting the influence of social context on the actions under study - including possible conflicts resulting from "power, economics and values" (p. 77).

- suspicion – biases and distortions in participants' stories have to be looked for. Although research might welcome multiple interpretations and world versions, it also has to be open to what Klein and Myers, calling on psychoanalytic and critical theory, call "false preconceptions" and "socially created distortions" (pp. 77, 78). The implication of this principle is that researcher should go beyond the surface meaning of data and "read" the social world of participants, which will, inevitably, include power structures, unequal access to resources and vested interests.

These principles incorporate the evaluative criteria of Guba and Lincoln (1994), which were mentioned earlier. Perhaps, they offer the researcher a more useful frame than earlier lists of criteria since the emphasis is on the conduct of research as much as its post-completion assessment. Hopefully, they infuse the reporting of the study in later chapters.

4.5   Research ethics

One of the basic principles of the PhD research project is the protection of the dignity and security of its participants. As mentioned earlier, from the beginning, it had the support of the Director of the Mpumalanga Provincial Library and Information Service. Copies of application for permission to access libraries and schools are given in Appendix A.

The support of the Director was welcome but, perhaps, meant that some distance had to be maintained between his office and the researcher. The following procedures were followed:

- Participation was voluntary. When appointments for interviews were made, the project was briefly described and permission to visit the library and to conduct the interview was asked for. A letter of introduction was sent to each site. As Marvasti points out, there are grey areas in the concept of "voluntary participation" (2004: 136). For example, in some of the larger libraries, the librarian in charge "nominated" who was to be interviewed, clearly after some prior consultation. Children were not interviewed but were observed and occasionally photographed in the libraries. It would be impossible to gain permission from the parents. The researcher feels satisfied that none of the photographs could be harmful to the young people – rather they show them in a positive light, studying in the library.

- Permission to record the interviews and to take photographs was always asked for. Transcripts of the unstructured interviews were shown to participants in the course of the second phase study for their comment. No photograph that can identify a participant is used in the dissertation or any subsequent report.

- To maintain confidentiality, the list of libraries in Appendix B is alphabetical not chronological.

- Anonymity is maintained, as promised. No respondent, apart from the Director of the Provincial Library and Information Service is named. In the writing of the second phase field study, pseudonyms are used in order to protect the identity of participants. The second phase case study presents a specific challenge for anonymity and confidentiality, as permission to undertake the study in the specific site had to be given by the Municipal Manager. In the letter requesting access, the researcher made it clear that confidentiality and the anonymity of participants would be maintained.

Qualitative research perhaps offers more ethical challenges than other approaches – just because it is so open-ended (Marvasti, 2004: 143). The questions and themes emerge in the course of the field work. This makes it difficult to explain the research beforehand. Marvasti's

advice is that the researcher should bear in mind the overall purpose and value of the research – and that research projects have different audiences (2004: 142).

4.6   Conclusion

This chapter has revisited the research problem first presented in Chapter 1 and articulated the problem statement and research questions. It has described the research site, the methodologies, the questionnaire/interview instruments and the data-gathering in the two phases of the project. It has also articulated appropriate evaluative criteria and research ethics.

Chapters 5, 6 and 7 present, analyse and interpret the data gathered in the first phase of the study, as described in Section 4.3.1 above. The second phase participant observation case study in Woodsville, introduced in Section 4.3.2, is reported on in Chapter 8.

CHAPTER 5
SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS OF PHASE 1 DATA
PART 1: QUESTIONNAIRE SECTIONS A, B AND D

Chapter 5 begins the summary and analysis of the data gathered in the Phase 1 questionnaire/interviews with 57 librarians in 46 public libraries in Mpumalanga. It covers Sections A, B and D of the questionnaire, which gather data on physical conditions and facilities and on existing information literacy education in the libraries. It, perhaps, has a more quantitative flavour than the chapter that follows although, in keeping with the qualitative constructivist frame of the study, where appropriate, the discussion integrates qualitative data and quantitative data, in the belief that they are interdependent. This involves connecting data across sections and questions of the questionnaires. Thus, at times, the qualitative data, which are garnered from informal comments and the later open-ended questions and which are the specific focus of Chapter 6, are alluded to in this chapter. The quantitative data of Sections A, B and D often merely describe a situation and then point to directions for further enquiry. The qualitative data serve to enrich the quantitative in exploring these directions further. Where possible, the data are also analysed in the light of previous research as reviewed in previous chapters.

To save space, where possible, summaries of the quantitative data gathered by the questionnaire interviews are given in Appendix C, closely following the questionnaire format. The author's purpose in this chapter is to add value to the summaries by engaging in analysis and interpretation of the data.

5.1   Introduction

The aim of the Phase 1 survey is to explore the readiness of public library staff in Mpumalanga for a role in the information literacy education of school-going youth. As explained in Chapter 4, the questionnaire/interviews gather data on physical facilities and resources and existing user education programmes. The underlying assumption is that effective information literacy education demands certain conditions and understandings, which were discussed in the survey of existing theory and research in Chapters 1, 2 and 3. Information literacy education, as a field, is relatively new and there is little preceding research, especially in the public library arena. Conditions in South Africa, in both the school library and public library sectors, differ from those in countries like the United States and Australia, where the bulk of research has been done. As suggested in Chapter 4, this means that the project in Mpumalanga is exploratory in nature.

The field survey in Mpumalanga aims to describe first of all, in Wolcott's words, "what is going on" in Mpumalanga's public libraries with regard to information literacy education and factors that might affect it. The next step is to examine the data in order to answer more analytical questions like "How do things work?", "What is not working?", "How might things work better?"(Wolcott, 1994: 12). This implies looking for interrelationships and contradictions among the data. The purpose in this chapter is to engage in this kind of description, summary and analysis.

The quantitative data were entered for summary and analysis in an Excel spreadsheet. As mentioned above, where possible, summaries of responses are given in Appendix C, question by question.

One of the advantages of personal interviewing is that informal comments can also be recorded and analysed. They add nuances and different perspectives, revealing what is important to respondents themselves. They thus provide a window on what constructivist research might call the "experienced realities" of respondents.

5.2 Libraries' conditions and services

This section, which describes the physical circumstances and some aspects of the use of the libraries, will help answer the fundamental question of the capacity of public libraries in Mpumalanga for information literacy education. It examines whether the libraries have the facilities and resources required to run effective information literacy programmes.

Sections A, B and D of the questionnaire provide descriptive data of the libraries and their staff. Sections A and B, collecting data on library statistics, facilities, and existing information literacy programmes, were completed only once, in each of the libraries in the sample, by the staff member in charge of that library. Not all 46 libraries were able to provide the statistics asked for in Questions 2 and 3, as will be evident in the figures in this section. Follow-up phone calls to the regional libraries filled in some of the gaps but not all. Although Maphotla Library had been included in the sample, as mentioned in Chapter 4 [4.2.2], on arriving, the researcher found it to have closed. Its librarian, a volunteer, who had worked for years in the small community resource centre that predated the new building, and who is listed as Maphotla Librarian on the list of libraries provided by the Director of the Mpumalanga Library and Information Service, could therefore not provide answers for Sections A and B,

although he did respond to the other sections. Section D, collecting biographical data, was completed by all 57 respondents.

5.2.1 Physical size and space

The issue of size and space here prefaces the description and analysis of the survey data, just because the visits to the libraries uncovered its possible significance. Definitions of size of library in the sampling followed the advice of the Director, being defined by size of collection and staff. However, the visits to the libraries uncovered how urgent the issue of *physical* size or space is. Respondents refer to the issue time and again, with nine respondents bringing it up spontaneously in their opening words or in their final comments as their most urgent problem. Almost all the libraries have outgrown their buildings, including those in the large towns of Ermelo, Standerton, Witbank and Piet Retief. Analysis of the comments on space reveals three strands:

- The first indicates that many libraries are just too small for the kind of usage they now experience. Photographs at each site confirm that in most libraries there is not enough room for users to sit, browse, read or gather information [See Appendix D]. Every possible inch is used to fit in tables and chairs – often at the expense of displays and project shelves, as often pointed out by respondents. The shortage of space clearly causes frustration among some staff members, who sometimes betray a wish for children to use their libraries quickly and not "loiter" – as illustrated in the comment below:

  They must get the book and go home [respondent's emphasis – saying that they should leave for home rather than stay on in the library to work on their project or homework]. (Questionnaire 4)

- The issue of study rooms to accommodate distance tertiary level students is the second main strand in respondents' comments on space. Several of the libraries have been extended in the past few years with a view to providing more space. However, much of the extra room is designed for "study hall" use. The survey revealed several make-shift study rooms squeezed into existing reference or children's sections. In a few libraries, the study rooms are separate from the library itself – in a separate room across a hallway or in a small building in the library grounds. On the surface, the tertiary students demand little of the library staff beyond a place to sit, access to the textbook collections of the distance learning University of South Africa (UNISA), which several libraries house by arrangement with these institutions, and photocopying services. There is, however, evidence that their needs put pressure on the libraries in terms of space and supervision – as is the case elsewhere in Africa (Issak, 2000: 114). A few libraries in the larger towns charge a small entry fee and the

researcher's photographs document some telling notices which call for quiet and cleanliness [See Appendix D].

- The third strand of comment on space refers to recent encroachment on library space by local authorities. In one sprawling town, the librarian of a tiny library reports that the library was moved out of its dedicated building by the new enlarged local municipality and that she is now fending off officials' demands to take over a small adjoining room she uses for study space. Another library has had its children's section taken over by the local municipality for a training room. Another has lost its activity room to municipal auditors.

Any future information literacy programming would have to take into account the restrictions of small buildings, crammed with bookshelves.

5.2.2 Membership & circulation

The survey records membership and circulation (book loans) figures, garnered from the monthly reports for February 2004. It should be noted that circulation figures might differ in other months – in school holidays for example. The figures show that total membership of the libraries surveyed is 117,306, with the five "big" libraries of Ermelo, Middelburg, Nelspruit, Secunda and Witbank accounting for 47.1 percent of that total. Total circulation for the month is 156,258, with the "big five" making up 60.6 percent of the total.

Figure 3 depicts the relationship between circulation and membership.
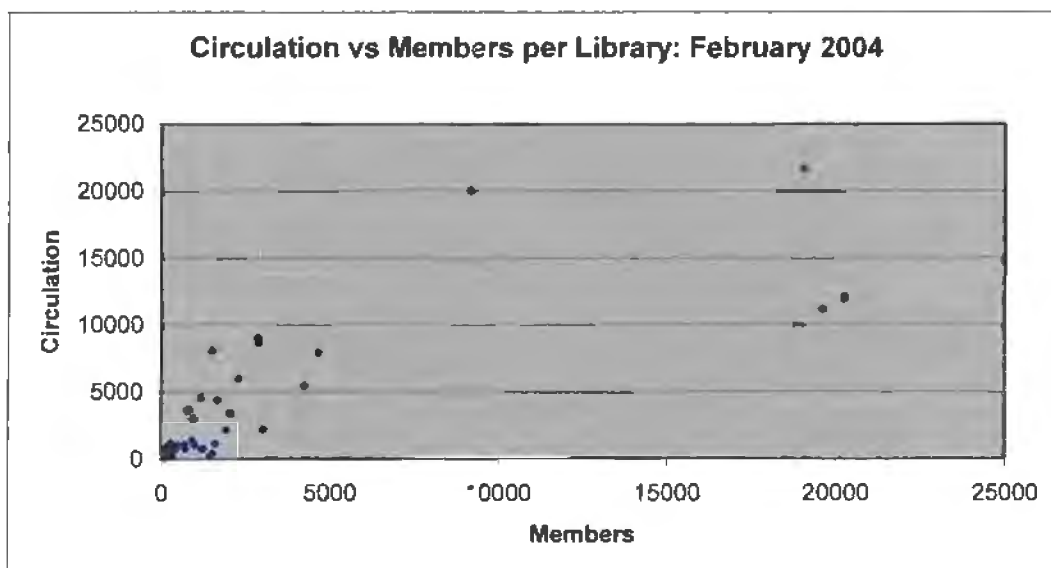
Figure 3: Questions 2 & 3

Of the 46 libraries, three libraries have memberships of about 20,000 members and 21 have fewer than 1000. Generally, the higher the membership, the bigger the circulation.

The juvenile membership and borrowing statistics are of specific interest, given the study's focus on school learners. Overall 64.4 percent of members are adults and 35.6 percent are juvenile. Figure 4 compares adult and children's circulation in the 36 libraries that were able to provide a breakdown for both membership and circulation. It is sorted by adult circulation rate per member. It shows that the adult circulation for the month per member varies from very little to nine, with a median of about two books. In almost all libraries the child circulation rate is lower than the adult's. Examination of the data shows that the libraries with the biggest difference between adult and child circulation are the central libraries in the larger towns of the Province. Perhaps this indicates that school learners are more likely to borrow books from branch libraries near their homes or schools.
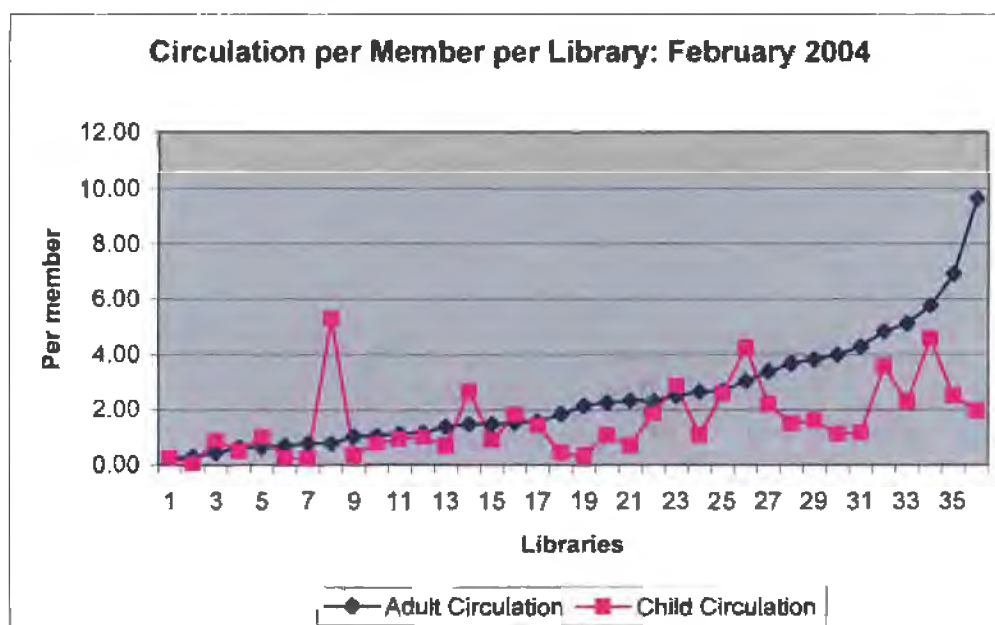
Figure 4: Questions 2 & 3

Significant differences between the two age groups, adults and children, emerge when the figures are analysed by "history"- that is, the library's traditional position within the apartheid landscape, "previously disadvantaged" representing, even now in 2004, libraries in historically African, Coloured and Indian townships or the old rural Bantustans, and "historically advantaged" being those in downtown and surburban, previously white, areas.
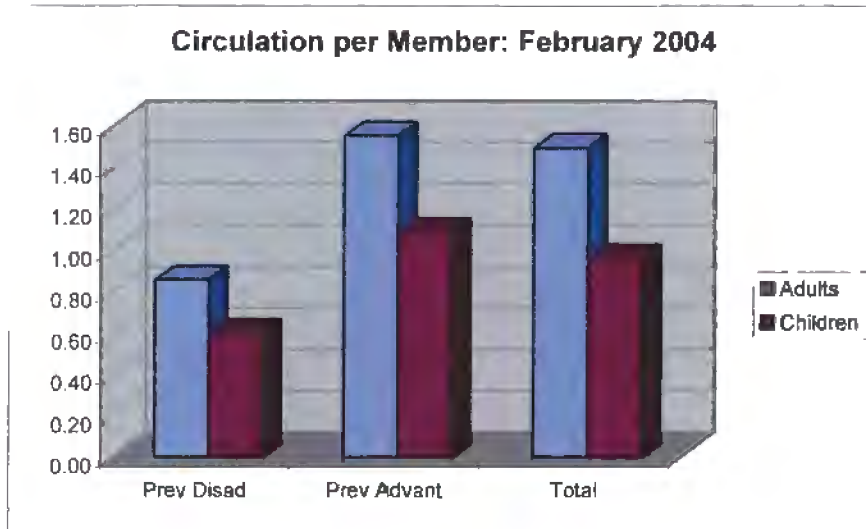
Figure 5: Questions 2 & 3: Circulation vs Age Group vs History

Figure 5 is consistent with Figure 4 as it shows that adults overall borrow more books than children. The circulation per person for both children and adults is lower in previously disadvantaged libraries in the Province.
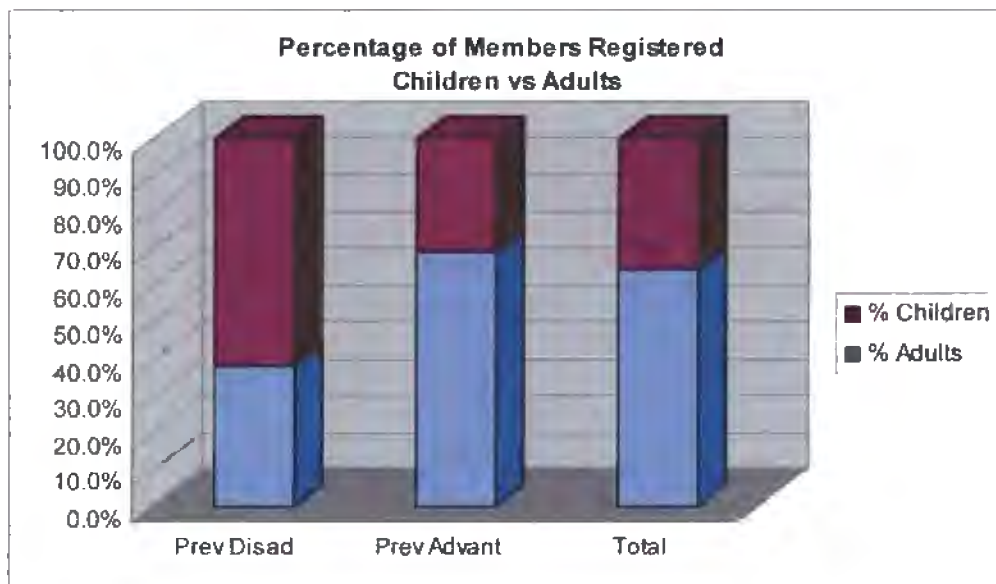
Figure 6: Question 2

Figures 5, 6 and 7 summarise membership and circulation by "history" and by age group. As was mentioned in Chapter 4 [4.2.1], the so-called historically white libraries now serve multicultural user communities, although the same cannot be said of the libraries in the townships, which can be assumed still to have largely black memberships. Shifts in patterns of use will be returned to in the following section.

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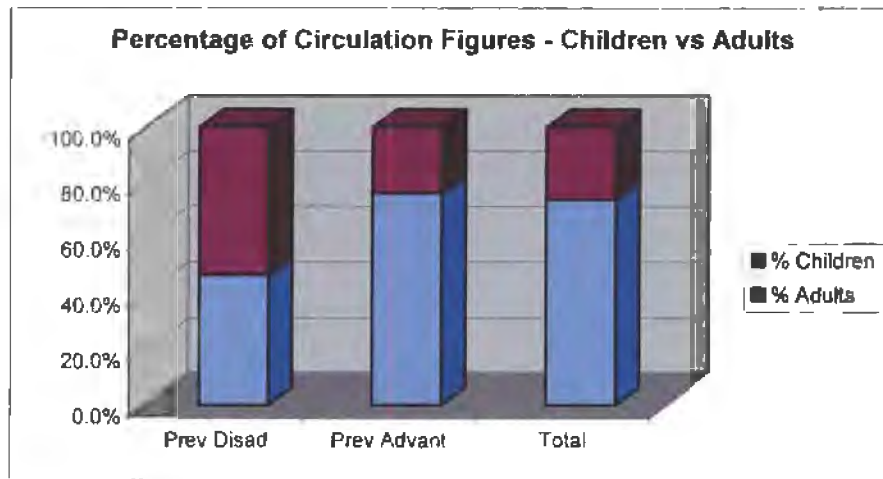
Figure 7: Question 2

Figures 5 to 7 reveal that there is a highly significant difference between the percentage of members registered who are children in the historically disadvantaged libraries versus the historically advantaged ones (Chi-squared = 6062.9, df = 1, p<0.0001). Similarly, there is a significant difference between the percentage of monthly circulation figures for children in the historically disadvantaged libraries versus the historically advantaged ones (Chi-squared = 4831.2, df = 1, p<0.0001). Figures 5, 6 and 7 thus illustrate the importance of youth in the libraries in previously disadvantaged areas. This issue will be returned to in Sections 5.2.4 and 5.3, which discuss the provision of children's services and of retrieval tools, respectively.
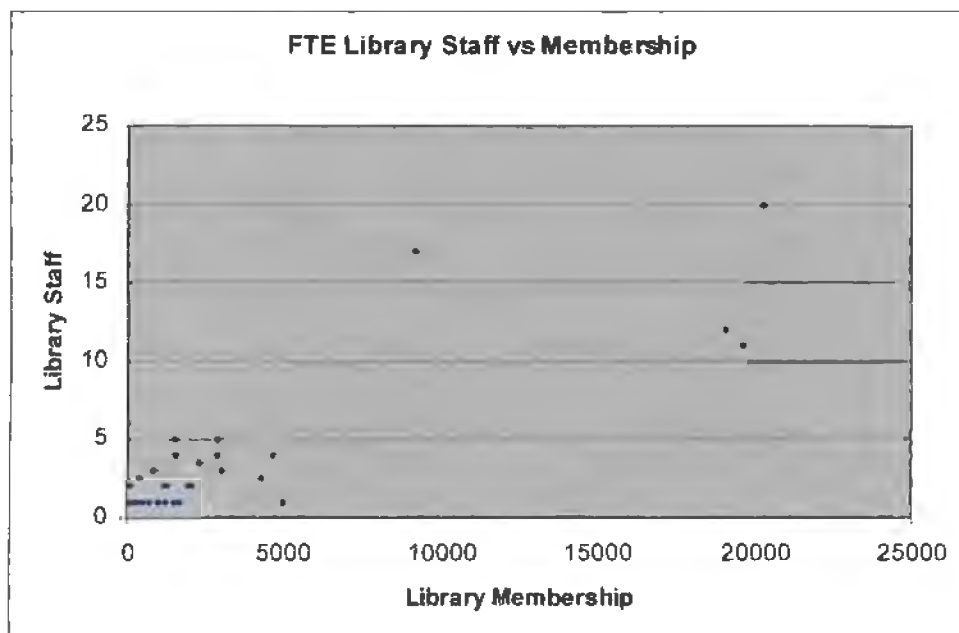
Figure 8: Questions 2 & 4.1

Staffing of the libraries is discussed in a later section; however, in discussing the membership and circulation figures here, the possible influence of staff provision has to be considered. Further analysis of the circulation and membership statistics suggests that levels of staffing

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might well be a contributing factor- as the scatter plots in Figures 8 and 9 and Table 7 demonstrate.
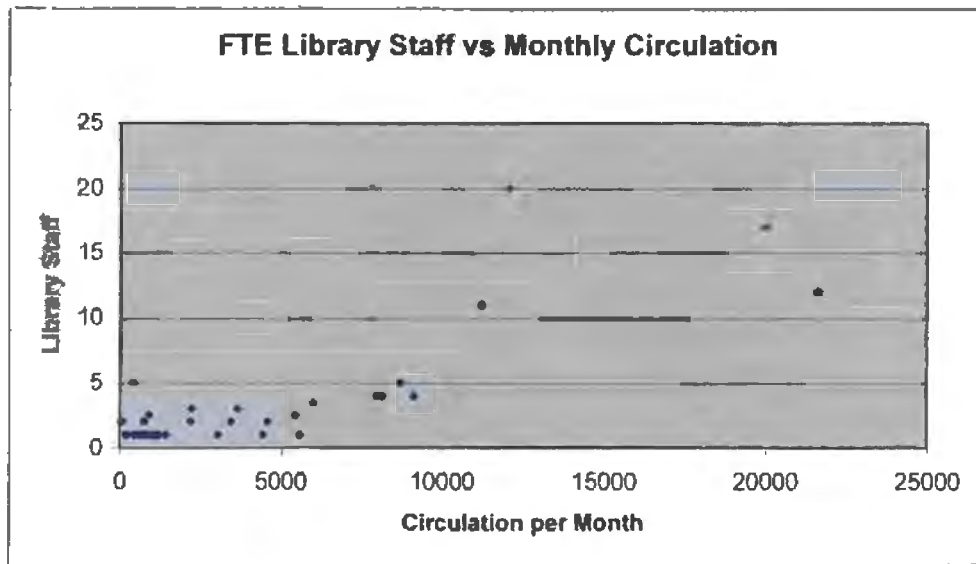
Figure 9: Questions 3 & 4.1

Table 7 shows that the Spearman rank correlation between FTE (full-time equivalent) numbers of library staff, membership and monthly circulation is highly significant (at less than a 0.5% level). The circulation per member for each library (sorted by adult ratios) is shown in the preceding two scatter plots for both adults and children.

Spearman Rank Correlation Between:	Rank Correl Coeff	Z	P
Members and Circulation	0.5353	3.5508	0.0004
Library Staff and Circulation	0.4332	2.8733	0.0041
Library Staff and Members	0.5426	3.5992	0.0003

Table 7: Correlation analyses: membership, circulation, staff numbers

In considering differences in membership and circulation between the historically white libraries and those in the townships, the difference between *use* and *borrowing* has to be acknowledged. The low circulation and membership figures in many libraries mask the reality on the ground, evidenced by informal comment in the course of the interviews and by several questions to be reported on later, that the libraries are extremely heavily used, mostly by school learners and students. Previous research suggests that many of these learners will not be formally signed-up members (Witbooi, 2001; Hart, 2003). Learners come into the public library to do their projects and homework but do not borrow materials to take home. Their parents perhaps are unaware of the need for their children to be library members and also might be unable to complete membership application forms. Library use might be, therefore, largely in-house. The monthly reporting form sent by the libraries to their Regional Librarians

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includes two pages for programmes other than circulation and membership. It includes sections on story hours, creative programmes, reading circles, film shows, community involvement, library orientation (for individuals and groups), reference questions, community information queries and, so on. However, the author's perusal of these forms in some of the libraries and at the regional libraries reveals that they are completed haphazardly. Most libraries do not send in this kind of analysis with the result that there is no formal documentation of their in-house use.

5.2.3 Changes in patterns of use

As signalled in Chapter 4 [4.2.1], there is evidence that public library user profiles have changed in recent years. Respondents' comments suggest that black youth now forms the dominant user group in the Province, thus supporting the evidence in the previous section of the significance of black youth to libraries. With the abolition of apartheid, many black children who are living in the townships now attend schools in the nearby towns and so use the library close to school to do their school work. As described in Chapter 2, the abolition of apartheid has also brought a transformed education system. In reflecting on the increased numbers of black youth in the library resulting in her having to double up staff in the reference section in the afternoons, the librarian in charge of a central town library suggests that, in the past, the prevailing pedagogies in black schools did not require learners to go to libraries. She shows understanding of the links between curriculum and libraries in her remark:

Bantu education did not expect libraries. (Questionnaire 3)

Here, she echoes research, both international and South African, in the school library sector that has linked teaching philosophies and styles to the existence and use of libraries (for example Stadler, 1991; Kistan, 1992; Diepraam & Bester, 1993; Brown, 1999). In the mid 1980s, Overduin and De Wit's comparison of school libraries across the racially-segregated education systems in South Africa found that the Department of Education and Training schools (the schools designated for Africans) had virtually no libraries and that their curriculum documentation allowed little room for the use of libraries (1987). Later commentators, like Stadler (1991) and Fredericks (1993), point out that the apartheid political economy assumed that black schools were preparing youth to be mere cogs in the labour force - with no need of libraries.

The heritage of apartheid might well play a different part in the shifting patterns of library use. One township librarian suggests that young black people "like to get out of the township". Another speculates that they might well prefer to use the libraries previously

barred to them – "just because they can". A third township librarian also says that the children in her township like to use the library in the nearby town but she adds that there is a perception that the so-called white libraries are better. There is calm acceptance in her words:

> *In apartheid time, they couldn't use it* [the library in town]. *So now they can, they perceive it to be better. So they go there. I accept it.* (Questionnaire 33)

Two heads of previously white libraries in down-town areas imply that the perceptions might be accurate. They suggest that township youth prefer their libraries because they are better resourced and offer more dynamic services, with one saying:

> *They don't get the same service in the township, we have more stock.* (Questionnaire 39)

Support for this view comes from a township librarian who acknowledges the shortcomings of her own library:

> *Yes they use the town libraries. Children* [referring to her own users] *are selfish – they take out the books too soon. We run out of books.* (Questionnaire 27)

There are several suggestions in the interviews that library use from the more advantaged sectors has decreased. Moreover, the survey found that two libraries in formerly Indian areas have recently closed owing to "under-use", as mentioned in Chapter 4 [4.3.1.4]. Some respondents attribute the perceived decrease in use by more advantaged sectors to the Internet; others blame their aging stock, for example:

> *We have a lot of black kids and first time users.* (Questionnaire 37)
>
> *White children have computers so they don't come in so much. Black children are coming more and more.* (Questionnaire 19)
>
> *Whites don't come in anymore – our books are too old.* (Questionnaire 36)

Nkosi's PhD study on library services to youth in the Eastern Cape (2000), in distinguishing between white and black staff in its interviews, implicitly acknowledges that the race of public library staff might well be a significant factor in how the services are used. Whether they allude to race or language or culture cannot be verified but some of the comments on membership scattered through the interviews in Mpumalanga might offer some support for this perhaps unpalatable view. One black librarian in a historically white small town library claims that her membership has been transformed since she got the job four years ago because blacks feel "comfortable" with her (Questionnaire 11). Another black librarian, appointed six years ago to run the library in a historically white small town, has experienced similar changes. She comments that the changes in her users mean that her largely Afrikaans stock needs to be replaced with Zulu language books (Questionnaire 49). Some support for these perceptions might be seen in the comment from a white librarian in a small town library who claims to have only one black member. On being asked where black pupils at the local school go, she says:

I don't know. I've asked the schools 'Can't you bring the children in?' but they say it's too far.
(Questionnaire 14)

The educational role of the public library is the question at the centre of the PhD study so the comments, early on in the interviews, on changes in users and changes in public library focus are of interest. Several suggest that the impact of the heavy use by black youth has been a shift to a focus on education from previous emphases on leisure reading and on services to adults. While acknowledging that their jobs are more demanding than in the past because their users are more "needy", several small town librarians are philosophical about the change. One, a public librarian for over 20 years, says:

> *I'm still enjoying it. That's our job* [namely "to help"]. (Questionnaire 35)

Two librarians in a small town claim that black users are more appreciative – one, an Indian herself, describing White and Indian youth as "spoilt" and "blasé".

Others see the shifts in emphasis as a "problem". Perhaps in several of these respondents, the negative perceptions stem from a lack of capacity to cope with *increase* in use rather than objections to the shifts in *kinds* of use. For example, one librarian in large town library opened her interview with these words:

> *We have a big problem here. You should see our reference room in the afternoons. Staff are running around. Before we used to have one staff member in there. After 2.00 now we have three – and it's not enough. They* [i.e. staff] *are running around, making photocopies, they are complaining that they are working too hard. They can't cope.* (Questionnaire 11)

Some respondents express concern that the role of libraries in encouraging and providing for leisure and fiction reading is being neglected. To re-emphasise what she calls the "traditional" role of public libraries, one, the head of the largest library, Secunda, who started the library years ago in a garage, insists that every staff member reports on a book at staff meetings. Again, the existence in South Africa of what might be called a "reading culture" – and how that concept might be defined - might depend on race or class or culture. One black librarian in a black township says of her community:

> *Here they don't read so we concentrated on non-fiction and reference.* (Questionnaire 46)

The reading of fiction can be for utilitarian purposes, as evidenced in the comment from a black librarian in a township library, who claims to be encouraging fiction reading – to improve spelling:

> *In library orientation I tell them about fiction. Their spelling is bad – I encourage them to read more fiction.* (Questionnaire 47)

Another black librarian working in a small town library admits that the reading habits of her largely white user community have led her to examine her own reading. She exclaims:

Whew! You whites read! (Questionnaire 50)

Much of the above comment throws light on the central problem of the research study – the educational role of the public library and how this role relates to its other roles in society. This will be returned to in Chapter 6, in a fuller discussion of respondents' perceptions of their role.

5.2.4 Children's services

As mentioned in the previous chapter [4.3.1.2], the purpose of the questions on children's facilities (Questions 5 and 6) is to ascertain the quality and status of Mpumalanga's library services to children. Internationally and in South Africa, concerns have been expressed that children are discriminated against in terms of access, staff professionalism and provision of resources (Library and Information Services Council (England). Working Party on Library Services for Children and Young People, 1995; Hart, 1999b; Elkin & Kinnell, 2000; Hart, 2002). In South Africa, youth forms a higher proportion of the population than in first world countries – which implies that their reading and information needs be prioritised. The previous section has reported figures that indicate the significance to Mpumalanga's libraries of black children and youth.

Only two libraries in Mpumalanga, the two largest, have dedicated separate children's libraries, open and staffed all day by specialists. Two other libraries have separate children's rooms but they are open and staffed for only half the day. Twenty-five libraries in the study are designed with dedicated sections for juvenile users, with 20 of these libraries being in historically white areas. The other 21 libraries with no children's sections are almost all libraries in historically black areas, many of which are small rectangular buildings, consisting of one room. In spite of international guidelines on the special requirements of children's libraries in terms of positioning, space, facilities and design (Library Association. Youth Libraries Committee, 1997: 8), the on-site visits in Mpumalanga reveal that an insistence on separate children's sections would be unrealistic, given the design of the buildings and the small staff numbers. Two observations are relevant here:

- The project work demanded of Intermediate Phase learners cuts across the traditional boundaries between adult and junior libraries. The researcher's visits to the two libraries with children's rooms on separate floors suggest that separate facilities might hinder services. Respondents' comments on school assignments, which will be discussed in Chapter 6, lend support to earlier research findings on the complexity of information sought by South African children for their school projects (Maepa & Mhinga, 2003). Learners are being asked to investigate contemporary localised

problems and local history, topics which are unlikely to be covered in conventional collections of books in children's libraries.

- Current levels of staffing make it difficult to maintain separate rooms. A newly-built township library has an excellent children's room across the hall from the main library, but it is locked up for half of the day (Questionnaire 48). Although obviously in urgent need of more space, two respondents in another older largish town library express no complaint at having their spacious downstairs children's room taken over by the Municipality, citing the difficulty of staffing and supervising it (Questionnaire 26).

Whatever the building design, shortages of staff are clearly having an impact on children's services. Answers to Question 5.2 show that, of the 25 libraries with designated children's sections, 20 have no staff stationed in them to serve children at any time in the week. Staff move across to the children's section, according to demand. Once the morning's shelving and administrative work are complete, it seems that staff tend to stay "on call", at the circulation desk, usually near the entrance, in the adult section. The result is that the children's sections are largely empty of staff, except when children ask for help. This approach might assume levels of confidence beyond many children.

Apart from numbers of staff, another issue is their competency to meet the special needs of children. Only four libraries have children's specialists. The staff in the remaining libraries are generalists, expected to go across to the children's sections as needed. Both the American and British library associations stipulate that every public library service should have a professionally qualified children's specialist to coordinate services to children and that staff working with children need special education and training (Library Association. Youth Libraries Committee, 1997: 8; American Library Association. Association for Library Service to Children, 1999). As will be discussed below, answers to Question 27.6 show that very few of Mpumalanga's library staff have had formal professional training, which traditionally includes courses in children's librarianship and children's literature. And Question 28.2 reveals that very little in-service-training or continuing professional development is undertaken, with none of the respondents reporting any training in child psychology or children's literature – both considered as intrinsic to children's librarianship in professional manuals. Only the respondents belonging to one large library system have received any in-service-training in children's work. They recently attended a workshop on running a story-hour – given by the specialist children's librarian at the central library. The competencies, which are internationally regarded as fundamental to children's librarianship, cannot be taken

for granted, as suggested by the comment from a respondent in one of the largish town libraries:

We ask the teachers to tell the stories. None of us is really a storyteller. (Questionnaire 19)

In the international literature of children's librarianship, the emphasis is on reading and literacy programming rather than on support for formal schooling. Of course, it cannot just be assumed that international views of children's services are appropriate in South Africa. Nonetheless, given South Africa's problems with reading levels at school (READ Educational Trust, 1998; Smith, 2004), it is hard to argue against this emphasis. In South African conditions, such programmes clearly need to be outreach activities, extending into clinics, educare centres and crèches, as librarians cannot depend on the support of parents' own library membership. The researcher found some evidence in Mpumalanga of this kind of outreach, with six libraries lending boxes of picture books to educare centres and 20 libraries regularly engaging in story-reading in the library with visiting classes from nearby schools. As far as the author could see, only two libraries advertise a weekly public story-time. As in membership and circulation, as discussed in Section 5.2.2 above, staffing provision might well restrict such activities. As one respondent, the sole staff member in her township library, says, in explaining why she no longer schedules story-hours:

We used to do it – we're too busy now. (Questionnaire 35)

The first phase survey made no attempt to analyse the nature of children's use of Mpumalanga's libraries. The author's earlier study in 2002 of learners' use of two public libraries in Cape Town found that primary school children accounted for 57 percent of learners coming into the library in the week of the study, with Grade 7 learners forming the largest group (Hart, 2003b). The biggest need in one library was for information for school projects and, in the other, for a space to do homework. Her observations in the course of the study in Mpumalanga and respondents' comments lead her to believe that similar patterns of use exist in Mpumalanga.

This section has suggested that shortages of staff might be a key factor in the provision of services to children. But there is some evidence that there might also be a fundamental lack of appreciation of the importance of children's facilities and services.

5.3 Information resources and retrieval tools

Figures 10 and 11 display responses to Questions 9 and 8 respectively, which ask about kinds of information resources and information retrieval tools held by the libraries (apart from books). They also record where the resources and tools are housed.
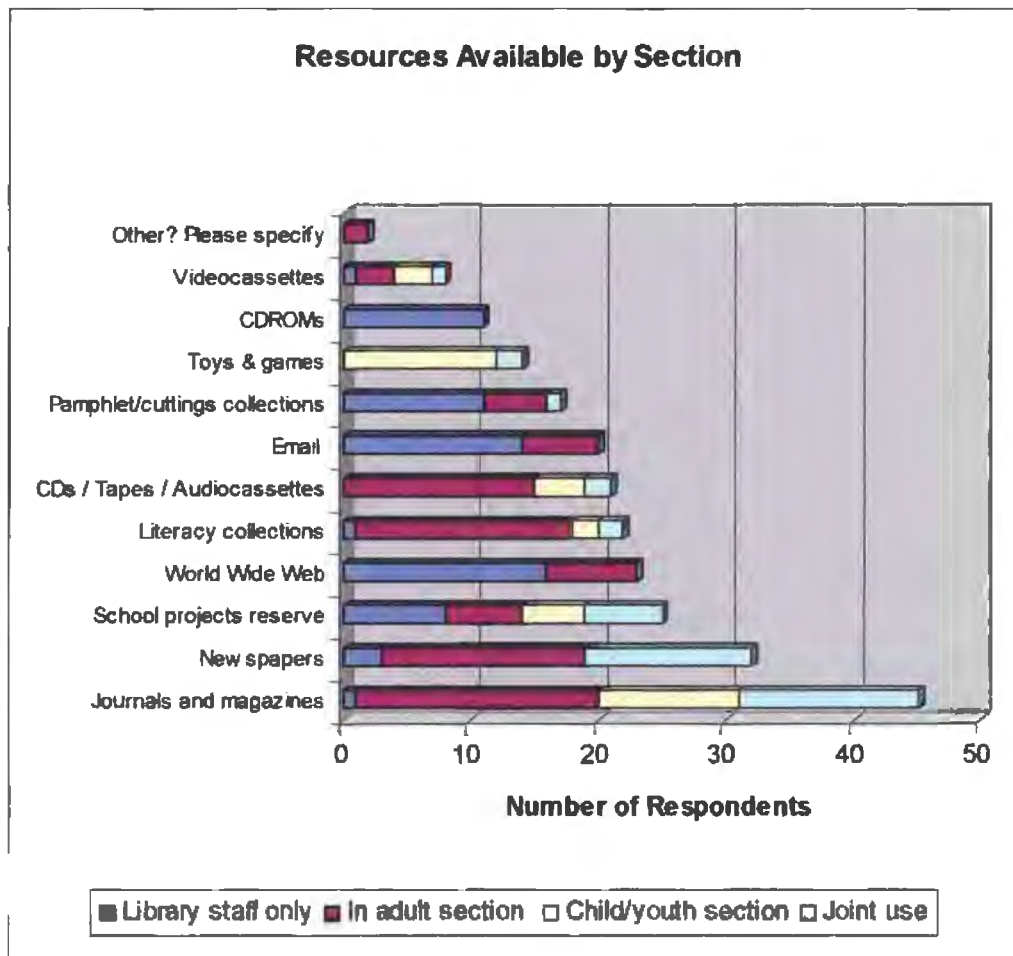
Figure 10: Question 9

The interest in Figure 10 perhaps is the information it gives about the positioning of materials. The question records whether the tools and materials are placed:

- in the office, out of reach of the public
- in the adult section
- in the children's section or room
- between children's and adult sections for joint-use.

In most of the older township libraries, the last category was found to prevail as the libraries are too small for distinct sectioning.

Three categories in Figure 10, perhaps, deserve some explanation:

- "School projects reserve" refers to the setting aside of materials for current projects. In 25 libraries, as soon as staff become aware of project topics, they remove relevant materials from the shelves. The significance for the study is that this forestalls the need for children to learn important information retrieval skills. They just go to the project shelf or table where the books are laid out.

- The "literacy collection" refers to books designated for adults learning to read. They are labelled as such by the Regional Libraries. There are a few comments that teenagers, especially those whose first language is not English, like to borrow these books as they are "easy". The implication is that the loans figures for this category do not necessarily indicate use by adults learning to read.

- Seventeen libraries have some kind of "cuttings collections" – files of information unlikely to be covered in the conventional book collections. The need for such collections is evidenced by the many comments on the complexity of the topics children are being given to research, an issue that was brought up in the preceding section [5.2.4] and that will be returned to in Chapter 6.
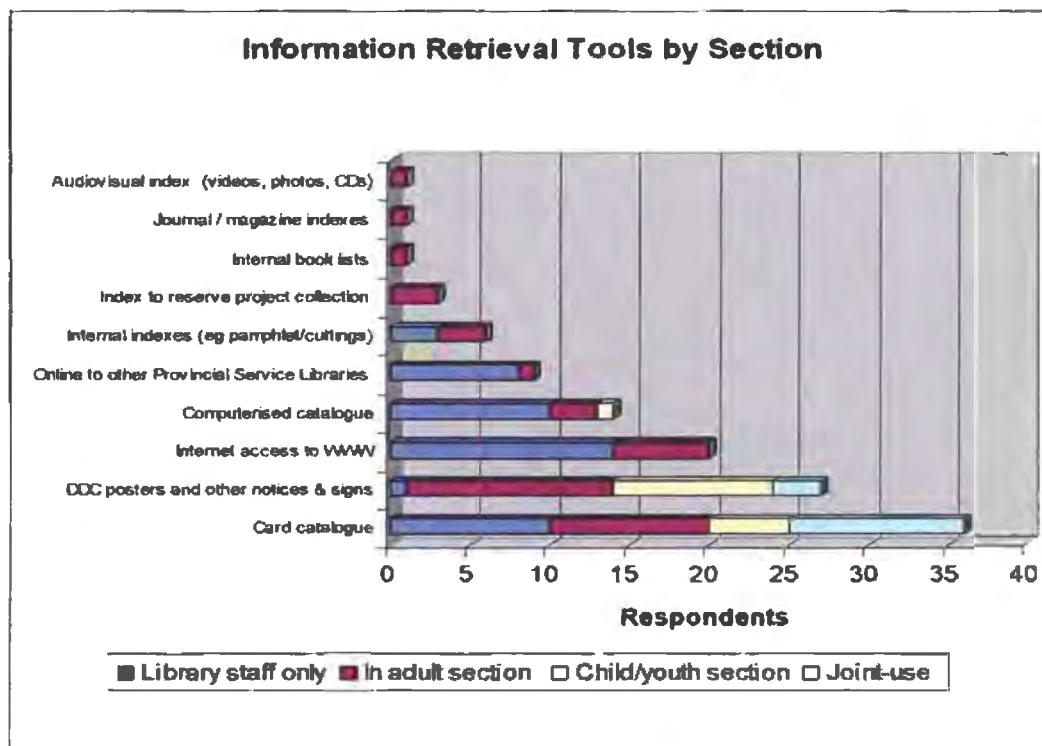
Figure 11: Question 8

Figure 11 depicts the information retrieval tools available in the Mpumalanga libraries – in staff offices, the adult sections and the children's. The analysis and organisation of information held within print and multi-media resources, by means of cataloguing, classifying, indexing and building databases, are central to the library profession. Indeed, it is these organising systems that distinguish a "library" from a mere collection of materials. The

purpose of the cataloguing, indexing and database systems is to provide mediating tools for retrieval by people in need of information. The tools, thus, need to be visible and accessible to library users. There is some comment in the literature, for example, on the importance of children having their *own* catalogues, in their own sections and adapted for their needs (Vandergrift, 1989; Walter, 1997).

Figure 11 suggests that the provision of retrieval tools for independent use is not a high priority in most of Mpumalanga's libraries. Only six libraries provide a separate catalogue for their juvenile users. Eleven place their card catalogues between the children's and adult sections – available for joint use. Thirteen provide adults with independent access and 20 have a catalogue accessible to staff only. Only six libraries provide indexes to cuttings collections – three of these being in a back office. Table 8 provides another analysis of responses to Question 8 in its analysis of information retrieval tools by history of library – namely, historically disadvantaged (black) libraries and historically advantaged (white) libraries.

Tool	HDL	HAL	Total
Card catalogue	17	19	36
OPAC	4	10	14
Online access to Mpumalanga Provincial Library Service network	4	5	9
Internal indexes (EG to Pamphlet collections)	2	4	6
Journal indexes	0	1	1
Mpumalanga Provincial Library Service bibliographies	0	0	0
WWW access	7	13	20
Sabinet & other databases	0	0	0
DDC posters	10	17	27
Index to school project collection	0	3	3
Index to audiovisual collection	0	0	0

Table 8: Information retrieval tools by library history: Question 8

(From sample of 22 HDL and 23 HAL libraries)

Significance tests on Table 8 (Question 8) reveal the following:

- significantly more information retrieval tools in HALs (Chi squared = 7.28; p<0.01)
- significantly more OPACs in HALs (Chi squared = 3.36; p<0.07)
- significantly more WWW access in HALs (Chi-squared = 2.78; p<0.1)
- significantly more DDC posters in HALs (Chi-squared = 3.79; p = 0.05)

The pattern is clear – the historically advantaged libraries (HALs) are better equipped with retrieval tools than the historically disadvantaged (HDLs).

Question 10 serves as a check to Questions 8 and 9 as it documents public access to the Internet and to OPACs, on the day of the interview. Only seven of the 45 libraries represented in the question were providing direct access to the Internet and only three to an OPAC. Only 12 of the libraries visited had their computer catalogues up and running for staff use on the day of the interview. These figures are consistent with those in the two earlier questions, which finds that 14 others have staff access to the Internet and perform searches *for* clients, charging for the resulting web site print-outs.

The survey took place at a time when Mpumalanga's libraries were in the process of computerising their catalogues and merging their catalogues with those of the regional libraries on the provincial online PALS database. In the past three years, the Carnegie-funded Building Electronic Bridges (BEB) project, referred to in Chapter 4 [4.2.1], has spent five million rands on building a database of 120 million electronic library records and placing 120 computers in all public libraries in the Province with online access to the database (Mpumalanga Provincial Government. Department of Sport, Recreation, Arts & Culture, 2004). Although teething problems are inevitable in the present transition, it is hard to make sense of the low figures in the preceding paragraph. The official in charge of the BEB project admitted in a conversation on 24 March 2004 that she and "the PALS people" were puzzled that so many libraries still were not connected to the provincial system. A possible explanation is given by one respondent and by the Director of Mpumalanga Provincial Library Service, who explain that connections have been cut as many local authorities have not paid Internet fees (Hendrikz, 2004b). The BEB project had subsidised the first six months and then local authorities had been expected to take over the charges. Whatever the problems with computerisation, in the meantime card catalogues in several libraries have been dismantled. The result is that eight libraries in the survey have no catalogue at all – neither a card catalogue nor a computerised one. Nineteen maintain a card catalogue but five of these are placed in the back office.

Perhaps, the reality in Mpumalanga is that library catalogues are not performing the essential information retrieval function that librarianship theory would claim for them. The case of the pot plant preventing access to the catalogue drawers because library users "make a mess of the cards" (Questionnaire 35), cited in Chapter 4 [4.3.1.2], might indicate a lack of understanding of the purpose of a catalogue. A respondent in one of the large libraries, which is relatively well-provided with OPACs, says:

In each section there is an OPAC, in practice very few use it. Most ask the staff. (Questionnaire 45)

On being asked about the position of the card catalogue in her library (in a passage at the back of the library), a librarian in one of the larger libraries replies:

They could use it but they don't want to. (Questionnaire 40)

The issue of providing the means for independent information retrieval is clearly crucial to the research question of public librarians' capacity for information literacy education. Examination of the figures relating to the provision of indexes to cuttings collections and project collections suggests that the issue is more complicated than physical facilities. Figure 11 shows that, of the 17 libraries that build in-house cuttings collections and the 25 that provide separate project collections, only nine provide for public access to them via indexes. This neglect might rather point to more intangible factors, such as librarians' beliefs about users' information-seeking behaviours. Could it be, for example, that public librarians do not value the need for independent information skills? Or, perhaps the issue is rather gaps in respondents' education and training, which lead them to neglect the tools considered essential in any definition of a "library". Further exploration of these ideas can only take place after analysis of the responses to Section C, which probes these more subjective aspects.

5.4 Staffing

Questions 4 and 27 provide a view of the staffing of Mpumalanga's libraries and gather descriptive data on the respondents. Only seven of the 57 respondents are male. The mean age is 39 years; the average number of years in their present library is six years. They are a multilingual and multicultural group as shown in Table 9.

Zulu	17	South Sotho	2
Afrikaans	12	Afrikaans/English	2
Siswati (Swazi)	10	Ndebele	1
English	6	Afrikaans/Zulu	1
North Sotho	5	Blank	1

Table 9: Respondents' home languages: Question 27.3

5.4.1 Staff provision

The link, established above in Section 5.2.2, between numbers of staff and circulation and membership highlights the significance of the provision of staff. Analysis of responses to Question 4.1 reveals that the average number of staff in the sample is 3.5 - with the median being 1.5 and the highest 20.

As mentioned in the discussion of sampling in Chapter 4, the survey reveals far more "one-person" libraries than expected. Twenty-two "heads" of libraries interviewed in the study in Mpumalanga are in fact the sole staff member of their library – representing almost 50 percent of the libraries in the sample. The 22 are evenly split between historically white and

black areas. Thirteen respondents reported that their library had empty or frozen posts, eight from the group of one-person libraries.

The "one-person library" was used at times as a variable in the analysis across the data as it was deemed to be possibly significant for information literacy education in the Province. Indeed, several respondents report that they would like to do more outreach work in the community and in schools but are unable to leave their libraries. Examples of these comments are:

> *It's difficult as I can't get out of here.* (Questionnaire 7)
> *I have reported 10 times to management that I need another staff member.* (Questionnaire 10)

These comments confirm the early impressions of the researcher who, in her phone calls to Mpumalanga libraries to make appointments, had quite often struggled to make contact as the libraries were reported by the municipal switchboards to be "closed" – because the librarian was sick, on leave, at a meeting or at a funeral.

As mentioned earlier, the opening hours of the small libraries are rather restricted – with only well-staffed libraries open after 4.30pm and on Saturdays. As several respondents in townships and small towns point out, the result is that working people and children, who attend school out of the townships or in larger towns, cannot access their libraries. In her comment on being a single staff member, another respondent, responsible for a branch library in a large town, questions the ability of single-person libraries to meet the wide range of demands facing them, asking:

> *How can we cope with all the diverse needs?* (Questionnaire 24)

Her words are reminiscent of some of the international writing on the challenges facing rural libraries, that was referred to in Chapter 3 [3.2]. As acknowledged in the professional literature of rural librarianship, the challenge for rural librarians, who in Mpumalanga often work alone, is to provide for information needs as diverse as in any large city – but with fewer resources at their disposal.

5.4.2 Job titles

It is clear that the survey took place in a time of transition, with libraries undergoing the same processes of restructuring and review as other parts of local government, as described in Chapter 4 [4.2.2]. Evidence of the restructuring is the shifting job titles of library staff, with some still retaining old titles and a few having received new ones like Library Coordinator and Library Clerk – as shown in Table 10. Titles, relationships, responsibilities, reporting

lines, and job descriptions are still in transition – with several respondents pointing out that their jobs were being reviewed at the time of the survey.

Job Title	Region Ermelo	Kwamhlanga	Lydenburg	Middelburg	Nelspruit	Standerton	Total
Assistant Librarian	2					6	8
Chief Librarian				2			2
City Librarian						1	1
Clerical Assistant	2						2
Library Assistant	5			4	8	5	22
Library Coordinator			1				1
Library Clerk			1				1
Librarian	1		3	4	2	2	12
Regional Librarian		1					1
Senior Librarian				1			1
Senior Library Assistant					1		1
Town Librarian (acting)	1						1
Unknown		1	1	1		1	4
Total	11	2	6	12	11	15	57

Table 10: Respondents' job titles by region: Question 27

The question on job titles reveals some discomfort evidently brought about by changes in local government, for example:

- There is some concern that the new municipalities are too large, with administrative structures and services too distant. One librarian in a small town, 33 kilometres away from her local municipality offices and from her central library, on being asked for her job title for Question 27 insists that it is, "Everything". She explains that she has taken on the responsibilities of "doing everything in the town" (Questionnaire 14). She continues that she manages the team of six gravediggers, sees to the sinking of new boreholes (urgently needed in the recent drought), fields queries about rates, property, and, so on. People, she says, need "someone close" to do these things. She also points out that she is not being paid to do these "extras".

- The new title "Library Coordinator" appears to designate the librarian in charge of the libraries of the new local Category B municipalities. However, the sole officially

designated Library Coordinator in the survey points out that, although she has now been given responsibility for several extra libraries in her new larger local municipality, no extra staff member has been appointed to take on some of her work in her own library.

- Another perspective comes from some of the small town librarians who have been put under the new local municipalities. They are clearly used to a certain amount of independence, for example in communicating directly with the provincial regional library, and have understandably found it difficult to adjust to their libraries' becoming mere branch libraries within larger systems. Complaints include having to ask permission to go to meetings, restricted opening hours, and curtailment of freedom to move out into the community. Thus:

    I was told now I wasn't to attend meetings. (Questionnaire 14)

    Since I came under X [new authority], *my hours have decreased. I'm open now only at 12.30, do admin in the mornings. I used to open up. Amalgamation has restricted me to an island. I'm now expected to stay in my library.* (Questionnaire 5)

In Chapter 4 [4.2.2], it was speculated that the rise of the new large local municipalities might eventually enable Mpumalanga's libraries to enhance their services, since experience elsewhere has shown that larger tax bases and the associated economies of scale benefit public libraries (Midwinter & McVicar, 1994; Fry & Wallis, 2000). The above comments indicate the challenges still to be overcome.

5.4.3 Education and training

Figure 12 – summarising responses to Question 27.6 – shows that only 17 of the respondents (30.3%) have a formal post-Matric professional qualification, mostly a diploma or degree in Library and Information Science. Another 19 report that they are enrolled for a course of study at the time of the interview – with nine studying for a professional diploma or degree and five for a Grade 12 Certificate (Matric or school leaving certificate).

Respondents' Qualifications

Other 5%
Pre-Matric 18%
Post Matric 30%
Matric 47%
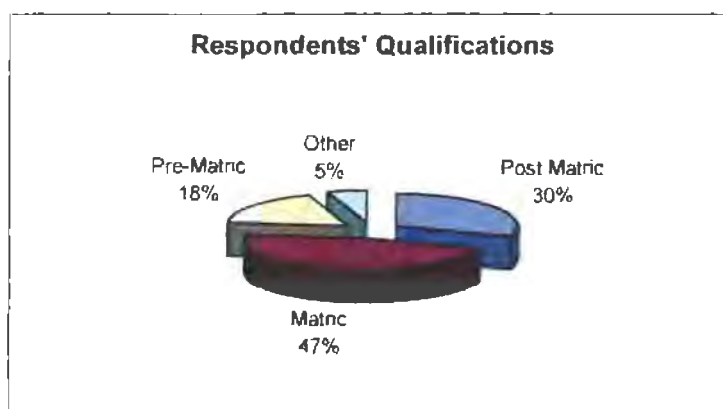
Figure 12: Question 27.6

Given the focus of this study, exposure to the concepts of information literacy and information literacy education in professional education is of interest. Question 28.1 documents that only one of the 17 professionally qualified staff reports some exposure to the concept of information literacy education in his degree coursework. In their American study, Bruce and Lampson also found low responses among public librarians, with school and academic librarians' reporting far more exposure in their studies (2002: 88). It is noteworthy, however, that professional education in the United States is at post-graduate level and is geared towards specialisation; whereas in South Africa, the first professional degree prepares generalists, trained for all kinds of libraries.

Fourteen librarians in charge of one of the 46 libraries in the survey have professional librarianship qualifications. Analysis of the responses shows that staff in township libraries are less likely to have tertiary qualifications than those in previously advantaged areas, echoing the author's findings in her study of Cape Town librarians in 1999 (Hart, 1999b) Four of the librarians in charge of township libraries in Mpumalanga have tertiary professional qualifications; six respondents, in charge of township libraries, do not have matric. Ten of the historically white suburban or town libraries are run by professionally qualified staff; none are run by staff without matric. However, it cannot be assumed that those working in previously white libraries with tertiary education are white. Of the 17 with tertiary education, seven are black librarians working in previously advantaged downtown libraries. The large number of one-person libraries has already been commented on. A central issue that arises is the competencies demanded of a sole staff member, whose communities have reading and information needs as diverse as any other.

How someone is appointed to run a small town library became an issue of interest soon into the project, after the sixth respondent revealed that she was "just standing in". In reality, she

is a clerk in the next-door municipal office but for the past three years, since the resignation of the former librarian, the arrangement has been that she comes across to the library "as needed" (Questionnaire 6). Several other respondents in charge of small town libraries report that they were seconded to the library after working as clerks for the municipality – in the records or roads departments, for example (for example Questionnaires 9, 12, 13, 14). It is noteworthy that the newly designated Library Coordinator in the sample, a senior position in which she is responsible for the five libraries in her local municipality, has no professional or post-Matric qualification. She was seconded to her present position from a clerical job in the municipality seven years ago. Perusal of responses to Question 27.4, which documents length of service, suggests that these secondments took place about eight years ago, in the transition period after 1996 between the former Transvaal Provincial Administration and the new Mpumalanga Province. Follow-up research is needed to confirm the author's hunch (based on the above dates and also on scattered comments from her interviewees) that, in the climate of uncertainty caused by massive administrative change in the mid 1990s, many "old-school" town librarians resigned and that the new municipalities, operating without clear guidelines from an established provincial library service or a national professional library association, replaced them with ad-hoc appointments. The use of the term "ad-hoc" here does not signify any negative judgement on the quality of these staff on the author's part. Comparison of professionally qualified and so-called "unqualified" staff was not within the parameters of her research project.

However, the interviews uncover evidence that the kind of appointments discussed above might well impact on the long-term professionalism of public library work in the Province. Comments from professionally qualified respondents reveal their unease with the situation. In explaining why she has abandoned her post-graduate degree in Knowledge Management, one asks:

Some are put over us who are less qualified – so what's the point? (Questionnaire 45)

She is in the process of challenging her recently designated title, Assistant Librarian, hoping to have it upgraded to Librarian. Her motivation is that she is in a leadership position in a large library, that she has a professional degree and has 21 years of experience in libraries. Another, head of a small town library, with a three year National Diploma, questions the value of completing her fourth BTech year and confides that she is looking for a job out of Mpumalanga. She contends that government needs to change the way it sees libraries:

They have no idea of the value of our work. A speed cop earns more than us. (Questionnaire 16)

In another comment on staffing, a qualified librarian with 15 years experience, head of a large township library, warns that the downgrading of public library work will impact on all staff:

We do a lot. We need higher salaries. The situation is making qualified librarians move on – therefore we'll all suffer. (Questionnaire 48)

The issues highlighted here are complex. Of interest are the six respondents who have been promoted in the last eight years to run their township libraries after working as cleaners in the local town libraries previously. None of the six has matriculation certification. One, a woman of 47 years, who is studying to obtain her Matric and who worked as a cleaner in the town library for 13 years, is described by her former supervisor, professionally qualified and in charge of the nearby town library for the past 13 years, as follows:

She's been around for years; she knows it all. (Questionnaire 46)

The person described here says, in her own interview, that her ambition is to leave the township library and run the library in the nearby town (Questionnaire 47). It could be argued that, in the past, her race barred her from equal access to education and professional training – and that post-apartheid transformation now demands that deserving staff members receive recognition and opportunities. Nonetheless, it could also be argued that the employing of under-qualified staff in township libraries puts their communities at a disadvantage.

The evidently low level of professional education among the study's participants implies the need to examine their access to workplace skills development and in-service education. Table 11 shows the in-service training or professional development respondents have had in the past three years – summarising answers to Question 28.2.

Library computer system course	41
Computer literacy or other computer application	39
Training in how to teach information / library skills to library users	17
Information / library skills training (improving your own skills)	16
Internet course	8
Other (All six referred here to Customer Care Course given by local authorities)	6
Children's literature	4
Some aspect of school curriculum: eg Curriculum 2005 / Outcomes Based Education / Project work	3
Children's needs / psychology	2

Table 11: Respondents' in-service training: Question 28.2

The most common workplace training is computer training – in the PALS library system, adopted by the Mpumalanga Provincial Library Service a few years ago, and in other basic computer skills. The 17 respondents, who report training in information literacy education, are those who attended the workshop in Middelburg on 16 March 2004, mentioned in Chapter

4 [4.3.1.3]. The 16 positive responses to "information and library skills training" include those of six members of the various branches of one large library system, which arranged a workshop on library displays and children's hours earlier in 2004. It is interesting to compare the figures in Table 11 with those in the author's survey of children's librarians in Cape Town in 1999 (Hart, 1999b; 2000a; 2000c). In that study, children's literature education was the area most commonly mentioned and there was no mention of computer training, although many respondents expressed an urgent need for it.

In Mpumalanga, the BEB initiative, alluded to above in Section 5.3, is designed to empower rural people by providing electronic access to the provincial library network and the Internet. The long-term sustainability of such projects clearly depends on the ICT competencies of public library staff. Question 29 examines how respondents rate their ICT competencies. Table 12 shows that a large majority perceive themselves to be fairly computer literate or computer literate.

Know nothing about computers	Not very computer literate but know library computer system	Fairly literate – feel I need more skills though	Computer literate	Am an "advanced" computer user
2	3	23	23	5

Table 12: Self-ratings on computer literacy: Question 29.1:

Question 29.2 examines more closely respondents' ratings of their computer skills. Figure 13 summarises the responses and uncovers gaps in respondents' knowledge and skills. The Figure shows that most respondents perceive themselves to lack skills in the communications technologies of the information society – the Internet, database building and database searching. Although ICT skills are not synonymous with information literacy skills, previous research has shown that perceptions of the overlap between the two concepts might well lead to reluctance to get involved in information literacy education among librarians who feel that they lack IT competence (Bruce & Lampson, 2002: 101; Moore, 2002: 4).
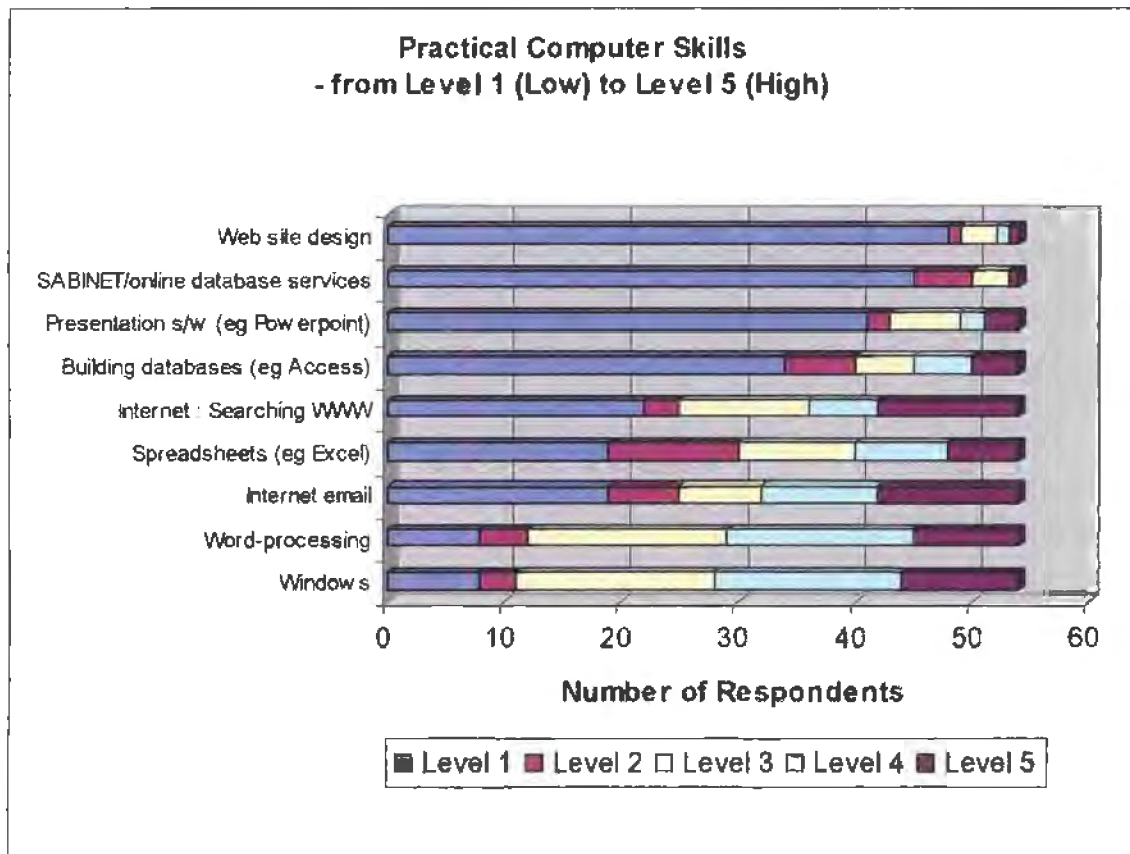
Figure 13: Question 29.2

This section has focussed on the qualifications, education and training of respondents. Whether their education and training, pre-service and in-service, have prepared public library staff in Mpumalanga for their work is a crucial question for the research project. The question is not confined to South African public librarianship. In examining the "crisis" of "disorganized and unproductive" rural libraries in the United States, Luchs (2001: 51) contends that the prevailing low level of professional education of their staff is their biggest weakness. While acknowledging that the American rural librarians in their studies are dedicated and enthusiastic, both Luchs (2001) and Vavrek (1997) believe that the diverse information needs of their communities demand professionally qualified staff.

The need for more education and training is acknowledged by many of the Mpumalanga respondents. Questions 28 and 29 provoke comments that reveal a wish for more professional development, for example:

> *We need education. If we're not educated ourselves, how can we help the public?* (Questionnaire 25)

According to one respondent, lack of funding is the problem:

> *We've asked and asked for courses on children's literature but there's no money....* [Again, a little later] *There is no money for these courses.* (Questionnaire 44)

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5.5 Information literacy education programmes

Section B of the questionnaire investigates the present status of information literacy education in Mpumalanga's libraries. It asks what information literacy education is being conducted – for the general public and for schools. It also records the partnerships the libraries might have with other organisations and sectors since there is consensus in the literature that effective information literacy education requires alliances with educators and other role-players in the community. Curran warns that the complexity of information literacy means that librarians cannot "dispense" it alone (1990: 351).

5.5.1 Existing information literacy education in public libraries

Questions 11.1 and 11.2 document the information literacy education that exists and any plans for future programming. Problems over terminology were referred to in Chapter 4 [4.3.1.2] with "user education" being described as a usefully inclusive term, probably understood by all participants. Question 11.1 allows for individual one-on-one training, for self-help guides (for example, pamphlets or workbooks) and for work with groups – following the example of research in New Zealand (Koning, 2001). However, all respondents claim to be willing to give individual assistance as asked for and no self-help guides are reported. Figure 14, therefore, documents only those activities given to groups – without exception, groups of school learners. Question 11.2 gathered only one positive response with regard to future plans, from a township library that is planning to set up computer literacy training for learners, using the six new personal computers recently donated by a large corporation.

Information Literacy Programmes

- ▣ Library orientation sessions
- ▣ Lifeskills workshops
- ▢ Reference collection sessions
- ▢ Project / assignment workshops
- ■ OPAC / catalogue sessions
- ▣ Sustained IL programmes
- ▣ Other
- ▣ Literacy classes
- ■ Regular writers' visits
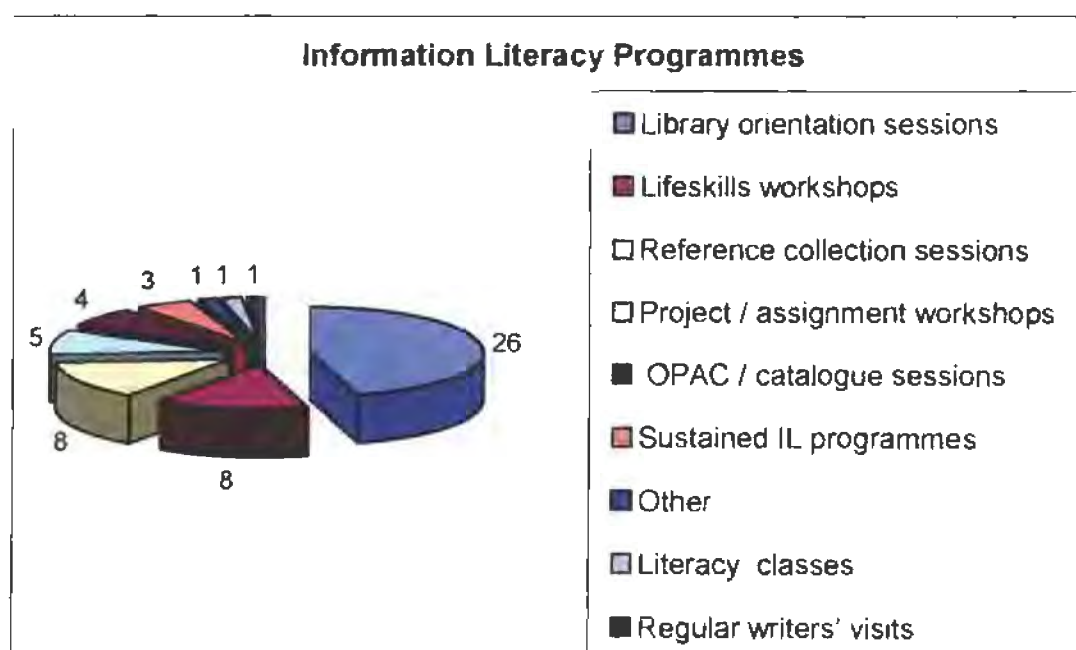
Figure 14: Question 11.1

Nine categories of information literacy education are represented in Figure 14, which summarises responses to Question 11.1. The original question included 13 categories but no positive replies were given for the four computer related categories, computer literacy, World Wide Web, CDROMs and email. The single "other" in Figure 14 refers to visits to the library by classes to work on a project, supervised by their teachers and with no library staff participation. The virtual absence of literacy education revealed in the responses to Question 11 highlights a gap between the reality on the ground and recent thinking in the literature of African public librarianship (for example Makhubela, 1998; Sturges, & Neill, 1998; Issak, 2000), which advocates an active role in adult basic and literacy education. Again, shortages of staff have to be mentioned as a possible explanatory factor. For example, the librarian in charge of one of the most "rural" libraries, in a clearly poverty-stricken ex-homeland, claims to have conducted a "pilot survey" and to have found one-hundred people in her community who would attend literacy classes in her library. But she adds that she cannot go ahead unless another staff member is appointed:

> *I'm trying to negotiate with the local authority to get involved in ABET* [Adult Basic Education &Training] *I would need an assistant.* (Questionnaire 22)

Figure 14 shows the most common information literacy education activity to be Category K, "library orientation", in which classes are brought to the library, usually at the beginning of the year or in the annual Library Week, and introduced to its layout and services. Typically these sessions last for an hour, though some respondents claim to "do it" in 15 minutes. McMillan's project in a public library in New Zealand might throw doubt on the efficacy of this kind of once-off library orientation. She found that children quickly forget what they learn after a library visit and that the large size of school groups compromises the effectiveness of the teaching (2001: 5). Life-skills workshops, apparently given by HIV/Aids experts, garnered eight positive replies but perhaps cannot be described as user education since it seems that the library's sole role is to provide a venue. Responses to the other categories of more focused user education – eight for Category G, "How to use the OPAC/catalogue", eight for H, "How to do your project", five for I, "User education with one group sustained over more than one session", and four for J, "How to use the reference collection" - are of particular interest. Only three respondents report that they sometimes work with the same class in a sustained way over more than one session.

The positive responses in the categories G to J come from only 11 libraries - five being one-person libraries. Clearly, the numbers in Figure 14 are rather low. A clue to the paucity of formal information literacy programming might lie in some of the accompanying comments, which indicate that, ironically, many respondents perceive themselves to be too pressurised

from the high numbers of learners in their busy afternoons to establish structured programmes for groups in the mornings. Another contributing factor might be indicated from the fact that no pattern within municipalities can be detected, with the positive responses scattered across different regions and different municipalities. For example, a large central library replies positively to one category (Questionnaire 3); yet three of its branches do not (Questionnaires 5, 6, 54). This might indicate that there is no common approach or policy within library systems.

Responses to Question 14.1 might provide further evidence of lack of common approaches within a system. It asks if user education programmes are mentioned in mission and policy statements and results in only 8 positive replies. The accuracy of this figure is, moreover, dubious as, of these eight, only four are able to specify the terminology used. Nine claim to make no mention of information literacy education in their mission statement. The 27 libraries, who prefer Answer D, "Other", indicate that they do not have a mission statement. Many of these defend the lack of such a document by pointing out that their purpose is included in the mission statements of their municipalities, where libraries are often described in broad terms as a "community service", serving to uplift and educate the community. The motivation for the question on policy documentation is the evidence elsewhere that institutional support via policy is a key element in information literacy programming (Koning, 2001; Bruce & Lampson, 2002: 102).

Already within the comments accompanying Questions 11 and 12, there are suggestions that information literacy education might depend on the interest, or even whim, of individual staff members. An example is the response to Question 11 from a librarian (one of the staff seconded from the municipal offices in the mid 1990s), who feels strongly that information literacy education is not something she can be expected to do. She will engage in it if she has time and if it is appreciated:

I do it when I feel like it. Sometimes I'm just tired. I don't have to do it. (Questionnaire 9)

Three points are significant here:

- She is not aware of any clear guidelines, either from her library service or from the library profession, on what her role in supporting her users entails. To her, it is a matter of personal choice.
- Her choice to do what she considers to be "extra" work seems to be connected to a perceived lack of appreciation for her work.
- In another part of the interview she says that she moved across to the library from the municipality as she "loves reading". Her answer to Question 28.2 shows that

she has received no exposure to professional development since, apart from training in the PALS system. Her case, perhaps, illustrates the shortcomings in the appointment and in-service training practices that were described in the previous section.

Given the ambivalence in her comments above, this respondent will be returned to in Chapter 6, where her responses to Question 18, which probes the educational role of the public library, are of interest.

5.5.2 Relationships with schools

Question 12 documents the libraries' connections to their surrounding schools – this being deemed a useful indicator of successful information literacy education of school learners in the research literature (Koning, 2001; Bundy, 2002b), as shown in Chapter 3 [3.3].

Question 12.1 finds that, on average, the libraries report having 7.3 schools within a radius of three kilometres. The largest number is 40 schools, reported by the librarian in a rural library in one of the densely-populated former homelands. Historically black libraries are reported on average to have within three kilometres 8.6 schools and the historically white 6.2. According to Question 12.2, respondents estimate that 47 of the schools that surround them have a "functioning school library with a teacher-librarian responsible for it" – that is 14 percent (Question 12.2).

In answer to Question 12.3, 17 respondents report that their library has a "special" relationship with at least one school – in terms of regular visits, block loans and contact with educators. Figure 15 below provides analysis of responses to Question 12.4, which examines the nature of the special relationship in terms of which programmes are in operation.

Schools' Programmes

- ■ Library orientation
- ■ Regular story reading & telling
- □ Library staff visits to school
- □ Regular contact with teachers
- ■ Project workshops
- ■ Block Loans
- ■ Class visits for ILE
- □ Lifeskills workshops
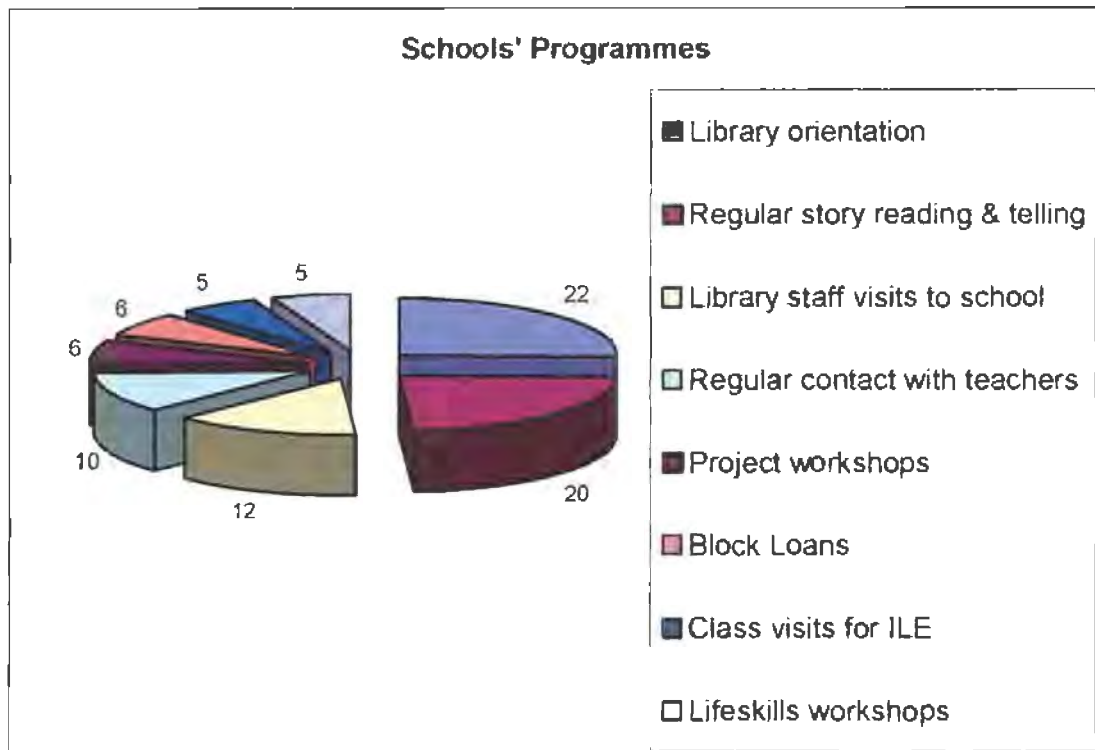
Figure 15: Question 12.4

It is reassuring that the responses to Question 12.4, which asks about school programmes, are largely consistent with those to Question 11, which documents information literacy education activities in general. The responses within the question are not mutually exclusive; thus, five librarians report that their library is engaged in five or more of the activities listed, with three of these being one person libraries. Again, once-off library orientation accounts for the largest number of responses (22), followed by storytelling (20). Twelve libraries visit the schools at least once a quarter and 10 report that the schools' educators come to the library at least once a quarter As with Questions 11 and 14.1, it is difficult to see a consistent pattern of school programmes within municipal library systems, with the central library and branches all giving different replies. Similarly, quite often, the town librarian responds positively to a number of activities but the nearby township librarian does not

The answers to Questions 11 and 12 at times reveal the pressures of the competing demands on the librarians' time. Many respondents acknowledge that they would like to do more, for example:

> *Bar-coding is my priority* [PALS computerisation project]. (Questionnaire 14)
> *I just can't. I have half an hour for admin, I'm open from 9 til 4.30.* (Questionnaire 39)
> *D.. [a new staff member] is starting in May then I'll have time* (Questionnaire 28)

A glimpse of the potential benefits of adequate staffing is given in the description of a proactive programme of school visits by the librarian in charge of a large well-equipped

township library. She has a staff of five, which allows her to go out from her library and make monthly visits to the schools in her community. She claims that she "used to" work with the media teachers (teacher-librarians) in the schools but now, "the Department has changed and media teachers have lost their posts and their interest" (Questionnaire 48). Now, it seems that her specific focus in the visits is not information literacy education but rather sexuality education, as she is concerned at the high rate of teenage pregnancies and HIV/AIDS. Her "how to choose life" programme of workshops in the library involves some 300 Grade 11 learners (Questionnaire 48). She claims to have built up a reputation as a counsellor in the community, saying:

> *I specialise in sexuality issues – parents are too shy to talk. I do counselling it's part of my community work. People with suicide threats, marriage problems.* (Questionnaire 48)

Although at present, her programme does not include information literacy, clearly it could be a powerful vehicle for information literacy education.

5.5.3 Community partnerships

Question 13 documents other partnerships that libraries have in the surrounding community, apart from those with schools. Figure 16 summarises the responses to Question 13. Again the answers are not mutually exclusive, making the low numbers even more striking.
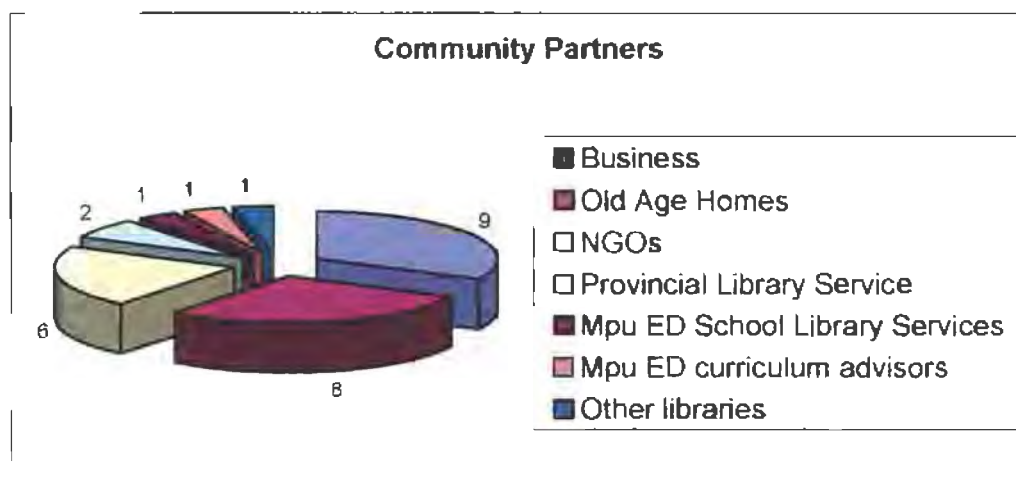
Figure 16: Question 13

The most common category of partnerships is business - a closer look at the responses showing that they all refer to the financial support given to public libraries in Mpumalanga by SAPPI, SASOL and Eskom, three large corporations. The author witnessed three displays of books, bought with SAPPI funds to mark the annual Library Week. The next highest category is Old Age Homes - several libraries taking boxes of books to their local homes. The six mentions of NGOs refer to health associations, four in the field of HIV/AIDS and two in cancer.

The absence of any mention of literacy groups confirms the earlier finding in relation to Question 11.1, where only one library reports any involvement in literacy education. As already mentioned, the finding throws doubt on the many suggestions in the literature that the public library is well-placed to play a coordinating role in literacy education (for example Makhubela, 1998).

Given the purpose of this research project, the evidently almost non-existent relationship between public libraries and the Mpumalanga Education Department is of interest. Only two respondents in public libraries claim to know about and have any contact with the Education Department school library services. One met a regional coordinator of school libraries at a LIASA meeting (Questionnaire 28) and the other had a visit from her regional school library coordinator some months previously, who had promised to return to discuss "working together" (Questionnaire 22). A third rather vaguely says: "A lady approached me – I think she was from the Education Department" (Questionnaire 1). Another expresses surprise at the question:

It's the first time I've heard there is such a service. (Questionnaire 53)

This finding belies the comments made to the author on 24 March 2004 by the Director of the Library and Information Service and the Head of the Education Library and Information Service, quoted in Chapter 4 [4.2.2], when each signalled a cooperative working relationship.

The figures given in this section perhaps indicate that school/library connections are at present not strong. Moreover, it has to be remembered that the schools reported on here make up only a small proportion of the total number of schools in the province. The answers to the open-ended Questions 20, 21 and 22, which will be discussed in the following chapter, might throw light on factors that underlie the evidently rather weak relations – thus contributing to a more nuanced picture.

Clearly, the overall impression left by the data gathered in Section B of the questionnaire/interview is that information literacy programming is not well-established in the public libraries of Mpumalanga. Ironically, the comments that accompany the answers to Questions 11 and 12 hint that the respondents perceive themselves to be too busy coping with the demands of school learners to establish structured programmes. Their information literacy education is of individual learners, flocking to the libraries in the afternoons. Chapter 6 will expand on this suggestion in its exploration of respondents' experiences with school learners.

5.6   Conclusion

This chapter has begun to answer some of the research questions concerning the readiness of Mpumalanga public libraries for information literacy education. It has offered quantitative analysis of the data gathered and has provided information on conditions in the libraries which might influence information literacy. It has, hopefully, also confirmed the value of mixing quantitative and qualitative methodologies in its frequent use of qualitative data to enrich the summaries and analysis.

In the introductory section to the Chapter [5.1], its purpose was described as to find out from the survey data, in Wolcott's words (1994: 12), "What's going on?" The answer that is beginning to emerge is not clear-cut. A tentative finding, with regard to formal structured information literacy education in Mpumalanga's libraries, is that, "Not very much is going on at present". Very few libraries do more than rudimentary library orientation; very few have sustained relationships with schools that might involve intervention in the learning programme. Public libraries are rather isolated with very few community partnerships reported. However, there are other indications that the libraries are, in fact, directly involved in the information literacy education of Mpumalanga's school-going youth. It seems that they are struggling to cope with the demands of school learners, after school hours. Perhaps, they are, indeed, playing a crucial role in providing for the information needs of school learners.

Wolcott's next questions are, "What is not working?" and, "How might things work better?" Key issues, that might be influencing the situation, have emerged from the data summarising and analysis in this chapter, such as:

- the size of the libraries and their staffs
- education and training of staff
- libraries' relationships with schools.

Many of these issues concern physical facilities and provisioning. However, there are suggestions that less visible, more subjective, issues might be equally significant. *Why*, for example, do library staff not index their cuttings collections? *Why* do they tuck catalogues and indexes away from the public? Given their clear frustration with the sheer numbers of learners, *why* do they not intervene more directly in nearby schools or establish relationships with the Education Department? These complex questions will be returned to in the following chapter, which explores the subjective beliefs and attitudes of respondents towards information literacy education.

CHAPTER 6
SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS OF PHASE 1 SURVEY DATA (CONTINUED)
PART 2: CONCEPTIONS OF INFORMATION LITERACY EDUCATION

This chapter continues the summarising and analysing of data, with a focus on Sections C and E of the questionnaire/interview. The data gathered in Section C often throw light on earlier questions, which were discussed in Chapter 5. Similarly, findings of earlier questions often add valuable perspectives in the discussion of Section C questions.

6.1 Introduction

As described in Chapter 4, Section C of the questionnaire/interview is designed with a mix of open-ended questions and Likert scale questions. The person-to-person interviewing allowed participants to add informal comments to all responses. The content of these comments and the responses to the open questions, which yielded qualitative data, were analysed through coding and tabulation of the transcriptions. The first level of coding is the explicit topic of the question: for example, "Please comment on the educational role of the public library". Then reading and re-reading of the transcriptions suggest other categories or units of meaning to be coded within the larger topic. For each unit of meaning an index card was "opened" to record all occurrences and to record supporting quotations. Thus, data are both broken up to be de-contextualised into categories but are also retained "whole" in their context. Clearly the process is iterative and untidy. As tentative themes emerge, the researcher has to re-visit earlier transcriptions to check that all occurrences are recorded. In her discussion of qualitative case study methodology, Nassimbeni suggests the following guidelines for the categorisation of qualitative data: categories should reflect the purpose of the study, include conceptual definitions, be exhaustive, be mutually exhaustive, be independent and derive from a single conceptual framework (1988: 247). The researcher considered the use of qualitative research software, such as NVIVO, to expedite the analysis and coding of the transcriptions. However, in deciding against it, she followed the advice of Reneker, who warns of the time needed to build files and to learn to use the software in his words:

> I devoted substantially more time to building files and learning how to use the software
> than I anticipated, and one may question whether the hours devoted to these tasks might
> have been better spent in reading and re – reading the textual data (1993: 504).

The open-ended questions and the Likert scale questions of Section C explore respondents' perceptions of and attitudes towards the concepts of information literacy, information literacy

education and the educational role of public libraries. They also probe the experiences of respondents in terms of the use of their libraries by educators and school learners. They thus throw light on the findings reported in the previous chapter and serve to answer the research question posed at the beginning of Chapter 4 - What *kind* of information literacy education respondents are ready for.

6.2   Perceptions of information literacy

Questions 15, 16 and 17 explore how respondents conceive of information literacy, how they see it in relation to other key concepts and how they relate it to lifelong learning.

Question 15.1 offers a list of 12 terms, all of which appear in the professional and research information literacy literature, and asks respondents to tick which they are "familiar with". The term that drew the most positive responses is "library skills training" (48); the term with the least is "Big Six Skills" (17). The 17 who knew of the Big Six Skills, generally accepted as the best-known information literacy model in school library circles (Loertscher & Woolls, 1999: 87), attended the information literacy education workshop in Middelburg on 16 March 2004, referred to in Chapter 4. The researcher has reservations about the effectiveness of this question since she found some respondents too shy to admit ignorance of a term. The follow-up questions were more sensitive indicators of respondents' knowledge.

6.2.1   Respondents' conceptions of information literacy

Questions 15.2, 15.3 and 16 explore the 57 respondents' conceptions of information literacy. Question 15.2 records that 46 respondents claim to be familiar with the concept of information literacy, though some doubt is thrown on the figure by the answers to the preceding Question 15.1, where only 36 claim familiarity with the term information literacy education or information literacy training. Seventeen of these are those respondents who attended the information literacy education workshop in Middleburg on 16 March 2004.

The responses to the open-ended Question 15.3 might explain the anomalies. It gathers qualitative data by asking those respondents, who claim familiarity with the concept of information literacy, to describe how they see an information literate person. The answers were transcribed and examined for common threads of thought or themes, summarised in Table 13. The 46 positive replies to Question 15.2 are reduced to 38 usable responses in Question 15.3. Three respondents make no attempt to give coherent answers; one cannot give a reply, saying that she knows of information literacy in "theory only" from her Honours

Degree studies; and four talk vaguely of their work as librarians. Table 13 lists responses in order of their frequency. Thus, most responses describe information literacy in terms of the first category, library use; and only two or three belong in the last three categories.

Unit of Meaning	Related Attributes & Behaviours	Selected supporting quotations (Q = Questionnaire number)
Uses library	Can use library independently Can use library resources	*They know how to use library (Q 17)* *He helps himself in the library (Q 19)* *He knows the difference between encyclopaedias, dictionaries and atlases (Q 28)*
Finds information	Knows where to go for information Not tied to one library Uses range of resources Information is "got" or fetched	*He's able to access information in different resources (Q 10)* *Sometimes he doesn't want information in a book (Q 31)* *They will find information even if not in the library (Q3)* *They know how to get it (Q 36)* *Person who can search for information on his own(Q50)* *A person who can help himself. Can get the information he needs (Q39)*
Literate	Able to read & write	*He's able to read and write (Q10)*
Communicates well	Listens & speaks well	*He's a good listener, able to communicate easily (Q 51)*
Lifelong learner	Keeps up with events Questions Adaptable & in control	*I can tell from their conversation, the issues they talk about. They're interested in information (Q 20)* *He asks lots of questions (Q 23)* *If there's a drought he can adapt to the situation. It gives you control. You know how to approach life (Q 57)*
Uses information to change perceptions and build knowledge	Strategises & is aware of subjective dynamic processes Has a certain world view which values power of information	*It's having the tools and skills to help herself find information, change perceptions, change knowledge and gain knowledge by it (Q 16)* *He reads anything to get information , that gives him knowledge (Q 49)* *I'm aware of the power of information. It's important for democracy. You sit down and talk. It brings tolerance(Q57)*
Shares information & knowledge	Altruistic	*Someone who helps the community, is in ABET [adult basic education], helps disadvantaged communities (Q11)* *He's a mentor, open to everyone (Q 57)*
Can articulate need	Sees context	*They know what they want (Q 17)* *He has knowledge to ask for it (Q19)* *They know how to present their question (Q48)*
Is in control	Confident Persevering	*They are confident people (Q24)* *They will push. They say "We don't have it because we're blacks – we have to go to X"* (larger central library some 50 kilometres away) (Q 22)

Table 13: Descriptions of Information Literacy: Question 15.3

Table 13 lists nine threads of thought or themes. An information literate person, according to these themes:

- uses the library and its resources

- can find information
- is literate and can understand what he or she reads
- communicates well – being a good listener and speaker
- is a lifelong leaner, with a lively interest in the world around him or her
- uses information to change his or her perceptions and build knowledge
- shares information with others
- can articulate his or her information need
- is confident, as he or she feels in control.

It has to be said that the majority of responses to Question 15.3 mentions only the first two. One noteworthy gap is that no respondent mentions the ability to assess information - to select trustworthy information.

It is useful to compare these descriptions with those of Bruce's respondents in her PhD research among Australian higher educators (1997: 160), which was discussed in Chapter 1 [1.2.1]. The result of Bruce's research is three clusters of categories of conceptions of information literacy, with the third being the most "complete":
- the information technology (IT) and information sources conceptions
- the information process and information control conceptions
- the knowledge construction, knowledge extension and wisdom conceptions (1997: 173).

Understandably, the respondents in Mpumalanga, all librarians, and almost all working in rural under-developed environments, mostly see information literacy in terms of library use and hardly make mention of IT. Their next most common category refers to the ability to find or "get" information, from a variety of sources and not always assuming the library as source. Most use words that betray a conception of information as, in Curran's term, a "utility" (1990). They see it as something that is fetched, and that librarians "give". Thus, their responses belong largely within Bruce's first cluster. Kuhlthau's contribution to information literacy education theory and practice, in her research from the early 1980s, is her distinction between information literacy as a subjective cognitive "process" and approaches that see it in terms of "getting" the right answer in a source (Kuhlthau, 1985; 1987; 2000). When the responses to Question 15.3 are viewed through the lens of Kuhlthau's research, then it is clear why most will be placed within Bruce's first cluster. Their description of information literacy in terms of *sources,* from which information is "got", places them there.

A few comments suggest a more nuanced view of the role of information in making personal meaning and in learning. Thus, there are echoes of Bruce's other two clusters in their

references to articulating an information need, lifelong learning, of changing perceptions, and of being in control. Moreover, in both sets of respondents, there are people who associate information literacy with social responsibility and with altruism. There are signs among the responses to Question 15.3 that a few respondents recognise the significance of how library users *feel* – reminiscent of Kuhlthau's emphasis on the "affective" aspects of information seeking. The last category in Table 13 describes information literacy in terms of "confidence". A few respondents contrast how an information literate person behaves with an information illiterate, for example:

> *Some library users are too embarrassed to admit they don't know how to use the encyclopaedias.* (Questionnaire 36)
> *You shouldn't be shy or ashamed.* (Questionnaire 47)

Overall, the answers to Question 15.3 already suggest how views of information literacy influence conceptions of what information literacy education should consist of. They often, for example, describe information literate library users as "asking for" information and themselves as "giving" information. Appendix D includes a photograph of an incident which provides supporting evidence for this point. It shows two teenage girls waiting passively at the desk with, in the background, the librarian at the shelves. They had asked for "something on a South African hero". The librarian thought for a while and said, "Let me look". She then spent a few minutes searching, returning with a book on Chris Hani, which the girls took out. Bruce and Lampson's study of a group of American librarians also found evidence of how narrow views of information literacy education can limit their potential as "agents for information literacy". They conclude that librarians need a broader view that accepts a stronger pedagogical role in teaching critical thinking skills (2002: 103).

Question 16 continues the exploration of conceptions of information literacy. Figure 17 summarises the responses to the Likert scale statements, sorted in order of agreement.

Agreement With Statements About Information Literacy

Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
"Information literacy is irrelevant to disadvantaged communities"	5	0	34		17
"Information literacy education is a new name for bibliographic instruction"		13	28	14	
"Information literacy education is a new name for what used to be called book education or media studies in schools"	6	26	19	6	0
"Information skills are the same as library skills"	7	24	7	19	0
"Information skills are mostly about using information & computer technologies to retrieve information"	11	34		3	8
"Information skills are essential to lifelong independent learning"	21	34			2

Legend: ■ Strongly agree □ Agree □ Neutral □ Disagree ■ Strongly disagree

Figure 17: Question 16

The responses to the first statement in Figure 17 show the strong agreement that information literacy education does not belong to advantaged communities only. The next three statements in the above figure probe perceptions of information literacy in relation to other terms, probing for awareness of the evolution of the concept of information literacy and information literacy education. The high number of "neutrals" for the second statement in the Figure suggests that the term "bibliographic instruction" is just not familiar – and, indeed, it is a term mostly used in academic library circles. There is some identification of information literacy with "book education", the term used in schools in the 1970s and 1980s for the subject in the curriculum that covered libraries and reference books. It is perhaps further evidence that some respondents' conceptions of information literacy belong in Bruce's first cluster of conceptions, given just above. They, thus, see information literacy in terms of "getting" information from sources with frequent mention of encyclopaedias, dictionaries, non-fiction books and libraries. Again the implication for their information literacy programmes might be that they see their job in the library as "giving" the right piece of information, as contained in the sources.

In the open-ended Question 15.3, very few mention ICT; yet Figure 17 shows 44 respondents in agreement (with 21 of these in "strong agreement") that information literacy involves ICT.

The identification of information literacy with ICT has already been referred to in Chapter 1 [1.1.1] as a potential barrier to the acceptance of the value of information literacy education. If information literacy is seen as dependent on ICT, then people working in less privileged environments might dismiss it as irrelevant and unattainable (Moore, 2002: 4). However, the strong belief that information literacy is relevant to disadvantaged communities has to be considered in tandem with respondents' strong identification of information literacy with ICT. There is perhaps recognition that the technologies of the information age are needed in all communities.

However, Bruce's research shows that use of ICT need not, in itself, indicate more complete notions of information literacy. One passing comment from a respondent that, "Our grandfathers could be information literate as well" (Questionnaire 54) recalls the consensus in the literature that information literacy does not depend on sophisticated technologies but rather on the ability to access information intellectually and to interact with the information environment. The comment echoes arguments in the literature of African librarianship that even oral societies demand information skills (Sturges & Neill, 1998: 139; Jacobs, 2000). The use of ICT or any other resources is incidental to respondents in Bruce's third cluster of most complete conceptions of information literacy. What matters to them is the finding and using of information to transform their existing conceptions, to learn and, ultimately, to build new knowledge (1997: 1).

The last statement in Figure 17 shows the virtual unanimity that information skills are essential to lifelong learning – surely an encouraging sign for any future information literacy programming in the Province.

6.2.2 Conceptions of lifelong learning and information literacy

The statement leads, usefully, into the next question, the open Question 17, which serves to delve more deeply into conceptions of learning, since it explicitly asks respondents to talk about how information literacy connects to the construct of lifelong learning. Table 14 categorises their statements – in order of their frequency, with the most frequent listed first and the least frequent, last. Again, the challenge for participants is to apply theoretical knowledge – this time, in thinking about and articulating connections between the two concepts. Seven respondents were unable to articulate connections between the two, preferring to make bland comments about lifelong learning. Their comments were, therefore, not included in the analysis.

Unit of Meaning	Related Meaning	Selected supporting quotations
Library use is building block to information literacy & therefore lifelong learning	Library use equated with information literacy	*The information you get from the library will help in your lifelong learning. It starts there – you'll keep them [skills] & build on them (Q8)* *The library is part of the ongoing education (Q10)* *All your life, you'll need books (Q15)* *Library skills are lifelong learning (Q28)* *Being information literate will help them because they'll be able to use different resources (Q50)*
Information literacy is prerequisite for learning	Two concepts are interdependent	*You can't be information literate without lifelong learning & vice versa (Questionnaire 5)* *They go hand in hand. To have lifelong learning you need information literacy (Q11)* *Because if you don't have information literacy , you can't learn (Q35)*
Information skills empower: "learning how to fish"	Information retrieval skills are lifelong skills Independence	*You're supposed to be able to retrieve information, otherwise you can't go on learning (Q9)* *You are seeking information in your everyday life – you need information to survive, each & everyday (Q22)* *Maybe you don't know how to cook spaghetti, if you're information literate you'll find out how – with a recipe book or ask someone (Q25)* *If someone shows you how to find the information it will stay with you (Q45)*
Lifelong learning is for furthering formal and workplace education	Continuing education ABET All ages, all levels of education Workplace skills: important to library staff, themselves	*For further studies, you'll use information literacy for retrieving information (Q44)* *Information literate must keep on learning even if they have higher qualifications (Q50)* *We are really kept on our toes, always have to know everything about everything (Q28)* *I want to learn & learn. I want to be City Librarian. I started as a cleaner at the beginning. Now I'm Assistant Librarian (Q45)*
Reading & literacy are crucial		*You read til you die (Q20)* *If you know about books [then you are a lifelong learner] (Q7)*
Way of life	Equipping with knowledge	*Information is something that lives in you. If a person is old, he doesn't forget the information he had when young (Q17)* *It's knowledge you can use for ever (Q 41)* *Information literacy is where you equip yourself with knowledge (Q49)*
Coping with change	Impact of ICT	*Everything changes everyday – it's a big mountain in front of you. IT is so fast. You have to know how to use all of this - the Internet (Q4)* *The world is changing (Q15)* *Technology is moving so fast you have to keep up (Q35)*

Table 14: Lifelong learning & information literacy: Question 17

Table 14 shows that respondents articulate clear connections between information literacy and lifelong learning – and libraries – as follows:

- Libraries teach information literacy and therefore are crucial in lifelong learning.
- Without information literacy, people cannot be lifelong learners.
- Information literacy is about information retrieval skills – skills that will last for life.

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- Information literacy is needed for furthering formal education – at tertiary level, in adult basic education, and in continuing professional development.

- Knowledge of books and being able to read empower for life.

- Information literacy *is* lifelong learning as it's a way of life, a way of looking at the world.

- Information literacy helps people to keep up with the constant changes of the information age.

Again, as with Question 15.3, respondents reveal their orientation towards libraries – with the most common responses linking libraries to information literacy and then to lifelong learning. There are a few hints that some respondents conceive of learning and knowledge as something "out there", something that one obtains, rather than something one builds within. For example, one sees it as a mountain to be climbed; another sees knowledge as "equipping" people.

However, perhaps what is most noticeable in the above responses is the stronger recognition of the process *skills* of information literacy than in Table 13. When asked to think about information literacy in terms of lifelong learning, it is apparent that more respondents convey a dynamic picture of what use of the library and its information resources demands and how it empowers people in their everyday lives. Information is, for example, described as "living" in a person. Other responses also convey a more positive image of the active role of the public library in teaching people independent lifelong skills, with some of their comments reminiscent of the adage that it is better to teach people how to fish than give them fish. According to Cronau (2001), such positive attitudes towards what she calls library "customer education" are a pre-requisite for effective information literacy education that contributes to lifelong learning.

In discussion of Table 14, respondents' comments on the demands of change in their own jobs should be noted, as they add weight to the analysis of Question 28.2 in Chapter 5, which finds a strong demand for in-service education and training.

6.2.3 Perceptions of the information seeking process: respondents' information literacy

The previous section has addressed conceptions of information literacy. How an individual conceives information literacy must depend on his or her experiences of information handling and his or her own information literacy. Question 24 addresses more directly the question of

respondents' personal information literacy and will be discussed here, although it came later on in the questionnaire/interview.

Question 24 does not ask respondents directly to solve an information problem, as Todd did in an Australian school (1995a) or ask them to describe a critical incident, as Stilwell and Bell did in a South African school (2003). It rather disguises its intention by asking respondents to describe the steps a school learner might go through in tackling the school project, "Culling Elephants in the Kruger National Park". This approach was deemed to be less threatening, as it lends some distance to the problem. At the same time, their own information literacy should be reflected in their descriptions of what they expect of school learners.

The answers to Question 24 were analysed according to a template of seven phases:

1. Analysing the need – or topic
2. Recognising need for background knowledge to find a personal "angle"
3. Deciding where to go
4. Finding relevant information
5. Engaging with information, reading, summarising
6. Synthesising information from different sources
7. Organising information, presenting it, writing it up.

The delineation of these phases rests on existing information literacy process models, such as Kuhlthau's ISP. Assessing information literacy is a thorny issue. Chapters 1 and 2 reported on some examples of approaches which assess respondents' information literacy in terms of awareness of information seeking as a cognitive process of interdependent phases, each with its own useful strategies. These studies use Kuhlthau's ISP model as a benchmark (McGregor, 1993; Todd, 1995a; Isbell & Kammerlocher, 1998; Moore, 1998; Limberg, 1999). The premise in this research is that people who are conscious of the phases of the information process are more likely to be information literate, although of course they might have no inkling of Kuhlthau's ISP model. In Bruce's terms, they belong in the more "complete" categories of conceptions of information literacy, as discussed earlier.

Figure 18 is the result of the analysis of responses to Question 24.

	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3	Stage 4	Stage 5	Stage 6	Stage 7	Total
4								0
26								0
1							■	1
2			■					1
5			■					1
11							■	1
14			■					1
15			■					1
20			■					1
21			■					1
27				■				1
28				■				1
38			■					1
42					■			1
53			■					1
6			■	■				2
7			■	■				2
8				■		■		2
12			■	■				2
13	■		■					2
17	■		■					2
18	■		■					2
19			■	■				2
24			■	■				2
34			■	■				2
35				■	■			2
39				■	■			2
40				■	■			2
41			■	■				2
45			■	■				2
47			■	■				2
52	■		■					2
57	■		■					2
3	■		■	■				3
9	■		■	■				3
10	■	■			■			3
16	■		■		■			3
25			■	■	■			3
33			■	■		■		3
46			■	■	■			3
49	■	■		■				3
50	■		■			■		3
51	■		■	■				3
54			■	■		■		3
48	■		■	■	■			4
23	■	■	■	■	■			5
43	■		■	■	■		■	5
22	■	■	■	■	■	■		6
31	■		■	■	■	■	■	6
44	■		■	■	■	■	■	6

Stages

1. Analysing need
2. Recognising need for background knowledge
3. Deciding where to go
4. Finding relevant information
5. Engaging with information, reading, summarising
6. Synthesising information from different sources
7. Organising information, presenting, writing up

Figure 18: Awareness of stages in Information Seeking Process: Question 24

Each response was examined in the light of the above seven phases or stages. If the answer referred to a specific stage, then that stage was blocked off in the diagram. Figure 18 is sequenced by total number of blocks or stages in one respondent's answer, ranging from answers that made no coherent mention of any phase to those that mentioned six. The Figure serves horizontally to record the sophistication of each response in terms of number of phases referred to and, vertically, to show which stages receive the most mentions. Fifty responses are represented in Figure 18. The two in the Figure with no shaded blocks are those whose answers missed the point and could not be assessed for information literacy. One, for example, began his answer with the words, "It's not fair to cull elephants - we won't have elephants anymore", and continued in the same vein (Questionnaire 26).

Figure 18 suggests that, in common with Bruce and Lampson's American librarian respondents (2002: 85), the Mpumalanga participants are pre-occupied with finding *skills* – Stages 3 and 4 receiving by far the most mentions (39 and 25 respectively). In fact, often the "finding" is described rather as "fetching" with little emphasis on the evaluative and strategic skills of searching. Thus, none mentions the need to distinguish between good and bad information. Seventeen describe the first step as "asking the librarian for" the information needed. The next most cited stage is the first – 20 respondents alluding to the importance of understanding the need for information before the focused search begins. Only eight respondents refer to Stage 5 – synthesising information from different sources and only four the seventh stage, organising the gathered information into a presentation or paper. The frequent references to "photocopying" often suggest that respondents feel that their job is done once they hand the child the page. Thus, children are described in some answers as finding the information and photocopying it and then going home. There is little appreciation in these comments of the complex cognitive processes involved in reading – selecting, assessing, synthesising information.

Only four show some kind of awareness of the need for learners to see the bigger picture before they focus on finding information for the specific topic - Stage 2 in Figure 18. They talk of "having a mental picture" (Questionnaire 10), "identifying the problem" (Questionnaire 22), and "having questions ready" (Questionnaire 49). This last quotation perhaps hints at Doyle's contention that, in the information society, "Knowing how to ask the right questions may be the most important step in learning" (1999: 99). In the context of school project work, Branch describes the finding of an essential question as the "hardest part of any inquiry" and finds that, once learners are persuaded or allowed to spend more time exploring a topic in order to find the essential question, then the later stages go more easily (2003: 37). The lack of insight into Stage 2 in Mpumalanga libraries might mean that children

are given information before they are ready for it. In a study in a Cape Town public library, after watching children in long queues at the photocopier, the author commented that follow-up research in the learners' classrooms is needed to assess whether they have assimilated the information they find in the library (Hart, 2003). The Australian researcher, Todd, contends that "all too often", children fail to build genuine new understanding because they are not allowed enough time for reflecting and formulating while they explore and collect information (2004: 35).

The pre-occupation with the finding stage, especially if "finding" really means "fetching", when viewed in the light of information literacy theory and previous research, might have several implications. It allows librarians to distance themselves from the pedagogical issues of whether children understand the concepts they are "researching" and their context and what they do with the bits of information found for them by library staff. Curran, in 1990, claimed that "it is in the area of "information use" - of interpretation, organization, and communication – where even less connection with the library has been established either by us librarians or by users and non-users" (1990: 351). Eleven years later, Bruce and Lampson make a similar claim in the report on their study of some American librarians' perceptions of information literacy education. Their public library respondents claim that their clients have no need of information literacy as they are on hand to serve their information needs (2002: 91). "Serving" seems to imply the giving of information on demand.

If public librarians limit their educational role as suggested above, it makes it easy for them not to prioritise the building of alliances and relationships with other role-players – educators, for example. As reported in Chapter 5 [5.5.2; 5.5.3], Questions 12.4 and 13 found little evidence of sustained relationships between the public libraries and schools or other outside agencies. Information literacy has the potential to be a "cross profession connector" between schools and libraries (Bundy, 2002b: 57) but only if librarians perceive that they have a pedagogical role. The following section focuses on respondents' perceptions of their educational role and so will expand this discussion.

6.3 Perceptions of the role of public libraries in education & information literacy education

Questions 18 to 20 examine how respondents perceive the educational role of public libraries. The Likert scale statements of Question 18 and the open-ended Question 19 focus on respondents' attitudes to and views on the educational role of the public library, trying to

uncover the subjective factors that might facilitate or hinder information literacy programming.

Question 18 provokes much more off-the-cuff comment than the earlier more abstract Question 15.3, as will be shown below. It thus leads into the open Question 19 effectively. Question 18 includes five philosophical statements on the educational role of public libraries (18.1, 18.3, 18.4, 18.7, 18.8) and three that probe perceptions of their preparedness for a teaching role (18.2, 18.5, 18.6). Figure 19 summarises the Likert-scale responses, in order of least to most agreement with the statements.

Role of Public Libraries in Education and Information Literacy Education

Legend: ▨ Strongly agree □ Agree □ Neutral □ Disagree ■ Strongly disagree
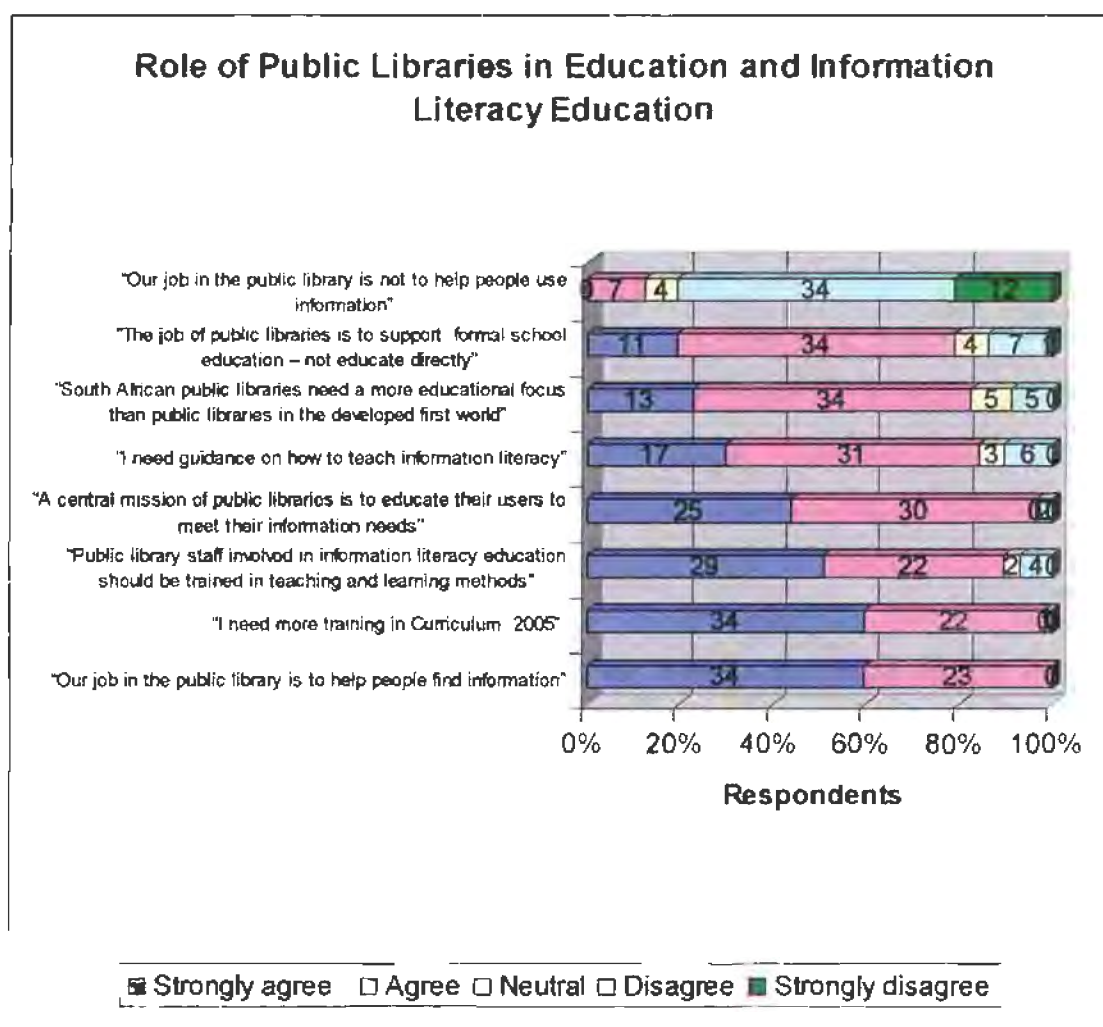
Figure 19: Question 18

At first sight, Figure 19 shows little sharp divergence within responses to individual statements but the shades in agreement between mere agreement and strong agreement might well be significant. Overall, there is acceptance that public libraries in South Africa have a strongly educational role but there is some ambivalence, as will be shown below. The most positive reply comes from the first interviewee, a young black librarian in charge of a large

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town library, who pins the future of public libraries on its role in education, saying as she replies to the last statement in Figure 19 (18.1):

Our educational role will ensure our continuing existence. (Questionnaire 1)

Responses to the second statement above (18.3) seem to contradict other responses. Thus, a strong majority (45 out of a total of 56 respondents) agree that public libraries should play a "supportive" rather than "direct" role in formal education. Yet, the next two statements in the Figure (18.4 and 18.1) show that equally strong majorities agree that South African public libraries need a more educational focus than those in developed countries and that the central mission of public libraries is to *educate* users to meet their information needs. Statements 18.7 and 18.8 are designed to probe respondents' willingness to assume a more dynamic responsibility for information literacy education by seeing if they draw a line between helping users find information in the early stages of a project and helping them apply the information found. There is some difference in the responses to the two statements. All 57 agree with the non-contentious statement that that their job is to help people find information, with 34 "strongly agreeing". Only 11 refuse to support the contention that it is not their job to do more than help users find information – but this time only 12 seem to have strong feelings that it is indeed their job to do more.

Figure 19 shows virtual unanimity on the need for more education in Curriculum 2005 and in learning and teaching methods; however, several hesitate in answering these questions and add some provisos. An example is the respondent who, earlier in Chapter 5 [5.5.1], in the context of examining existing information literacy education in response to Questions 11 and 12, was negative about a teaching role, claiming that it was not expected of her job in a public library . She was quoted as saying:

I do it [information literacy education] *when I feel like it. Sometimes I'm just tired. I don't have to do it.* (Questionnaire 9)

Now, in reply to Question 18, this same respondent agrees positively to the statement 18.2 that public librarians should be trained in teaching and learning methods, saying:

I'd like to be trained [in learning and teaching methods] *but not because I want to assist in people learning – I won't have time for it. All I have to do now is use the index, open up the page ... but I still have to give them the right paragraph. ... If it's* [a] *home-schooling learner* [a learner taught at home] *then I'll help if I can, if I have time. If someone wants it but doesn't expect it, I'd find the time.*

Her description of the helplessness of her clients, which obliges her to use the book index and "give" them the "right paragraph", betrays an awareness of the need for information literacy education. Later on, she complains that schools are not doing their part to enable children to help themselves in the library. Her dilemma is perhaps that, fundamentally, she does not

believe that she should be teaching children the skills they lack – saying here that she doesn't "want to" and that she wouldn't have enough time for it. Her comment on lack of time has to be viewed in the light that she is the only staff member in her library. It echoes Bundy's study in 2002 which found that 46 percent of the public librarians surveyed said lack of time was hindering their involvement in information literacy education (2002b: 57). Her repeated use of the words "have to" is interesting. She seems to draw a line between finding the right page for the client and giving any further support. But she then implies that she has no choice because the users just cannot do it by themselves. Thus, even if grudgingly, she agrees that she needs to know more about teaching and learning – not, she is at pains to point out, because she "wants to". Supporters of information literacy education would suggest perhaps that the establishment of structured information literacy programming with her local schools might, in the end, save her time.

As mentioned above, the shades in agreement between "agreement" and "strong agreement" within the broad agreements evident in Figure 19 might be telling, especially in the light of some of the informal comments accompanying the replies. They suggest that other respondents share this respondent's dilemma. For example 18.3, "The job of public libraries is to *support* formal school education – not educate directly", elicits broad agreement but with only 10 expressing "strong agreement". This, together with the doubts evident in the following sample of accompanying comments, indicates an acknowledgment that they are in fact involved directly in the school curriculum:

> *Realistically we can't do more. But we do it. We are forced to do it. We don't have enough time and staff – we can only support.* (Questionnaire 38)
> *I agree* [that public libraries merely support formal schooling] *because there are school libraries.* (Questionnaire 5)
> *Because we should not be teachers – our job is just to help them find information.* (Questionnaire 7)
> *But schools don't have teacher-librarians and we have to do it. It shouldn't be our job but for a myriad of reasons it's the reality.* (Questionnaire 43)
> *We have a lot of black kids and first time users – therefore we play a direct role.* (Questionnaire 37)
> *At the moment we are doing it directly but we are not supposed to. We should be serving all groups – not just the schools.* (Questionnaire 4)
> *We do experience problems with learners who don't understand that we are only support. They don't understand our stock cannot provide for their needs.* (Questionnaire 46)

Replies to Statement 18.4, "South African public libraries need a more educational focus than public libraries in the developed world", show broad agreement with the statement. The agreement, however, might be rather reluctant, as 34 "agree" rather than "strongly agree" and even those in agreement reveal their ambivalence in the following accompanying provisos:

> *In a way I agree – there must be money and resources, then. I would say we must "support" education 20 years ago. But OBE (Outcomes Based Education) fell on us – it was chaos.* (Questionnaire 3)

It's true in a way but it shouldn't be the norm. (Questionnaire 7)
Students are the ones using the public libraries – we have mostly students – and their parents. We end up catering for school libraries. Students are the ones who use us most. There must be a way whereby teachers and us can sit down and talk of the issues. (Questionnaire 20)

These two sets of comments express similar thoughts, even though the statements seem to be offering different stances. The informal provisos and second thoughts that follow the Likert-scale answers thus serve to throw light on the contradictions in Figure 19. They suggest that respondents might be caught between the reality on the ground and their long-held beliefs on the role of the public library. People who hold divergent views on what the situation *should* be are expressing similar sentiments. There is agreement that they are now willy-nilly "directly" involved for the following reasons:

- The children's needs are so urgent that they cannot refuse.

- The influx of black children with little experience of libraries has forced them to rethink their job.

- The lack of school libraries and information literacy education in schools has obliged public libraries to step into the gap.

- Users do not understand that public libraries offer mere support; therefore, staff feel obliged to step into line with their expectations.

A perusal of replies to the open question that follows, Question 19, might further aid interpretation of Figure 19. It simply asks respondents to comment on the educational role of the public library. Table 15 tabulates the responses to Question 19. Each category had a rich number of responses, from which only a few are given. An examination of the words chosen by respondents and the resulting categories of meaning in Table 15 show that many respondents use the question to return to the focused statements of the preceding Likert-scale question to follow up trains of thought.

Unit of meaning	Related meanings	Selected supporting quotations
Learners lack information skills	Children under-prepared	*In the first place they can't say to you what it is they are looking for. They say "We are looking for fishes" & we say "What about fishes?..." Other children are coming with questions and we give them information. You find a book & you know the information is in there but they want us to read the pages & say "Question 1 – there is the answer. Question 2 – there is the answer". It seems they cannot read & sort out the questions & see what are the important facts. That has become the big problem for us. (Q 3)*
	Librarians are struggling to cope with needs of learners	
	Teachers' shortcomings	*Schools must tell them how to use the library – it would help. ...Otherwise they stand there waiting for us to do everything. (Q8)*
		When we ask "what is your assignment" we see it as a practical problem – they don't see this. We

	A need for more communication with schools	have to explain it. Directions are not given in class. They just want a book to copy from. (Q46) I wish teachers can come & visit us before they set assignments. A class of 30 or 40 come all at once – children are queuing at 1 o'clock. (Q12) We do most of the work of teachers. We are teachers! We do most of the work – more than the teachers. Children are just given an assignment – the rest is up to the libraries. (Q23)
Change in users - new user groups with new demands	Educational role stronger now than in past More black users – need more support?	Everything changed five years ago – we do more school work, teaching students how to use a book, how to use the library, how to do reference, how to use books, to retrieve information. Black communities didn't have libraries – never had libraries before, never needed them. It's the first time, some now enter. (Q4) I think it's right to assist people, be patient.- learn to persevere. The library is very important to new generations. (Q11) With us it's good. Most of the people we help. Personally no problem. Especially in the black communities where there are no libraries. If we are hectic then so be it! (Q17) We do have an educational role especially with kids who don't have access to the Internet. (Q39)
Tension between demands	Redefining mission? Reluctance to give up other roles Education vs recreation Education vs information service What about school libraries?	Five years ago everything changed. But we are supposed to serve all communities. We're supposed to be a public library – everything changed five years ago (Q11) If we had enough staff, we could encourage people to come to library for educational needs, make people aware they could benefit for their educational needs. Most people have the perception that libraries are only for fiction, for recreation. (Q 7) The main role for the public library is to provide specific information to specific users. This is at same time as education. We have an information role at same time as educational role. (Q18) Public library must be open for everyone – not specifically for education - it's for all. If we become specific for education – schools have their own library. (Q25)
Librarians: are they / can they be teachers?	Librarians' capacity questioned: need for more training Acknowledge shortcomings of Library	When the education system changed, teachers were sent to update themselves. A summary of what they learned should have been sent on to public libraries. So we could change our things- we need to communicate with them. (Q48) In Curriculum 2005 most learners need independent research, not dependent on teachers. Some librarians did not do Curriculum 2005, therefore we need training. (Q10) We act like teachers – need to know how to help. Are we doing it right? We're passing the message on – are we doing it right? [It's] like that telephone game. (Q14) They can't expect us to be teachers. We show them how to use the library- 10 stay & listen, 20 go out. They must know what the library is about before they come here. We show them in five minutes – it's

	Orientation	not "education". (Q19) We don't understand OBE terms. (Q20)
Public libraries lack capacity	Old books	Libraries don't have OBE books – still have old books . (Q10) If they can help us with books, especially [to do] with this millennium. Kids are looking for information on things happening now – our books can't cope. (Q38)
	Not enough space	I have a problem with space when I come to teaching class. I can't accommodate a big number (Q50)

Table 15: Perceptions of the educational role of public libraries: Question 19

Very few respondents comment on the philosophical issues. A rare indication of this kind of awareness is the comment from the respondent whose belief that its educational role is central to the survival of public libraries was quoted earlier. In reply to Question 19, she addresses again the question of the future of public libraries in the age of the Internet, saying:

> If we know exactly what we are doing, we will always have people in the library, users we can always help. People buy PCs – they don't think they need us – but they do. And not everyone has a PC. (Questionnaire 1)

It is noteworthy that no responses refer to the public library's role in adult basic education or in informal education. It seems rather that respondents are preoccupied with the everyday pressures they are experiencing from school learner users, as can be seen in the categories identified in Table 15, namely:

- Public librarians struggle with school learners who come to the library lacking the required information or library skills. Here they echo their tertiary level colleagues in Cape Town who agree that the lack of such skills is not appreciated by lecturers (Sayed, 1998: 9).

- Libraries have new kinds of users – whose background has not prepared them for library use.

- Public librarians are subject to conflicting demands - between curricular needs and leisure reading, for example. Some see this as a tension between their "proper" role and the new one that has landed on them without preparation.

- The capacity of public librarians for teaching is questioned. Can they be expected to be teachers? In common with Australian public librarians (Bundy, 2002b: 67), they feel the need of more knowledge of the curriculum.

- Educators in the schools offer little support to librarians. Public librarians see learners but not their teachers. They desire more communication between schools and public libraries.

- Public libraries lack capacity for information literacy education in terms of space and stock.

Some of the responses to Question 19 support the suggestion above that the contradiction in Figure 19, between respondents' stated belief that public libraries should play only a *supportive* role in education and their evident desire, for example, for education in Curriculum 2005, might come from a gap between experience on the ground and the received wisdom from traditional public librarianship. The frequent use of words like "should", "must" "supposed to" in the responses to Questions 18 and 19 implies a dilemma. It could be that they are torn between how things *should* be, according to their long-held beliefs, and how things are in reality. Koning (2001) found similar preconceptions of what public libraries do and do not do to affect New Zealand's public librarians' attitudes to their services to school learners. As shown in previous chapters, the professional literature of children's librarianship, for example, assumes that it is the job of schools and school libraries to teach information literacy and that the role of public libraries is to provide mere support for and enrichment of the curriculum. Moreover, closer to home, answers to Question 14 show that there is little acknowledgement of the role of public libraries in education in the libraries' policy and mission statements, as was discussed in Chapter 5 [5.5.1]. Thus, there is little professional and institutional support for the role that, apparently, is dominating Mpumalanga's public librarians' working lives.

The strands of comment on changes in users and conflicting demands deserve special attention since they suggest a shift in the mission of South African public libraries. This was referred to in Chapter 5, in the discussion of the changes in patterns of use [5.2.3]. It seems that the demands of learners and students are taking precedence over the needs of more traditional user groups - adult leisure readers, for example. Some regret is evident among librarians who believe that leisure reading is being neglected. Some reveal a kind of stoic acceptance, thus:

> *We won't be able to get away from the educational side of it. We shall have to accept it.* (Questionnaire 46)

However, some librarians, perhaps the younger black professionals, welcome the change, with one saying:

> *If we are hectic, then so be it! (*Questionnaire 17)

It seems that, whatever their personal feelings about the changes, all agree that they are experiencing pressure on their services and that they lack capacity to cope with learners' demands.

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Question 20 continues the exploration of perceptions of the role of public libraries in education and information literacy education. It has two parts: the first, asking who should be responsible for information literacy education, schools or public libraries; and the second, asking them to elaborate on their response to the first part. Answers to the first part, Question 20.1, show unanimity that information literacy education should take place in both schools and public libraries. That all respondents see information literacy education as a shared responsibility is, perhaps, surprising, given the sparse evidence of shared information literacy programming revealed in the answers to Question 12, discussed in Chapter 5 [5.5]. The open-ended follow-up Question 20.2 might throw light on the contradiction.

Responses to this question were often rather short bland comments about working "hand-in-hand" with schools. A few point out that both schools and libraries have the same mission, and a few hint at divisions between schools and libraries, for example:

> *We are doing one and the same thing – giving knowledge to our children in the community.* (Questionnaire 49)
> *We can't work apart from each other.* (Questionnaire 44)
> *There are two camps - but they have the same interests.* (Questionnaire 43)

Others are more specific about what they expect of schools, suggesting the following:

- Schools could motivate learners to use the public library.
- Teachers could make sure children understand their assignments before they come to the public library to avoid, in the words of one librarian, "children coming in empty-headed" (Questionnaire 53).
- Schools could teach the "basics" for public libraries to build on.

This analysis of the responses suggests an explanation for the contradiction alluded to just above. Respondents certainly believe that information literacy education should be taught by schools *and* libraries. But they see clearly defined areas of responsibility: teachers do the basics in the schools so that children know what they want, and then the job of public libraries is to provide the required information.

Most assume that schools do not have libraries and accept that public libraries are stepping in to provide books for the curriculum. Only a few show awareness of the need for more than providing books and warn that the lack of school libraries means that children are not being taught information skills. For example, one claims that, with the loss of school librarian posts, children are worse prepared for library work now than they were:

> *When children used to have media centres in school, they were trained how to use encyclopaedias, etc. Now they're not educated anymore* [i.e. in library periods] *even white children. There are no*

media centres, posts have been cut. There are no library periods in the schools – I notice the difference. (Questionnaire 39)

Another recognises the need for more insight into what is going on inside children's heads when she says:

Teachers could talk to their public librarians about their work so they know where the children are at. (Questionnaire 23)

The next few questions, Questions 21 to 23, examine more closely respondents' experience of the needs and demands of learners and educators.

6.4   Experiences with learners & educators

Answers to Question 21.1 confirm the strand of comment in the South African professional literature on the impact of Curriculum 2005 on public libraries that was referred to in Chapter 3 [3.1.1]. Fifty-four respondents report that Curriculum 2005 has brought an increase in the numbers of learners in their library. Scattered though the responses to Question 21 are complaints about the high number of learners, which is clearly testing the capacity of the libraries, for example:

We can't cope with any more. Last year we had four vacant positions. I must compliment my staff. They are willing to work. (Questionnaire 3)
It increases every day. I don't know why. (Questionnaire 27)
In 1999 I used to have a cup of coffee in the afternoons when I fetched my daughter from school. Now we stagger here – it's too much for me. They're working under the tables. We can't use our display table – we need the space for bodies. (Questionnaire 16)

Question 21.2 then asks them to explain the increase. Table 16 categorises the data gathered, with the more frequent responses coming first:

Units of meaning	Related meanings	Selected supporting quotations
Educational change – with OBE & Curriculum 2005	More project work Project topics more demanding Independent research Resource based learning	*Because of the curriculum, they are making their own research* (Q34) *It's not like in the old days when teachers used to stand in front & spoon-feed then with all the information. Now it's the children who must do the research.* (Q49) *Curriculum 2005 means children working not the teacher. Now librarians are working harder.* (Q5) *Now there are new topics – different topics.* (Q9)
End of Bantu education	Black children attend historically white schools Standards are now equally high – so black children need libraries	*In the olden days we were having this Bantu education, now we are all having the same. Nowadays more children are coming to the library more especially the black children. In the old days they didn't know anything about the library.* (Q2) *There are more black kids now in previously*

		white schools. (Q3) It comes from changes in the schools. Standards are now higher. They get more projects.(Q18)
Schools inadequately resourced	Very few school libraries Public libraries step in to the gap by providing resources	Where else must they get information? (Q46) Because there are no media centres in the schools and they can't get information at home. (Q12)
Poverty at home	Parents cannot afford Internet or to buy books	Children with computers at home don't come in. Black children are coming in more & more. (Q19)
Libraries have changed	New black librarian appointments Internet in libraries	Membership was low – it was whites only, the librarian was white. Now it's 50/50 as the librarian is black. White librarian couldn't understand learners' language. (Q11) Because there are changes in the library – we are using the Internet. This is why children are encouraged to come to the library. (Q13)

Table 16: Perceived reasons for the increase in learner numbers in public libraries: Question 21.2

Table 16 gives five categories of explanation for the increase in use of public libraries by school learners:

- South Africa's new curriculum requires learners to use more library resources – to do independent projects.

- The end of apartheid education has meant that black children now have the same demands made of them as white.

- Schools do not have adequate resources; therefore learners have to use public libraries.

- Most South African families cannot afford to buy books or access the Internet therefore they have to use public libraries.

- Public libraries have changed. They are more user-friendly than they used to be, with blacks feeling welcome in them; they have the Internet; they are more widely-known.

The tabulation of interview data necessarily isolates strands of thought. Perhaps the two extracts given below might illustrate how this impoverishes the data. They integrate the strands and provide insight into the interviewees' emotions:

OBE wants current topics. It's difficult to cope. Kids have to learn themselves; he has to do everything by himself. The parent does it! White parents and Indian that is - Black parents are working. Kids themselves don't know what they're looking for. Before OBE everything was on the syllabus. Everything is so recent, we don't have that information. At least when we had the Internet, we could help. (Questionnaire 35)

Previously they didn't even bother to come. Now they don't have a choice. Now the curriculum is channelling them to the library. That is why I'm wondering why government is not resourcing

school libraries. Resources should have come first, then implement Curriculum 2005. They should
have started with resources. I don't know what government was thinking. (Questionnaire 53)

The acuity in such comments from people, who are working closely with school learners, highlights the importance of public librarians' being given a voice in educational circles. The answers to Question 21.1 and 21.2 lend support to the warnings from South African school librarians that the new resource-based curriculum cannot succeed without access to libraries (for example Library & Information Association of South Africa. School Libraries & Youth Services Interest Group, 2000; Lombo, 2002; Zinn, 2002). They also lend support to the author's research in school learner use of two public libraries in Cape Town in 2002, which found children flocking to the libraries mostly for project work (Hart, 2003; 2004). They also echo her earlier study in 1999 which documented the experiences of 67 children's librarians in Cape Town with the new curriculum (Hart 1999b; 2000b).

The comments on the specific needs of disadvantaged black children, whose home languages will not usually be English, are of interest. Respondents' comments on their adjusting to the needs of new user groups were first mentioned in Chapter 5 in the discussion of circulation and membership trends [5.2.2]. There is little in the literature of information literacy education that addresses the problems of learners from disadvantaged backgrounds in engaging with library resources. In 1984, in addressing the neglect of the needs of black and Hispanic youth in American libraries at the time, Chelton told a gathering of librarians that professional attitudes and practices needed to acknowledge that "the United States youth population of the future is going to be made up of a majority of kids not like us" (1985: 23). Moore's study of four New Zealand schools found Maori, Pacific Island and minority students were disadvantaged in terms of intellectual access to library resources, because:

- their English lacked fluency
- they did not always understand what was expected of them and
- they lacked general and prior knowledge of the curriculum topics they were working on in the library (1998: 71).

Figure 20 summarises responses to Question 22, which consists of five Likert-scale statements. Its aim is to gather more focused data on respondents' day-to-day experiences with learners and educators. The Figure is arranged in order of levels of agreement, from least to most.

Use of Library by Learners and Educators

Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
"In my library, we are not teaching learners information skills adequately"	3	28	3	21	
"Since the introduction of C2005, we spend more of our budget on curriculum support materials"	9	37	6	5	
"We don't have enough resources in the appropriate languages for our learners"	11	30	5	11	
"Learners are not adequately prepared before they come to the public library to do their projects and assignments"	17	32	2	5	
"Teachers don't come into the library to discuss their projects before they set them"	35	20			

Respondents

■ Strongly agree ▨ Agree □ Neutral □ Disagree ■ Strongly disagree

Figure 20: Question 22

Statement 22.3, the first in Figure 20, provokes the most divergence in opinion. An examination of the accompanying informal comments shows that several respondents agree only reluctantly that they are not teaching information skills adequately, contending that they are "doing their best" or "are trying". They would do better, they imply, if they had more resources – time and staff. Of course, answers to this statement are influenced by whether respondents believe they should be teaching information skills at all. Thus, one adds the comment:

> *We just open the books and give to children. That's not right – he should do it himself.*
> (Questionnaire 12)

The piloting of the questionnaire in some Cape Town libraries early in March 2004 had highlighted the ambiguity in the statement 22.1, about the availability of adequate resources in "appropriate languages", the third in Figure 20. The intention was to find out if librarians felt the need of materials in indigenous languages. Indeed, about one third replies that they would like more books in the vernacular – for example Zulu, Ndebele, and Swazi. There are two strands within these views: one is a philosophical belief that libraries *should* have more materials in African languages in order to preserve traditions and cultures; the other refers to users' requests for books in African languages. A few acknowledge, however, that it would be difficult to meet this demand since there are so few non-fiction books published in African languages. The statement provokes some interesting nuances of thought, including·

- The preponderance of English books is not the problem but rather the level of English. The project topics being assigned to primary school children are complex and are not covered in juvenile books. This requires library staff to "sit down and simplify" books from the adult section (Questionnaire 47).

- Schools' choices of medium of instruction affect what learners want. Many schools have chosen English as their medium of instruction so children expect materials to be in English. A few township librarians need materials in Afrikaans, since many African township children now attend Afrikaans medium historically white schools in nearby towns.

- Several responses suggest that there might be a trend for black children and their parents to prefer English. One respondent, for example, says, "Black kids are extremely English. They talk English to each other, to their parents. They're embarrassed to talk their own language. It's *in* to talk English" (Questionnaire 36).

- One small-town librarian speculates that an injection of African language books might increase her membership (she has only one black member).

Figure 20 shows virtual unanimity that teachers do not communicate adequately with libraries in assigning projects and that learners are ill-prepared by their schools for project work in the public library – confirming views already brought out in earlier questions. These themes are picked up in Questions 23 and 25.

The open-ended Question 23 returns to the theme of the relationships between educators and respondents, which existing research and theory would deem to be crucial to information literacy education, as discussed in Chapter 4 [4.3.1.2]. Responses to Question 23 should enable the interpretation of Question 12, discussed in Chapter 5 [5.5.2], which found that only 12 respondents report that they visit schools and only 10 report regular contact with educators. The unanimity in Question 20.1 that information literacy education belongs in schools *and* public libraries has also to be borne in mind when examining responses to this question. The comments on relationships with educators are often ambiguous. For example the responses below begin with a polite comment, which is immediately qualified:

Not a problem. They don't come to tell us their projects. Is it my duty to go and ask them? (Questionnaire 46)
It's a good relationship. Although most don't encourage the children to come to the library. (Questionnaire 28)
I have a positive relationship. Most don't come to the library. (Questionnaire 11)
My relationship is good but they don't want to come to the library first to check if we have information. They want to stay in their classrooms. (Questionnaire 48)

The rhetorical question, in the first quotation, "Is it *my* duty to go and ask them?" is significant. It indicates a certain irritation that she might be expected to make the first move,

which is echoed by others. It has already been suggested that respondents draw clear lines around their public library work. Whether they accept their part in the "the information literacy chain" of interpreting, synthesising, using and communicating information (Curran, 1990: 351) has already been questioned in the discussion of Question 24. Table 17 tabulates responses to Question 23.

Units of meaning	Related Meanings	Selected Supporting quotations
Ad-hoc contact	Depends on personalities Not institutionalised Library Week marketing	*If they contact us, we help them when we can (Q8)* *I only contact them in Library Week. (Q9)* *Isn't much of a relationship. It's not institutionalised It's individual staff members – a need-to-know basis. (Q45)* *I have my favourite teachers. They come to the library. I invite them for tea in the library. (Q16)*
Difficult to sustain	Frustration is evident	*I asked then once before to give me their project topics & dates. But they didn't get back to me. So I don't feel that bad. (Q9)* *Little bit difficult. Teachers don't come. Before I used to go to them, ask for projects but they don't come back to me. (Q25)* *Is it my duty to go and ask them? (Q46)*
Educators are not library users	They send learners but don't come in themselves	*Teachers don't know how to use the libraries themselves. They don't want you to show them. (Q46)* *Not good at the moment. Some teachers don't come to the library. This discourages the learners. (Q10)* *About 4 out of 10 come in. (Q20)* *They are not coming – just sending children to search for information. (Q42)*
Learners badly prepared by educators for the library	Tear out pages	*We struggle as learners don't understand the topics. (Q54)*

Table 17: Relations with educators in schools: Question 23

Analysis of the responses leads to five conclusions:

- Relationships are ad-hoc. They depend on personalities and occasions such as the annual Library Week.

- Libraries find it impossible to sustain contact with educators. Librarians are frustrated that schools do not continuously keep them informed of current projects.

- Educators are perceived as "non-users". They do not use libraries; they do not know "how they work".

- Public libraries are struggling to cope with learners who are not being prepared adequately for library work. They do not understand what they need. This theme has cropped up frequently in discussion of previous questions.

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The language used in the comments on educators indicates a preoccupation with telling educators about "how libraries work" rather than a desire to be involved as a partner in the learning process. Librarians need to be informed of project topics in good time so that they can put relevant materials aside on the project shelves or tables, as described in Chapter 5 [5.3]. As one librarian points out, children blame them if all the materials are out:

> They just give them the paper, the project; they rely on us to help. They want us to seem like failures. The children are disappointed. They refer children to the library. But if they don't get anything they won't see the need for libraries. I went to schools to ask them to tell us about projects. But not one teacher came. (Questionnaire 52)

The evident irritation running through responses to Question 23 throws doubt on whether there is recognition of the "shared endeavour" of information literacy which Bundy claims is essential to effective information literacy education in public libraries (2002b).

Nonetheless, from the answers to Question 17, on lifelong learning, and Question 24, on the information seeking process, it seems that there is a nascent awareness among respondents of the cognitive skills required in project work in the library and of the interdependence of the various phases of information seeking. Questions 12, 22 and 23 all provide perspectives on the relationships between public libraries and schools. Since the issue is crucial for effective information literacy education, it will be taken up in the follow-up case study, which will explore what teachers feel about the interventions that public librarians are engaged in.

Question 25 probes respondents' experience of children's problems in undertaking project work in the library. It might enrich the insights of Question 24, as it scaffolds responses by providing a list of the phases of project work, rather than depending on respondents' own knowledge. The question has its roots in Moore's study of information literacy in four New Zealand primary schools (1998; 2000). It presents respondents with a sequence of tasks demanded in project work, and asks respondents to say whether learners in the library have problems "usually", "often", "sometimes", "rarely" or "never". As Moore acknowledges, a possible stumbling block is that the question allows for no distinction between age groups. Occasionally, respondents thus reply, "It depends on the age group".

In common with Moore's sample, the Mpumalanga respondents see the early stages of defining the topic and formulating useful questions to be the most frequently problematic. However, far fewer identify "evaluating information" as "usually" or "often" problematic. Rather than giving an accurate depiction of the real abilities of learners, this could merely reflect the findings of Question 24, where hardly any respondents show awareness of the importance of evaluating information.

Mpumalanga Librarians: Problems of Learners with Projects

Category	Usually	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Presenting information to others	4	6	6	3	
Organising the information	6	4	8	4	
Recording the information they need	5	8	6	10	
Evaluating information	6	16	15	4	
Keeping focused on the topic	9	17	5	10	
Finding information in the resources	11	20	9	8	
Deciding what information they need	14	17	16	3	
Selecting appropriate resources	13	21	12	3	
Understanding the topic	19	16	16	2	
Finding resources	17	21	10	3	
Formulating useful questions	20	21	8	3	

Number of Respondents

■ Usually ■ Often □ Sometimes □ Rarely ■ Never

Figure 21: Question 25

When interpreting Figure 21, it is important to realise that many respondents could give no opinion on the behaviour of learners in the later stages of a project. This explains why the three top bars in Figure 21 have fewer responses than the lower ones, which refer to the earlier stages of finding information in the library. The pattern in Figure 21, thus, confirms the earlier suggestion that Mpumalanga's public librarians perceive their job to be completed once they have provided users with information. Unlike Moore's respondents, who are teachers, they have little interest in the use and communication of information. Several state that these activities should take place at home. A sample of the comments, provoked by Question 25 and which point to this kind of belief, is given below:

> *I don't know what they do with the information I give them.* (Questionnaire 53)
> *They take the copies and go home.* (Questionnaire 8)
> *They photocopy, take it home. So I don't know about* [categories G to K]. (Questionnaire 19)
> *I can't comment – the children do the work at home.* (Questionnaire 17)

As they tackle the question, many respondents, however, concede that there is gap between their experiences and how things should be. Many admit that they do not know how to support learners in the library who are so ill prepared. The interdependence of the phases of the ISP is clear. It could be because students do not understand their topics, that the librarians feel that they have to *give* them the information required. For example:

> *Sometimes, I'm the one doing the project from A to Z.* (Questionnaire 5)
> *We have to give it to them.* (Questionnaire 4)
> *They ask me, "Tannie, waar moet ek lees?"* [Auntie, where must I read?] (Questionnaire 1)

Figure 21 shows that 38 respondents agree that learners have problems "usually" or "often" "finding resources" and 34 agree that learners have problems "usually" or "often" in "selecting appropriate resources". The finding begs another question: Is a shortage of appropriate materials in the public libraries a factor in the learners' problems?

Question 26 explores perceptions of the adequacy of public libraries' stock in terms of meeting school learners' needs. It picks up some of the same concerns expressed in the Likert scale question, Question 22, with several responses, for example, mentioning the need for African language materials. Other points are:

- Existing collections do not match the needs of learners in terms of the "new" project topics. Respondents refer to these as "OBE" (Outcomes based education) topics and several mention they need materials on "the recent past" and on "the problems of today".

- Children need books in their mother tongues although, again, one or two point out that children do not realise this. They ask for books in English but then struggle to cope. Books need to be more accessible to second language English speakers.

- The recent injection of reference books, especially new editions of encyclopaedias, after the provincial allocation of funds in 2002 has been a godsend. One or two, however, point out that they need regular acquisitions of new materials; and a few complain that the regional libraries take too long to process their books – they are still waiting for the books bought in 2002.

- The collections are simply too small to meet demand. Several township librarians express irritation that they have to borrow books or make photocopies in the nearby town libraries. They have to take a taxi to town and, since they are "one-person" libraries, their own library has to close.

These themes call for more exploration by means of observation of learners inside libraries. The case study to follow will return to them.

6.5   Respondents' final comments

The last question in the questionnaire/interview, Question 30, asks for any concluding comment on the role of the public library in education and in information literacy education. Analysis of the replies shows that respondents choose to return to themes they have already brought up, anxious to reiterate the things they feel strongly about. The responses might thus

serve to conclude this chapter since they highlight some of its findings and those of Chapter 5. As stated in Chapters 1 and 4, the aim of a constructivist research project is to understand the world, experienced and constructed by its participants. The words below open a window on how Mpumalanga's librarians interpret their realities. The themes of Question 30 are listed below with supporting quotations.

- Many return to the impact of educational change on the libraries, in terms of the large numbers of school learners coming to the libraries to do projects and their taking precedence over more traditional user groups.

   Five years ago we thought public libraries would die – the use had changed so much. Our job is much more difficult – we are giving class. There's much more tension than the old days. It's very different our job from when I started. (Questionnaire 4)
   After 3 o'clock it's havoc. You should see. I'm working with kids [only]. I don't have pensioners, adults [anymore] – getting more & more like this. They don't take books out. They come to do their projects. (Questionnaire 54)
   But we shouldn't neglect fiction – even in our traditional population, they regard fiction as a woman thing. (Questionnaire 45)

- Most express a need for more resources - staff, books, space.

   The only thing is we need more books. Education is very crucial at the moment. We need more staff so I can go & do library work in the schools. (Questionnaire 45)
   Space is my number one issue. (Questionnaire 42)

- The wish for more recognition - from their local authorities, their provincial library authorities, their colleagues and from schools - is a strong thread. A few return to their anger at the changes in local authorities' structures.

   I think in the past 10 years public libraries have been in a bad situation – left behind by the province and our municipality. I think it's time the public library gets the attention again they deserve. (Questionnaire 3)
   We can do more but we don't get support. Our directors – not one – have been inside the library in the last four years. Our manager applied for membership – he used it once or twice. (Questionnaire 8)
   The public library should work hand in hand with the regional librarian – we have communications breakdown – she operates on her own. As public librarians we must be asked for topics for our libraries, we need more input, more say. Most decisions are made for us. (Questionnaire 1)
   If it was before I would elaborate [on the question]. But now I must stay inside, they say. I am feeling frustrated. Instead of going forward I'm going backwards. I used to attend meetings so was aware of what was going on outside. I daren't raise the issue – I'll be accused of being political. (Questionnaire 5)

- There is recognition that public librarians need more education and training – in information literacy education, in the curriculum and in basic professional competencies.

   I wish we could get more in-service training. (Questionnaire 36)
   If they can give us more training in information literacy, it will help us spread it in our communities. (Questionnaire 25)

I need to learn more about information literacy education, more in the library. That is why I'm registering for Didactics at Unisa. Usually I invite classes to the library. If I can set up information literacy education, I'll be happy. (Questionnaire 21)

- The educational role of the public library is highlighted again by several respondents – at the same time as they bring up the challenges that this role entails. One or two contend that its educational role will ensure the future of the public library. And one returns to the question of the relevance of information literacy in her community:

  As librarians we are like teachers. (Questionnaire 28)
  We want that they [learners] must enter our library. More learners are coming in. But we need more space & we don't have enough books. (Questionnaire 31)
  Libraries can only survive in South Africa by being closely allied to education. (Questionnaire 45)
  The public library has to go back and research information literacy education. It comes to a certain group of people – it sidelines other. What about the illiterate? (Questionnaire 20)

The answers to Question 30, at times, betray a sense of being under siege and of isolation. Belief in the importance of their work is evident. But there is also a desire to have their true value recognised by their local governments, by their provincial authorities, by educationists and by their communities. Chapter 7 will return to the morale of the respondents as it clearly is a key issue for any future information literacy programming. If librarians see change or a new programme as more pressure on them and on their limited resources, then they will see the change as irrelevant and unattainable.

6.6   Conclusion

The conclusion to Chapter 5 suggested that this chapter might uncover some of the subjective factors that underlie the physical conditions and services of public libraries in Mpumalanga – and the existing information literacy education in public libraries. Chapter 6 has, indeed, thrown light on the questions posed at the end of Chapter 5. *Why*, for example, do library staff not index their cuttings collections? *Why* do they tuck catalogues and indexes away from the public? Given their clear frustration with the sheer numbers of learners, *why* do they not intervene more directly in nearby schools or establish relationships with the Education Department? The questions in Section C of the questionnaire/interview have brought to the fore how participants' views on education, information, information literacy and the educational role of public libraries might influence information literacy programming. Any future planning would have to take into account the beliefs and perceptions discussed in this chapter.

The ambivalence towards their educational role has been highlighted in this chapter. Many respondents are caught between their deeply held beliefs that they should not be doing what they perceive to be the work of *school* libraries and the everyday reality of scores of learners' flocking to their libraries in the afternoon to do work directly related to the classroom. Even those, who believe that a more strongly educational role will provide a niche for public libraries in South Africa, express discomfort at the pressures on their resources – their time, collections and physical space. They have experienced educational change as something that, in one librarian's words, "dropped" on them in the late 1990s.

Chapter 7 returns to the research problem and questions. It examines if and how Chapters 5 and 6 answer the questions. It then identifies the questions that remain for the follow-up case study.

CHAPTER 7
CONSOLIDATING PHASE 1

Chapters 5 and 6 have summarised, analysed and, to some extent, interpreted the data gathered in the first phase of the research project. They have kept rather closely to the questionnaire format. After its introduction, which returns to the research problem, this chapter has three sections which correspond with its three purposes, namely to:

- consolidate the discussion by returning to the research problem and its questions as posed in Chapter 4 [4.1] and searching for possible answers in the survey data summarised in Chapters 5 and 6

- articulate some possible findings and conclusions emanating from the first phase

- then, lay the ground for Phase 2, the smaller scale field study conducted in October 2004, to be reported on in Chapter 8.

The parameters of the study – to examine information literacy education of *school learners* - should be reiterated. Nevertheless, at times programming for other groups in the community, such as adult literacy education, is referred to, when deemed relevant.

7.1   Introduction: a return to the research problem

As made clear in Chapters 1 and 4, the research problem, *The Readiness of Public Libraries in South Africa for Information Literacy Education,* has two layers to be explored. The preceding two chapters have confirmed the significance of these two layers. One layer refers to physical capacity - facilities and tools; and the second to more subjective attitudes - conceptions, beliefs, perceptions, constructs, values. Both of these sets of factors clearly must influence library programming. The word "readiness" has synonyms that might help distinguish between the two. For example, the words "capacity", "preparedness", "ability", "competency", "background" "willingness" and "will" – each related to aspects of the concept of "readiness" – have all been used in the discussion in Chapters 5 and 6, sometimes in discussing physical facilities and sometimes in referring to attitudes of respondents.

Nonetheless, the results of the first phase survey, as described in Chapters 5 and 6, suggest that these two layers are not independent of each other. For example, perceptions, how people process and interpret sensations, depend on value systems and are indicators of behaviour (Stilwell, 1996: 179). For example, if a library is short of physical space, staff might resist change, feeling that they just cannot cope. Similarly, the lack of what might be called "professional vision", at times evident in the previous two chapters, might be attributed to a lack of physical access to the networks and databases of the information age. However,

conversely, it could be argued that it is the lack of vision - or of a philosophical and conceptual framework - that hampers solutions to the physical challenges. Fundamental beliefs about the educational role of public libraries have been shown in Chapter 6 to be significant in information literacy programming. Thus, if a librarian conceives of her role as merely providing access to a collection of reference books in the library, then it will not perhaps occur to her that her information literacy programme might well take place in the school rather than the cramped library.

A perusal of the literature of information literacy education shows that research has focused more on the external factors impacting on library programmes than the subjective factors of library staff's own conceptions. Bruce and Lampson's report of their survey of the views of public librarians in the State of Washington, USA, on information literacy education claims to have found only three similar existing studies – two of one group of Canadian academic librarians' attitudes towards information literacy education and one of academic librarians in New Zealand (2002: 82). Bruce and Lampson's own study uncovers wide divergence among their respondents in terms of their conceptions of information literacy and of the competencies information literacy education should include. The authors, educators at the University of Washington's Information School, highlight the importance of examining librarians' opinions on "what students need to be taught, how librarians can contribute to that teaching, and whether librarians have the ability to do so" (2002: 83). Their emphasis, however, is on gaps in the education and training of librarians rather than on how their respondents' conceptions are influencing information literacy education in their communities.

The studies by Stilwell (1996) and Kagan (2002) do not specifically focus on information literacy education but they deserve attention here, since they look at South African librarians' views on the possible contribution of libraries to social development. Stilwell's study reveals positive attitudes among the professionally qualified staff within provincial library service structures towards a developmental and educational shift in public library mission. However, a limitation of the study from the perspective of this study is that its sample of respondents does not include public librarians working on the ground for local authorities. Stilwell, herself, points to suggestions from her respondents that municipal officials might be a stumbling block (1996: 183). Kagan's later study in 2002 examines South African librarians' "opinion" on a possible shift in their mission towards "social responsibilities", and does include public library staff on the ground. His findings are less positive than Stilwell's, perhaps reflecting shifts in political economic climate towards what he calls "neo-liberalism", the deterioration in the position of libraries in South Africa in the 1990s - and his different sample.

Given the dearth of this kind of research within library science, the research in the influence of teachers' beliefs on educational change might perhaps provide insights. Barnes refers to research that shows that teachers often are seemingly preoccupied with physical facilities. This preoccupation, he suggest, hampers their response to change. Perhaps, his words below might be applied to Mpumalanga's public library staff:

> Teachers who can only "frame" in one way what happens in their classes can therefore see only one set of possibilities .... If such teachers are asked what they would wish to change in their work, they often mention only external concerns such as time or technical resources available (1992: 17).

Supporting evidence for Barnes's point in South Africa lies in the survey of teachers' likely use of proposed resource centres that was commissioned in 1995 by the Western Cape Education Department (Borman, 1995) and in the author's two studies within a circuit of schools in Cape Town (Hart, 1999a; 2000b). These South African studies show how teachers, in responding to questions on curricular change, refer constantly to historical systemic disadvantages in physical provisioning. All three studies provide little evidence of deeper reflection on how educational change might impact on their teaching styles - or vice versa. Borman, the author of the Western Cape Education Department report, concluded that teachers would require more education in the meaning of "resource-based" learning, if the proposed resource centres were to be effective. The mere provision of new facilities would not be adequate to transform school cultures. The discussion in Chapter 2 of the faltering processes of educational change in South Africa since 1995 might serve to confirm the value of his comment.

The implication of Barnes's words for the PhD study, if they are applied to librarians rather than teachers, is that it cannot just be assumed that public libraries adopt new programmes such as information literacy education if their staff lack the "frames" assumed in the construct of information literacy.

The discussion of the research problem in this section began by examining the word "readiness" and distinguishing between its two layers of meaning. Before proceeding to the discussion of the research questions, the term "information literacy education" in the problem statement requires a comment. As acknowledged in previous chapters, the term is an awkward one and one that cannot be assumed to be common knowledge. Two points are pertinent:

- The conceptual frameworks for information literacy education - and indeed information literacy programmes - might exist; but they might not be called "information literacy education".

- Information literacy education has evolved from earlier forms of library user education. Kuhlthau acknowledges that it co-exists with these earlier approaches (Kuhlthau & McNally, 2001).

The implication of these points for the study is that it cannot take a purist approach. Any intervention in the learning of the child in the Mpumalanga public libraries, which involves some aspect of information seeking and handling, is of interest to the study.

7.2 A return to the research questions

Despite the above acknowledgment that the two layers of the research problem are interrelated, this section, to some extent, examines them as separate entities, in the interests of systematic analysis and clarity. It returns to the research questions arising from the research problem, which were listed in Chapter 4 [4.1.2]. However, the sifting of Chapters 5 and 6 for answers inevitably cuts across the two layers of the problem.

In Chapter 4, the research questions emerging from the above problem are grouped into three categories. Firstly, there are those which examine what is happening at present in terms of information literacy education for school learners in Mpumalanga's public libraries:

- What programmes involving school educators and learners are being run at present?
- How are school educators using their local public libraries at present?
- What are the relationships at present between libraries and their local schools?

Secondly, there is the question that addresses the issue of physical capacity, thus:

- Do the libraries have the facilities and resources required to run effective information literacy programmes? The "facilities and resources", referred to, include space, staff and retrieval tools.

The third category asks about the attributes of public library staff in terms of their experience of and attitudes towards information literacy, information literacy education, and towards a stronger educational role for public libraries. This group includes the following:

- What are their conceptions of information literacy and information literacy education?
- What experience of and education in information literacy theory and practice have they had?
- How knowledgeable are public librarians about educational change and teaching and learning in general?

- What experience of and education in Curriculum 2005 and the Revised National Curriculum Statement have they had?

- What are the attitudes of public library staff towards an enhanced educational role?

As all three groups of questions are examined, answers to what Chapter 4 calls the following three "vague and speculative" questions are sought:

- What is inhibiting or what might inhibit information literacy education programmes in public libraries?

- What is facilitating or what might facilitate information literacy education in public libraries?

- What in-service education and training might be required to develop and enhance the participants' role in information literacy education?

These last three questions demand a deeper level of interpretation as they address questions of meaning and context. Wolcott, the research theorist, describes the task of interpretation as asking "How [sic] does it all mean?" and "What is to be made of it all?" (1994: 12). These questions cut across the two layers of the problem and will be addressed more coherently in the following section, Section 7.3.

7.2.1 Findings on existing information literacy education

The survey finds that public libraries in Mpumalanga are indeed heavily involved in the educational programme of their surrounding schools. Chapter 5 provides evidence that school learners are the dominant user group in many of Mpumalanga's public libraries, even though this might not be reflected in library circulation statistics. The unanimity of respondents, described in Chapter 6 [6.4], that educational change has brought increased use of their libraries by school learners is convincing – as is their agreement that the increase in use is attributable to the increase in school projects and independent learning, associated with the new curriculum, and to the non-existence of school libraries. Whether the heavy use of public libraries by learners, in itself, implies information literacy education and what *kind* of information literacy education is being conducted are then the key questions. Chapter 5 documents the information literacy programming in the public libraries [5.5] and Chapter 6 examines the respondents' perceptions of their daily experience of school learners and educators [6.4].

The interviews, even those with respondents who welcome their educational role, are permeated with a sense of crisis – emanating, without doubt, from the pressures of student numbers. It is apparent that the libraries are struggling to cope with the high numbers of

learners flocking to their libraries in the afternoons, many of whom lack the information skills required. Moreover, the rather sophisticated topics being given for research in the new curriculum are often beyond the capacity of the traditional library stock. Librarians constantly call these topics "OBE" (outcomes-based education) topics and claim to have not enough "OBE books". The most common problem cited in Chapter 6 [6.4, Figure 21] is that learners just do not understand the topics they have been given to research, since they lack background knowledge and they do not know how to analyse the task. English language inadequacies are frequently referred to. From the survey alone, it is difficult to judge whether the interaction between learners and library staff in the afternoons constitutes effective education. Chapter 6 [6.2.1] reports the glimpse of the passivity of two girls waiting for the librarian to find them a book; and there are comments scattered throughout the preceding two chapters that indicate respondents' unease over their encounters with school learners. Longer-term observation is needed to gain insight into this issue. The survey reveals divergences in opinion as to whether it is the responsibility of the public library staff to address learners' deficiencies. These differences in opinion will be returned to below in the discussion of possible shifts in conceptions of the social role of public libraries. It seems that, to many respondents, offering instruction might represent a shift in their conceptions of what is expected of them – namely, merely to provide information on demand. Many express irritation that teachers are not doing their jobs; and many say they cannot offer more help as they do not have the time. The shortages of staff and other resources will be returned to in the following section. Nonetheless, given adequate staff and support, the tentative conclusion of Chapters 5 and 6 is that a dawning philosophical acceptance that the public library has no choice but to intervene in information literacy education can be discerned.

One of the assumptions of the study is that structured systematic programming in the form of information skills instruction to groups of learners – classes brought to the library by educators, perhaps in the course of the school day - might address learners' skills gaps. The author's previous research suggests that such programming might, moreover, restore a sense of control to harried library staff (Hart, 2003; 2004). Chapter 5 [5.5] has shown that many public libraries in Mpumalanga do engage regularly with classes from at least some schools in their communities; but the typical intervention seems to be "library orientation", in which once a year, either at the beginning of the year or during the annual Library Week, a class is brought to the library for a once-off session on library layout and procedures. Eight respondents report a more focused intervention which introduces the reference sources in the library. However these interventions are, again, once-off and it is difficult to ascertain if anything more than demonstration is attempted. There is no mention of any attempt to identify beforehand what assignments the group might be working on, so that the instruction

might be tailored to the specific needs of the class. Only one respondent expresses a wish for some follow-up assessment of the learning outcomes of her library orientation visits. One or two other respondents betray similar unease that might echo the international research findings on the inadequacy of such sessions, which conform to what Kuhlthau labels "source based" approaches to user education, (McMillan, 2001; Oling & Mach, 2002). In 1981, Kobelski and Reichel used cognitive learning theory to identify the underlying weakness of source-based library instruction – namely the absence of conceptual frameworks (1981: 73). Without the scaffolding of theoretical principles, students, they contend, are unable to find meaning in the instruction and are unable to generalise it and apply it. As stated in Chapter 1 [1.2.1], throughout the 1980s and 1990s, Kuhlthau's research and theorising has addressed this weakness – and, indeed, transformed "bibliographic instruction", "book education", "media studies" and "library skills instruction" into information literacy education. Her research and that of others in her school have shown how the most effective information literacy education is conducted in tandem with real-life learning assignments and within an information literacy conceptual framework (Todd, 1995c; Kuhlthau, 1999b; Shoham, 2001; Moore, 2002).

Whether many of the Mpumalanga respondents, apart from the 17 who attended the information literacy education workshop on 16 March 2004, have been exposed to the new conceptual frameworks for their library education is doubtful. Chapter 6 reports that only one claims to have had some exposure to the concept of information literacy in his librarian education, and, as stated before, internationally, the concept has largely been confined to school and academic librarianship. It has to be acknowledged that there is little in the research or professional literature to offer guidance to public librarians wishing to develop their information literacy education, perhaps using their standard library orientation as a foundation. An exception is the LIANZA survey of public libraries' information literacy programming in New Zealand (LIANZA Information Literacy Taskforce, 1999; Koning, 2001).

The absence of supporting statements in the Mpumalanga libraries' planning and policy documents, as found in Chapter 5 [5.5.1], echoes one of the factors found to inhibit information literacy education in the New Zealand libraries. Only eight respondents in Mpumalanga claim that their work with schools is reflected in library mission and policy documents – moreover, even this low figure is dubious since no pattern can be discerned across answers even within the branch libraries of long-established municipalities. Policy serves to formalise and publicise the values that will inform practice; it legitimises change (Nassimbeni, 2001: 25). It was suggested in Chapters 5 and 6 that information literacy

education in Mpumalanga libraries tends to be "ad-hoc", dependent on the whim of individual staff members [5.5; 6.4]. They find no direction in documents from their local authorities or, as ascertained in the interviews with the regional librarians, from the provincial regional libraries. Although, as reported in Chapter 5 [5.4.2], the study uncovers widespread unease with the recent restructuring and merging of municipalities, in theory at least, the new municipal alignments might eventually lead to more uniform approaches to programming and policy-making. This possibility will be followed up in the second phase, where relations among "branch" libraries in one municipality will be examined. The point here is that the absence of clear policy creates, perhaps, a dislocation between respondents' everyday experienced realities and what they feel they *should* be doing, according to traditional practice.

The first phase of the study confirms the thin thread of thought in the literature that the key to understanding current information literacy education practices in public libraries is their relations with schools and educators. The study finds a puzzling passivity: there is widespread awareness of the need for more communication between public libraries and schools, with much frustration being expressed at the deficiencies of school learners and educators; yet, there is no evidence of sustained effort across libraries, even those within one municipality, to build channels of communication to tackle the problem. Turner is critical of what he calls librarians' "mystical faith" that teachers will open up their curriculum to information skills just because librarians say they are a good thing (1991: 14). He warns that teachers need incentives to change the way they do things. Perhaps, teachers in Mpumalanga need more than to be told what to do to make librarians' lives easier – which is the refrain running through many of the Phase 1 interviews.

A closer examination of how schools and public libraries in one community interact is needed before any conclusions can be drawn for information literacy programming. Phase 1 reveals clearly heavy involvement of public libraries in the education of school learners on a day to day basis; but it might not, it seems, reflect genuine partnerships between educationists and librarians. Whether the librarians' contribution is even acknowledged by the local educators is something to be followed up in the second phase field study. Seventeen respondents do claim to have a "special relationship" with at least one school. Figure 15 in Chapter 5 [5.5.2], however, shows this relationship usually to involve class visits for library orientation and storytelling and delivery of book boxes to pre-school and Foundation Phase classes. Six respondents report that classes from nearby schools come to their libraries with their teacher to use library resources as they work on projects; and another six describe classes coming with their teacher to return and borrow books. Clearly, any new approach to information

literacy education in public libraries would depend on improving their relationships with schools, perhaps building on and extending this kind of connection. A sustainable relationship must surely be more than the ad-hoc connections reported on by some respondents who, in talking of their positive relationships with schools, mention teachers who are friends or who send out an annual invitation to schools in Library Week.

Before leaving this discussion of public library involvement in information literacy education, one caveat has to be stated. Clearly, there are large numbers of schools and children without access to public libraries – implying a need for caution in any claim that public libraries might take sole responsibility for the information literacy education of youth in the Province. The Province has about 1864 schools (South Africa. Department of Education, 2003). The total number of schools reported to be inside a 3 kilometre radius – deemed by the researcher to be a reasonable walking distance - of the 46 public libraries surveyed in the PhD study is 322. The national survey of public libraries in 2002 found that six percent of Mpumalanga Province's population are registered members of a public library (Van Helden & Lor, 2002: 8). In Chapter 4 [4.2.1], the Director of Mpumalanga Provincial Library Service was quoted as saying the Province requires 98 new libraries if every citizen is to have access to one within five kilometres of his or her home (Le Roux & Hendrikz, 2003: 264). The author's travels throughout the Province brought home to her the gaps in provision and the uneven distributions. For example, in early November 2004, she drove for some two hours through Bushbuckridge, a sprawling area, which is, at the same time, both densely populated and rural. Schools line its main highway north to south but she saw no sign of a public library. Later, the Director of the Mpumalanga Provincial Library Service confirmed the observation, saying that he has identified "at least 21 communities in the area in need of libraries" (Hendrikz, 2005).

Yet, some of the towns of the province have, it seems, too many libraries. In Piet Retief and Ermelo, the libraries in the apartheid-designated Indian areas have recently closed. The reason is lack of use according to their former staff, who have been transferred to the downtown libraries. There is some evidence in Chapter 5 that library usage patterns depend on school usage patterns. It seems that the end of apartheid schooling has brought an increased mobility among school learner library users [5.2.3]. Children attend schools outside of their home communities and many choose to use the library close to their schools – perhaps, it is suggested in Chapter 5, because they perceive these libraries to be better equipped. The second phase field study will follow up this evidence in its closer look at the relationship between schools and public libraries.

7.2.2 Resource provision for information literacy education

Chapter 5 summarises the data gathered on the physical resources and facilities available to the public libraries, which might be deemed necessary for information literacy education, such as, space, staffing, quantity and quality of information resources, and information retrieval tools like catalogues and indexes. That chapter raises some questions about the physical capacity of public libraries for an enhanced role in information literacy education. But it also suggests that physical provisioning has complex ties to more subjective factors, like librarians' conceptions of their role in learning and in information literacy education.

Two pertinent findings of Chapter 5 are the small size of many of the rural and township libraries and the high number of one-person libraries. The circulation and membership statistics in many of the small township and rural libraries are very low and, apparently, have been the main consideration, in the past, in physical provisioning and staffing. The typical rural and township library, at present, is a small rectangular building crammed with shelves, with inadequate provision for sitting and study space. As mentioned above, there is, moreover, some evidence, according to staff perceptions at least, that children living in the historically black townships choose to use the more spacious and better-equipped historically white town libraries. These perceptions need to be followed up in closer observation in the second phase, as, if accurate, they might suggest the perpetuation of the under-use and under-development of the township libraries. Promising exceptions are the Ebahalenhle Library, which was built three years ago in a township close to Secunda, and three new rural libraries, completed in 2004, which provide more seating space. One of them, Maphotla, is designed as a joint-use school/community library, as mentioned in Chapter 3 [3.2], and has a classroom leading off the library. The survey reveals a trend towards the adding on of separate study space in older libraries – in partitioned sections of the reference section or in separate rooms. However, current thinking seems to reserve this space for tertiary level students, who, according to the interview data and the researcher's observations, make little use of the libraries' other resources.

The support of the Mpumalanga local authorities for information literacy education cannot be taken for granted, judging from the study's findings on library staffing. Chapter 5 reports that 23 of the 46 libraries surveyed have only one staff member, with eight of the 23 reporting that they have unfilled "frozen" posts in their libraries. The shortages of staff clearly restrict the freedom of movement of respondents in their communities, their opening hours, and the level of service that they can offer to their diverse user groups. Chapter 5 gives evidence of the ad-hoc nature of many of the appointments among the Mpumalanga respondents and of the low

level of professional education among them. Of the 23 librarians who are solely responsible for a library only three have tertiary level education and 15 have matric. Six lack school leaving qualifications, having been promoted from library cleaning positions. That 16 of the 23, including the six ex-cleaners, were appointed to their positions in the past eight years might point to a worrying trend within local authorities. Given the low circulation and membership figures and the present uncertainty over public library governance, the provision of staff is clearly a thorny issue.

The survey asks respondents to give their own subjective assessments of their collections in terms of the perceived needs of the school learner users. It makes no "objective" attempt to quantify the collections by, for example, comparing numbers of books with numbers of library members or numbers of inhabitants in the surrounding community. Neither does it try to assess their quality. This would require a totally different kind of study – and perhaps will only be possible after the follow-up study to the PACLISA audit of public libraries in South Africa has established some baseline and benchmark measures (De Jager & Nassimbeni, 2005). Mpumalanga public libraries inherited the collections of the old Transvaal Province in the mid 1990s and respondents are emphatic that the injection of reference resources in 2002, after Mpumalanga Province, for the first time, fulfilled its obligations by allocating funds to the library service, has made a huge difference. Chapter 6 reports on the consensus among respondents that public libraries are having to prioritise the needs of school learners in their acquisitions [6.4]. There are some suggestions that township libraries remain disadvantaged, although there is little direct questioning of the practice of using circulation statistics as the yardstick in allocating resources. As predicted in Chapter 4 [4.3.1.3], the issue of "appropriateness" of language of materials is found to be significant – and complex. Many respondents pragmatically accept that the language of learning of the local schools is the major determining factor in their acquisitions rather than the mother tongue of library users. Learners expect books in English or Afrikaans. However, whether this indeed is "appropriate" in terms of the real needs of African children is a concern expressed by several respondents. The more focused field study of conditions within one community might throw light on the issue.

One of the surprising findings reported in Chapter 5 is the limited public access to information retrieval tools, such as catalogues and indexes, in the public libraries of Mpumalanga. In addition, significant differences in provision of retrieval tools between the historically advantaged libraries and disadvantaged were found [5.3]. While 17 libraries maintain some kind of pamphlets or cuttings file, often specifically in response to the demands of the new "OBE" topics, that were mentioned above, only six of these maintain an

index to the file; and of these, only three are made available for public use. Many libraries have dismantled their card catalogues in the process of conversion to the computerised PALS system; but the computer system is as yet unreliable, with only 12 libraries having it up and running on the day of the researcher's visit and only three of these 12 making it available to the public via an OPAC. The result is that, in the course of the survey, only 17 libraries were providing public access to a catalogue. There is little recognition of the international professional recommendations on the special information retrieval needs of children, which were mentioned in Chapters 4 and 5 [4.3.1.2; 5.2.4].

The provision of indexes and catalogues for public access, in print or electronic format, is essential to information literacy education, as they enable a person to learn how to match a need for information to a collection of information resources, through a process of encoding and decoding of concepts. What is in the user's head has to be conceptualised, articulated and then "translated" or "codified" into the language of the index, which mediates between the seeker of information and the original sources (Taylor, 1968). Information science research has documented the high-level cognitive skills demanded at this early stage of information-seeking (for example Moore & St George, 1991; McGregor, 1993; Pitts, 1994; Gordon, 1996). Underlying librarianship's information literacy education theory is the belief that, if learned and practised in the library, these cognitive skills can then be transferred to and applied in other environments. Without these tools, users depend on library staff to find information for them.

Chapters 5 and 6 provide the following possible explanations for the inadequate provision of information retrieval tools in the public libraries:

- Because of lack of education and training, public library staff are not aware of the tools that professional thinking assumes to be essential to a library.

- Public library staff have not prioritised the provision of such access because they do not conceive the need for it. They conceive it to be their responsibility to *give* information – not to enable people to find it themselves. No connection is seen between the provision of access to the collection and the learning needs of their users.

- In the apartheid era, libraries in historically disadvantaged - black - communities were less resourced; and the inequalities have not, as yet, been redressed.

All three clearly play a part. And all three are interlinked – for example education of staff and discriminatory practices. Chapter 5 shows that the level of education is significantly lower among the staff of the historically disadvantaged libraries in townships, with only three having professionally qualified staff in charge and six being run by people without matric

[5.4.3]. It is noteworthy, however, that half of the respondents, including those seconded from municipal administrative offices, were appointed in the past eight years, after the demise of apartheid. Appointment practices within the local authorities clearly need to be followed up in the field study to follow. As stated in Chapter 5 [5.4.3], the issues are complex in post-apartheid South Africa. It could be argued that black staff were barred from senior positions in the past and perhaps deserve promotion. One respondent, a middle-aged white town librarian, is quoted in Chapter 5 [5.4.3] as saying, "She's been around for years, she knows it all", in talking of her former cleaner, who now runs the close-by township library. The author's impression, after interviews with these two people, is that "knowing it all" might well refer to familiarity with administrative procedures rather than to levels of information literacy and insight into information literacy education. Kagan links the low status of librarianship in South Africa to a tendency to stress practical "skills" and "training" rather than "theory" and "education" (2002: 4).

Chapter 6 provides evidence in support of the suggestion in Chapter 5 that public library staff, in both historically white and black libraries, tolerate the present poor provision of retrieval tools as they fundamentally do not conceive of information literacy as a constructive sense-making process. Most respondents' descriptions of information literacy and of the information search process, discussed in Section 6.2, indicate "incomplete" conceptions of information literacy and a restricted view of the role of the public library. To staff who see their job to be the organisation of a collection of books and the handing over of bits of information on demand, the public has no need of information retrieval tools and no need to learn independent information seeking skills. The discussion of the more subjective aspects of the study will continue in the next section.

7.2.3 Respondents' perceptions of information literacy education

This section explores the readiness of public libraries in Mpumalanga for information literacy education in terms of staff experience, attitudes and conceptions. Its focus is thus on the third group of questions above and it largely relies on the data which are reported on in Chapter 6.

7.2.3.1 Public librarians' educational background & their approaches to information literacy education

The previous section has already suggested that the inadequate educational background of some respondents might hinder information literacy education. It should be stressed that, with the exception of one senior director of a large municipal library, all respondents are directly involved with the public – providing what, in international professional guidelines, are regarded as "professional" services, namely reference and information services to all sectors

and learning support to tertiary and secondary students. However, distinctions between "professional" work and "non-professional" are clearly meaningless in small one-person libraries. This does not, of course, imply that the person in such libraries should not be professionally qualified; the author would argue that any public service point demands a professionally qualified staff member. Studies of small rural libraries in the United States have highlighted the importance of professionally qualified staff in the provision of high quality information services (Vavrek, 1997; Luchs, 2001; Walton, 2001).

As already mentioned, 30 percent of the Mpumalanga respondents have tertiary level or professional education; 47 percent have matric; 18 percent lack matric. Only three of the one-person township libraries are run by professionally qualified staff; six are run by people with no school matric. The examination of the formal qualifications of respondents is motivated by the reality, already established, that they are intimately involved in the education of school learners. Common sense indicates that the credibility of public library staff, in their work with educators and learners, demands post-matric education. There are, perhaps, three aspects to formal education relevant in considering the competencies required of a public librarian in serving the information and learning needs of a community:

- the professional library and information science education, which should ensure that its graduates are familiar with the resources of the information age, are themselves information literate, and are able to assess the information needs of a community and design services tailored to meet those needs
- the general knowledge and competencies that schooling at secondary and tertiary level provides
- and, specifically in terms of their services to educators and school learners, knowledge of the school curriculum.

The findings of the survey suggest that public library services engage in very little targeting of specific client groups - with only four of the 46 libraries having a specialist in children's services, for example [5.2.4]. Whether professional distinctions are discernible in general across the libraries in Mpumalanga is dubious. It seems that, in reality, there is little distinction between so-called "professional" work and "non-professional" in the day to day work of public libraries and in job appointments. This reality clearly rankles with some of the professionally qualified respondents [5.4.2; 5.4.3]. On the other hand, the author was struck by the insistence in two medium size libraries that their cleaners sit in on the interview – with the highly-qualified senior staff member in one contending, "We all do the same".

If this is so – and it is a suggestion that requires confirmation in the longer term observation of the project's second phase – the spotlight falls on the in-service professional development provided by local and provincial structures. Table 11 in Chapter 5 reveals that professional development, in at least the last three years, has been at a low level and uneven [5.4.3]. The emphasis of the Mpumalanga Provincial Library Service has been on training in the new provincial computer system and on computer literacy with 41 and 39 respondents referring to these two categories respectively. Encouraging evidence that the Mpumalanga Provincial Library Service is beginning to recognise the need for intervention in information literacy education is the workshop on information literacy attended by 17 respondents in March 2004 and a similar new initiative for 2006 (Hundrikz, 2005). Also encouraging are the several comments from respondents that show a desire for more education [5.4.3].

The above paragraphs throw some light on the two research questions:

- How knowledgeable are public librarians about educational change and teaching and learning in general?
- What experience of and education in Curriculum 2005 and the Revised National Curriculum Statement have they had?

Table 11 in Chapter 5 shows that the only evidence of structured education in the new curriculum lies in the responses of the three respondents who claim to have attended a talk on outcomes-based education at their local schools. Chapters 5 and 6 are littered with respondents' comments that indicate widespread uncertainty over curriculum change and desire to know more about Curriculum 2005. In Chapter 5, the context of the comments is the discussion of changes in library use patterns towards the dominance of school learners [5.2.3] and of perceptions of the in-service education needed [5.4.3]. The focus in Section 6.3 in Chapter 6 is on respondents' attitudes towards an enhanced educational role, with lack of knowledge of the new curriculum being cited almost unanimously as a hurdle [Figure 19] and doubts over teaching capacity being frequently raised [Table 15].

Nonetheless, Chapter 6 is striking for the many perceptive comments from respondents on educational change and Curriculum 2005 - and their impact on public libraries. They perceive changes in their working conditions to be a direct result of curriculum change. Moreover, working with learners, even if in less than ideal conditions, has, apparently, given public librarians insight into the learning needs of school learners and educators. Perhaps the fact that they operate in a one-to-one relationship with learners, closely observing their struggles as they try to make sense of their assignments, puts public librarians in a unique position to understand the demands of the new curriculum. They are, indeed, close to learners as they

learn. If their potential role were recognised, they could clearly provide a useful resource for educationists and curriculum planners. First of all, however, their contribution, actual and potential, to the learning process would have to be recognised by themselves and by their management and governance structures. Public librarians' own perceptions are perhaps fundamental to a shift in their position and will be examined in the section to follow.

7.2.3.2 Conceptions of information literacy and information literacy education

The findings, reported in Chapter 6, that 32 respondents see no difference between "information literacy education" and "book education" (the school subject prevalent in South African schools in the 1970s and 1980s) and that 32 see no difference between "information skills" and "library skills" are telling. They serve to begin the exploration of the research questions in the third category of questions as listed above in Section 7.2:

- What are their conceptions of information literacy and information literacy education?
- What experience of and education in information literacy theory and practice have they had?

The figures just quoted, perhaps, indicate that the conceptual frameworks of information literacy are not generally appreciated. They echo the LIANZA survey of public librarians in New Zealand in the late 1990s, which found that they do not understand the difference between the old user education and the "broader learning" of information literacy education (LIANZA Information Literacy Taskforce, 1999). It seems that the evolution of information literacy education from the traditional bibliographic and library instruction model cannot be taken for granted in public library circles.

Chapter 6 uses the two theoretical pillars of Bruce and Kuhlthau, described in Chapter 1, to explore Mpumalanga public librarians' conceptions of information literacy and of the information seeking process, with a view to assessing their readiness to take on information literacy programming. The exploration, indeed, throws light on their levels of information literacy. Chapter 6 uncovers links between conceptions of information literacy and approaches to information literacy education. Indeed, as predicted in the introduction to Chapter 6 [6.1], respondents' conceptions of information literacy give insight into the *kind* of information literacy education respondents are ready for and might offer some explanations for some of the puzzling gaps in service that are described in Chapter 5.

According to the analysis in Chapter 6 [6.2.1], the majority of Mpumalanga public librarians' conceptions of information literacy belong within Bruce's first cluster of conceptions –

because they emphasise sources. The Mpumalanga public librarians continually describe an information literate person as someone who knows his or her way about the library and who can find information in it. Unlike respondents in the more sophisticated environment of Australian academia (Bruce, 1997) or American public libraries (Bruce & Lampson, 2002) or academic libraries in Cape Town (Sayed, 1997), they are preoccupied with print sources rather than electronic; but, in common with Bruce's first cluster, they see information literacy in terms of knowledge of *things* – reference books and libraries in their case. This preoccupation might hint at an explanation for the prevailing source-based approach to information literacy education and also for the apparent passivity in relationships with schools – both of which were commented on above. If information literacy is about sources and the library is where sources are kept and where information is "fetched", then information literacy education takes place in the library and consists of library orientation and instruction in the use of the sources. The daily support, required of the librarian, is to provide, or to help fetch, the right answer. This conception of the role of the public library makes no room for any responsibility for or even interest in the larger learning process – and thus no communication with educators is called for.

As stated in Chapter 6 [6.2.3], echoes of the earlier findings on English and American public librarians' perceptions of their work by Curran (1990) and Bruce and Lampson (2002) might be evident. They comment that public librarians have rather limited views of their social role - they "serve" information on demand but do not, as yet, accept responsibility for interpretation or communication of the information they manage. In the South African context, Leach (2001) criticises public librarian training which, he says, should include repackaging and communicating of information if libraries are to fulfil a developmental role. Given the absence of school libraries and the clear dominance of school learner use of public libraries, perhaps a further shortcoming might be the absence of an emphasis on information literacy education – an emphasis that, as Chapter 1 has contended [1.2.2], is implied in the developmental model of public librarianship, in any case. Only one respondent claims to have had any exposure to the concept of information literacy in his formal professional training.

Scattered through Chapters 5 and 6 are comments from respondents that hint at a dawning recognition that current approaches to information literacy education in Mpumalanga public libraries are inadequate. Even those, who firmly state that they are doing everything that can be expected of them, concede that learners need more. Respondents distinguish between "having to do it" and the things they "should" be doing. The deficient information skills of their learners oblige them to intervene and to act as teachers; yet, they continuously question whether they "should" be teachers - presumably, in terms of traditional public library practice.

This ambivalence will be returned to in the discussion of conceptions of the educational role of public libraries, in the following section.

Further evidence that shifts in information literacy education might be possible lies in what Curran (1990: 351) might call the more "liberal" conceptions of information literacy and public library responsibilities that are evident in a minority of responses. There are, indeed, a few respondents who show a more constructivist awareness of information literacy in terms of changing perceptions and knowledge building and who, thus, might conform to Kuhlthau's views of information literacy as a dynamic process of constructive learning rather than getting the right answer (2000). They share the conceptions of Bruce's most "complete" third cluster, who, as described in Chapter 6 [6.2.2], conceive of information literacy as constructing knowledge and extending knowledge to gain wisdom. These respondents, perhaps, might be expected to have a more urgent sense of the need to be involved in the prior learning and preparation of library users and to follow up what happens once learners leave the library. These expectations were borne in mind in the choice of the site for the second phase case study, as will be shown below.

Kuhlthau's definition of information literacy is learning how to learn (1993b). In Chapter 6, Table 14's categorisation of respondents' perceptions of the connections between information literacy and lifelong learning [6.2.2] is consonant with the above analysis of their conceptions of information literacy. For example, many see lifelong learning in terms of knowing about libraries and using their resources. Yet, the Table does enrich the picture. The question aims at encouraging respondents to apply theoretical knowledge of the two concepts, lifelong learning and information literacy, in connecting the two and to uncover beliefs about learning. The question drew some rather bland superficial answers – with many respondents content to describe lifelong learning in terms of education that continues after school. Apparently, they are referring to the services they offer to tertiary distance education students, to adults changing their careers and also to the informal education that is traditionally part of the public library mission. There is, however, a stronger emphasis on the need for independent learning and on how information literacy empowers lifelong learners with independent information retrieval skills. Although the thinking still centres on finding information in library sources, the skills and processes involved in information retrieval are more manifest. There are even one or two mentions of how information gives "control" in the complex information society. Perhaps then, there is a stronger case for the second cluster of conceptions in Bruce's model, which involve "information process and information control".

Figure 18 in Section 6.2.3 aids further exploration of the information literacy of respondents in its analysis of respondents' depictions of the school project process. It assesses awareness of information handling as a *process*, involving several interdependent phases, each with its own appropriate problem-solving strategies. This kind of awareness has been shown in previous chapters to be essential to information literacy. The Figure lends support to the above analysis. It demonstrates a preoccupation with "finding" or "fetching" skills and little awareness of the phases that precede and follow the finding of information, namely the crucial preliminary phase of analysing one's need and the later phases of interpretation, application and synthesis. Eighteen respondents mention the need to understand what is required first, but the same number (18) describe asking the librarian *for* information as the first step in the school project process. Only four include the need for some background priming knowledge so that the learner knows what questions are relevant. No awareness of the need to evaluate information, in terms of the information need and in terms of its trustworthiness, is evident. Most perceive their responsibility to end once the child is handed the information and there is an acceptance that the next step is for him or her to photocopy the relevant pages and go home. The frequent mentions of "photocopying" lead to the suggestion in Chapter 6 that learners might well be given information before they are ready for it. Perhaps, they do not understand the connection between what is handed to them and their information need – and so have to resort to "cutting and pasting". This is a question to be followed up in the closer observation of the second phase.

7.2.3.3   Conceptions of the educational role of public libraries

The above sections have highlighted the close links between conceptions of information literacy education and those of the educational role of public libraries. It seems that information literacy education in public libraries hinges on public librarians' beliefs about whether or not they have a teaching role. The developmental philosophical frame for public librarianship implies an acceptance of an educational role – which can be encapsulated in the construct of information literacy education. Thus, the social mission of public libraries, especially perhaps in developing communities, is not just to provide information but rather to educate in information literacy. Taking on responsibility for the information literacy education of school learners is more than a change in emphasis in the traditional mission of public librarianship.

Chapter 5 [Figure 16, 5.5.3] finds surprisingly little evidence of community ties in the Mpumalanga libraries. The word "surprisingly" is chosen because of the rhetoric in public library circles in South Africa – heard at LIASA annual conferences for example - about their role as community information services. Elsewhere, there has been comment that public

librarians' lack of a broad social consciousness impacts on their attitudes to information literacy education. The LIANZA survey of information literacy education in public libraries in New Zealand concludes that public librarians are less likely than other librarians to see information literacy in a broad societal context (LIANZA Information Literacy Taskforce, 1999). The previous section indicates that the comment might be applied to the Mpumalanga public librarians and is significant, given the developmental philosophical frame of the study.

The previous section has commented on the ambivalence towards a teaching role that is evident in respondents' comments on changes in their user profiles and their relationships with schools, which were discussed in Chapter 5. Section 6.3 in Chapter 6, which examines the data on respondents' perceptions of their educational role, confirms this ambivalence. Figure 19 shows a contradiction: whereas a majority believe that the role of the public library in education is supportive rather than direct, an equally large number believe that public libraries in South Africa have to take on a more educational focus than those in developed countries and that a central mission of public libraries is to *educate* their users to meet their information needs. And only 11 say that it is not their responsibility to help users *use* information. Thus, there seems to an endorsement of a rather stronger intervening and teaching role than traditional Western thinking allows for. However, the accompanying comments and the responses in Table 15, which categorises their beliefs about the role of the public library in education, give a different picture in that they record respondents' qualms over whether they *can* take on a teaching role and whether they should be expected to. The reservations might be summarised as follows:

- Staff do what they can, but they lack the required resources – staff, space, time – and knowledge of the curriculum to be able to teach.
- Public libraries are being *obliged* to take on what should be the responsibilities of school libraries, because they now serve far more black children whose schools do not have libraries and who consequently lack the required information skills.

The comment from the middle-aged manager of a large town library that "OBE [outcomes-based education] fell on us – it was chaos", which is quoted in Chapter 6, communicates the strong emotional response provoked by the interview questions on the role of public libraries in education. There are suggestions, however, that the black librarians in the sample – both in the township libraries and the historically white down-town libraries - might have a more philosophical acceptance of their educational role. In talking of her work with school learners and the increased pressures it has brought, one comments, "With us it's good... If we are hectic then so be it". The "us" refers to blacks.

The "ambivalence", referred to above, perhaps stems from a gap between what respondents experience on a day-to-day basis and their conceptions of what their world should be. In common with public librarians in New Zealand, their "preconceptions of what they do and don't do" might restrict their vision (LIANZA Information Literacy Taskforce, 1999). Several express unease that their services to learners might be at the expense of other user groups. Public libraries, they believe, should be serving all sectors of their communities; yet they are being swamped by one sector, school learners. The township librarians seem relatively free of this concern, perhaps owing to the historical patterns of low adult library use or perhaps because they conceive the mission of public libraries to be education. Chapter 5 provides evidence that librarians in the townships have a more educational focus than their colleagues who serve historically white communities - in their choice of stock and also in their more utilitarian beliefs about reading [5.2.3].

7.2.3.4 Enabling and inhibiting factors: Insights from the answers to research questions

The previous section has tried to answer the research questions by surveying the data documented in Chapters 5 and 6. It has identified, it has to be admitted, more "inhibiting" factors than "enabling". And many of these factors require the closer lens of the second phase field study to be understood.

The chief enabling factor for information literacy education in public libraries, as all respondents acknowledge, is the new curriculum. Willy-nilly, public libraries are obliged to support the learners who are flocking to their libraries. Cooper's experience in the early 1990s of curricular change in New Zealand leads her to distinguish between public librarians who retreat from the challenge and those who perceive the new resource-based approaches as an opportunity for "innovative outreach programmes" (1993: 51). Whether public librarians in Mpumalanga perceive educational change as a threat to their status-quo or an opportunity for an enhanced educational role perhaps depends on how the inhibiting factors, which have been identified in the preceding chapters, are addressed in the next few years. The following section will return to the issue of who should provide the leadership and the support, which are clearly going to be required.

In broad terms, the conclusion of Phase 1 is that the library orientation that teaches "how this library works", which Chapter 5 found to be the most common structured information literacy activity, reflects the kind of information literacy education that respondents are prepared for in terms of their conceptions of their role. This is understandable once their conceptions of information, information literacy and information literacy education are probed. They tend to

conceive information literacy in terms of finding information in sources; and information literacy education is seen as teaching people how to find or "fetch" information. Inevitably then, they try to erect clear boundaries around their work in the library. Although the interviews are peppered with complaints about teachers' shortcomings, there is little evidence of any proactive attempt to build relationships with schools or other organisations.

There is evidence, nonetheless, that the boundaries are crumbling in the face of the huge needs of school learners. All participants acknowledge that the children are not being taught the necessary prerequisite skills before they come to the library, that schools do not have libraries, and that they are, indeed, obliged to intervene directly. The interdependence of the phases of project work means that they cannot ignore the fact that many learners do not know why they need the information public librarians provide and what to do with it. In Chapter 6 [6.4], the respondents' descriptions of their relations with schools, in response to Question 23, led to doubt over whether they are partners in, what the Australian Bundy calls, "the shared endeavour" of information literacy education (2002). However, overall, it seems that there is at least a dawning recognition that public libraries have to work more closely with schools.

Whether the public library can indeed rise to the challenge of information literacy education in order to play a part in the development of an information literacy society in South Africa is the key question of the PhD study. Much depends on public librarians' conceptions of their social role. Physical conditions might be improved but, unless the more subjective factors are addressed, the improvements will be ineffective.

7.3   Some findings of the first phase

This section articulates certain findings and conclusions, most of which are tentative and in need of further exploration in the second phase. Before specific assertions relating to information literacy education are listed in the next section, it is perhaps necessary to explore the possible implications of the study for one of its philosophical pillars, the developmental mission of public libraries.

7.3.1 Implications for the developmental philosophical framework

The study shows the social mission of public libraries to be in a state of flux, with many staff members experiencing a tension between what might be called "received wisdom" and their daily experiences. Whether the evident "flux" in mission reflects a state of transition or a state of disarray is not clear. It *is* clear that public library staff, in the absence of a clear vision from

their management and professional structures, are unsure what they should be doing or what they should prioritise. They are unanimous that their educational role is dominant; yet, they have no preparation or support for this role. Perhaps, Walton's comments, that small rural libraries "cannot be all things to all patrons" (2001: 21) and that their programming must rely on analysis of their communities' real needs, are pertinent. Until some leadership is shown in this area, information literacy education will remain ad-hoc and dependent on the inclinations of individual staff members.

Some doubts have been expressed in recent years as to whether South African librarianship is capable of the kind of leadership that might be required to transform its social role (Dick 2002a: 31; Kagan, 2002: 2, 5). As mentioned above, Stilwell's study of the views of professionally qualified librarians working within provincial public library structures in 1996 reported rather positively on the potential of transformation in public library social mission. However, Kagan suggests that the low levels of professional education and the resulting low status of library staff might hamper innovation (2002: 2). Shifts from established ways of doing things require vision and negotiating clout. He contends that in countries where librarians' status is low, they cannot maximise their potential societal benefits as they lack credibility amongst policy-makers. And in South Africa, he warns, there are doubts even within libraries, that librarianship is, in fact, a profession (p. 5).

The suggestion above has been, moreover, that the low level of education on the ground restricts the vision required to find innovative solutions to current problems and thus might hinder new approaches to information literacy education. Luchs's answer to those under-educated rural library staff who question the need for tertiary professional education might be relevant. She refutes their claims that they are "doing a good job so far" by saying that they "simply do not know any better" (2001: 53). Their rural communities, she contends, moreover, may not realise that their library services are inadequate because they have nothing to compare them with.

7.3.2 Phase 1 conclusions on the readiness of public libraries for information literacy education

The list that follows articulates some conclusions, which emerge from the Phase 1 study:

- Public libraries are indeed heavily engaged in the information literacy education of school learners. The overall conclusion is that it largely comprises, at present, one-to-one support, although there is a fair amount of source based library orientation. How significant this education is in the learning programme of the learners requires further exploration of the relationship between schools and libraries.

- Public librarians' "incomplete" conceptions of information literacy, information literacy education and of their educational role restrict their role in the learning process of information literacy.

- As suggested in the preceding section, the low level of professional (and academic and general) education of public library staff might impede innovation in library and information service programming. Information literacy education demands insight into constructivist learning and contemporary pedagogies – as well as into the attributes and tools of the information society.

- Shortcomings in certain physical facilities, such as the lack of space and absence of retrieval tools, are inhibiting factors.

- The heritage of apartheid still impacts on the provision of library and information services – in terms of availability of services and, perhaps, quality of service. The Australian, Todd's comments on the significance of *class* to information access and seeking might be pertinent to the study of staff in the historically black and disadvantaged libraries of Mpumalanga. He suggests that, although the rich networks of the information society might be available, the "information poor" perceive themselves to be devoid of any sources that might help them. They perceive access to information to be restricted to and guarded by the privileged (2004: 33). The need to be sensitive to social context is one of the evaluative principles of the study as stated in Chapter 4 [4.4], and so this is an issue to follow up in Phase 2.

- The low morale of public library staff might well impede the introduction of new programmes such as information literacy education. The evident low levels of job satisfaction have a variety of causes, such as changes in local authorities, perceptions of their low status within their municipal structures, inadequate resources, pressure of school learner numbers, and lack of appreciation of public libraries within their communities. Chapters 5 and 6 include dissatisfied comments from professionally qualified staff who see no future in public librarianship and from disheartened staff who have discontinued their professional studies.

- The relations among public library, local authority and province – and among libraries within a local authority – are clearly a significant factor in need of further examination. The first phase study raises questions over the standing of public libraries in their municipalities. The cool climate is not necessarily a new phenomenon, municipal officials' understanding of the community role of public libraries having been questioned over the years (Zaaiman, Roux & Rykheer, 1988; Stilwell, 1996: 183). The difference now is that public libraries are not, at present, accountable to formal provincial and professional guidelines or standards

- The actual and potential role of the Mpumalanga Provincial Library Service in terms of information literacy education is rather murky. Traditionally in South Africa, the provincial library structures were expected to provide "support structures" and professional guidance to affiliated public libraries (Stilwell, 1996). The workshop on information literacy education, hosted by the Mpumalanga Provincial Library Service on 16 March 2004 is a sign of its recognition of shifts in mission of public libraries. The field study will examine over a longer period of time how public library staff interact with Mpumalanga Provincial Library Service, via the provincial regional libraries, for example.

These conclusions will be revisited after the reporting of the second phase of the study in Chapter 8.

7.4   Moving to Phase 2

The above sections have included allusions to Phase 2 of the study, the participant observation case study. Chapter 4 has already identified the two public libraries in the Mpumalanga town of Woodsville (a pseudonym) as case study site. The two libraries in the site are geographically close, but, historically, have served different communities. One library, to be called Woodsville Library, is situated on the high street in the commercial centre of the town, and the other, Hillside Library, is in the historically black township on the periphery of the town. The disappearance of apartheid barriers is evidenced by the researcher's photographs, taken in the first phase survey. They show large numbers of black children in Woodsville Library. Woodsville has two librarians and a cleaner and Hillside has one librarian and a cleaner. The first phase interviews with the two librarians in charge suggest that a fair amount of traffic and communication exists between the two library sites, with each showing an awareness of belonging to a pair of libraries. However, each also showed some discomfort with the low membership and circulation figures at Hillside. The Hillside librarian, Mrs Matolo (a pseudonym), in acknowledging that "the Council say the library is too quiet", attributes the low figures to her being unable to leave the library to visit her local schools (Questionnaire 15). The town of Woodsville now belongs to a new local municipality, the centre of which is a larger town about 56 kilometres away. This municipality has recently appointed a Library Coordinator, the librarian in charge of the largest library in the municipality. She is responsible for five libraries in the new municipality.

7.4.1 Phase 1 themes to frame Phase 2

The discussion of the tentative findings of the first phase of the study in Section 7.2 above has highlighted certain questions that require further exploration by means of a more intense field or case study within one site. The areas that have been identified for further study are given below, roughly in the order in which they are mentioned in the above discussion:

- the relationship of school and public library. For example, how is the public library perceived by educators? Is the educational role of the public library recognised and encouraged by educators in the schools?

- the learning experience of the afternoon visits by individual students to the public library

- the learning experience of the class visits to the public library

- the relations between so-called "branch" libraries, within the newly merged local municipalities

- the role of the regional libraries of the Mpumalanga Provincial Library Service

- the relationship between the Mpumalanga Provincial Library Service and the Mpumalanga Education Department's school library services

- the patterns of use between neighbouring town and township libraries. For example, which learners from which school use which library and why?

- the impact of staff morale on information literacy education.

7.4.2 Choice of Woodsville as case study site

The first phase survey certainly informed the choice of Woodsville as field study site. It provided knowledge of similarities and differences – and highlighted the key issues common across all sites. These issues are described and analysed in Chapters 5 and 6. The eventual choice of Woodsville for the follow-up field study was influenced by the following considerations, the significance of which is, hopefully, clear after the reading of Chapters 5 and 6 and the earlier sections of this chapter:

- It is neither completely rural nor urban; thus it does not face the extreme challenges found in the isolated rural sites and lacks the advantages of the "big five" libraries in the Province.

- Woodsville has two public libraries, each with different histories and with different levels of resources. The first phase survey found interesting differences between the information literacy programming of the two libraries and also between their relationships with schools. The site, thus, provides an opportunity to explore more deeply these differences and reasons for them. This will perhaps contribute to Klein and Myers's principle of "abstraction and generalisation" (1999: 82), referred to in

Chapter 4 [4.4]. As stated in Chapter 4, a single case study might not be directly generalised to other sites, but the theoretical insights which it generates might be.

- Each of the libraries has, according to the Phase 1 survey data, a manageable number of schools in its catchment area. Woodsville reports five schools within three kilometres, and Hillside three.

- Examination of the interview data shows that each of the librarians appears to have, what Curran (1990: 351) might call, "liberal" views on information. Information, to them, is more than a utility that is stored in the library and fetched from it. The Woodsville librarian, for example, describes information as changing perceptions and knowledge (Questionnaire 16). The Hillside librarian talks of information as changing attitudes (Questionnaire 15).

- Similarly, the first phase survey data show that each of the Woodsville librarians expresses positive attitudes to the role of her library in the educational programme of young learners in her community. It would seem self-defeating to choose a site in which the librarian actively disapproves of information literacy programming. The Woodsville librarian's reply to Question 19 of the first phase questionnaire / interview is, "We *are* teaching the kids – I love working with kids" (Questionnaire 16) and her colleague in Hillside's reply is, "We mustn't get left behind as we are sometimes teachers" (Questionnaire 15).

- Nonetheless, the analysis of the first phase interviews suggests different perspectives and, indeed, some tension between the librarians in charge of the two libraries. These are potentially of interest to an ethnographic field study with its stress on understanding "complex interactions, tacit processes, and often hidden beliefs and values" (Marshall & Rossman, 1995: 9). As stated in Chapter 4 [4.4], one of the fundamental principles of the study is openness to what Klein and Myers call "possible conflicts resulting from power, economics and values" (1999: 77). Given the history of Mpumalanga's libraries and the evidently low morale of their staff, the interactions between the two librarians in Woodsville might well be significant.

- Although the two Woodsville libraries might not quite be described from the first phase survey data as, in LeCompte, Preissle and Tesch's terminology, an "ideal-typical" case of best practice in information literacy education (1993: 70), they also cannot be seen as deviant or aberrant.

- The first phase data show that Woodsville Library has relatively strong community ties. The librarian reports involvement in several community groups. Given the developmental theoretical framework for the study, this was deemed to be of potential significance.

- Access was easy. Both librarians and the local municipality's Library Coordinator immediately agreed to the researcher's request to conduct the study in Woodsville. Approval was also quickly granted by the Municipal Manager and by the Mpumalanga Education Department's Regional Office.

7.5 Conclusion

The above issues frame the second phase field study; however, it also had to be open to new issues and questions. Chapter 8 will demonstrate how the intensive study of the Woodsville libraries, in their context within a new local municipality spreading over a large rural area, certainly confirms some of the interpretation in this chapter. However, it also shows how new perspectives from the in-depth interviewing and relatively long-term observation, as well as the insights gained from the educators' interviews, lead to some revision and rethinking.

CHAPTER 8
PHASE 2: WOODSVILLE CASE STUDY

As described in Chapters 4 and 7, the survey of the first phase identified Woodsville (pseudonym) as an appropriate site for the intensive case study of the second phase and identified the issues that would inform the participant observation study as it began. However, the second phase represents an attempt to start afresh - to examine information literacy education in the site with an open mind. In keeping with one of the tenets of qualitative research (Stake, 1995: 48; Klein & Myers, 1999: 76), it is open to contradictions of the tentative assertions of the first phase. In Chapter 1, the PhD research project is described as a mixed methods study, drawing on both quantitative and qualitative conventions. On a notional continuum, the second phase smaller scale participant observation study, written up in this chapter, lies closer to the qualitative end. Thus, in keeping with another tenet of qualitative theory, its recognition of the need for reflexivity (Stake, 1995: 47; Klein & Myers, 1999: 74), the voice of the researcher becomes more explicit with the use of the first person, "I". Hopefully, the report in this chapter, however, is credible and reliable. Following advice in the research literature (for example Atkinson & Delamont, 1985; Guba & Lincoln, 1994) that credibility and theorising are aided by rigorous data-gathering methodologies and subsequent reporting, Appendix E provides a diary of my data gathering strategies in the month-long study. The aim is to conform to Klein and Myers's evaluative principles for trustworthy and authentic research (1999) that were given in Chapter 4 [4.4].

The case study has seven sections:

- The first and second introduce the case study and its site.
- The third and fourth are both introduced by vignettes of events in the two public libraries; each highlights different challenges for information literacy education.
- The focus in the fifth section is on the interviews in the Woodsville schools.
- The sixth section widens the perspective, beginning with a vignette of a visit with the local municipality's Library Coordinator to Groenvallei Library, some 45 kilometres to the north, and reporting on interviews with the Municipal Manager and the Director of the Mpumalanga Provincial Library Service. Both Woodsville and Groenvallei now fall within the same new local municipality, which is the result of the merging of four towns and sprawling rural settlements.
- The last section articulates some assertions that arise from the study.

8.1 Introduction to the case study

The challenge is to confine the writing up of the case study to one chapter. The restraints of space militate against a chronological description of the study, to be followed by analysis and interpretation of the descriptive data. This approach, although systematic, would also, perhaps, entail tedious repetition as, inevitably, the same fields would have to be ploughed more than once.

The solution to the space restraints is to follow the advice of an expert on case study, Robert Stake, in making use of the device of vignettes. Vignettes are, according to Stake, "briefly described episodes to illustrate key aspects of the case" (1995: 128). They serve both to give a sense of context and to highlight the theoretical issues that dominate the field study. Case study relies on two methods in its interpretation of meaning - direct interpretation of an individual instance and the aggregation of instances to identify a class. Thus at times in this chapter, the gaze is on one event or incident; and, at other times, there is an attempt, through collection of a number of examples, to "make tallies" (Stake, 1995: 74) in order to construct categories of meaning. As stated in Chapter 4 [4.3.2], the Woodsville study is less of an "intrinsic" case than an "instrumental" one. The case is thus a means to examine the issue of information literacy education, which implies a greater emphasis on categorical data and patterns of meaning than on description of the case itself. This statement does not, however, obscure the importance of contextual factors, which were found to play a role in information literacy education in the town, as will be shown.

As Wolcott points out, all description in research accounts is laden with theory-building analysis (1994: 13). For example, the choice of the three episodes for the vignettes implies categorisation and prioritisation of issues. The discussion that follows each vignette picks up the specific issues highlighted for further exploration. The data in these discussions come from a variety of sources and range across various times in the field study, for example:

- observations and follow-up observations - of interactions, incidents, participants' comments - to initiate, confirm or contradict a theme of enquiry. These were typed up from field notes each day in a field notes journal.
- informal talk with participants, recorded in my field notes journal
- structured and tape-recorded interviews with 22 Grade 7 and 8 educators and a teacher-librarian. Appendix F provides the interview schedule with some summaries of results. Section 8.5 summarises and analyses the data gathered in these interviews. The principals of the seven Woodsville schools were also interviewed; their interview schedule is provided in Appendix I.

- formal interviews and follow-up interviews with the staff of the two public libraries, the Municipal Manager of the local municipality, the Director and Project Manager of the Mpumalanga Provincial Library Service staff, the Head of the Mpumalanga Education Department's Education Library and Information Service. Appendix H provides the interview protocols.
- perusal of documents, such as learners' assignment sheets.

The aim is to connect and cross-triangulate data gathered through different methods, in an iterative way, in order to confirm emergent data categories and theoretical assertions.

8.2   Woodsville's libraries and schools

Chapters 4 and 7 have given some introduction to the case study site, the pseudonymous town of Woodsville [4.3.2.1; 7.4.2]. But to support the readers of this chapter, perhaps it is necessary to place the libraries and schools geographically and socially. In describing Woodsville, its two libraries and seven schools, the apartheid heritage of racially based land allocation and schooling cannot be ignored, as it still impacts on school attendance and library usage. Figure 22 provides a diagram of the positions of the seven schools in relation to the two public libraries.

G

A Woodsville Primary
B Woodsville High
C Mountainview Primary
    (Independent)
D Bergsig Primary
E Hillside Primary
F Hillside High
G Forest Primary (outside town, in
    forestry area)

E   F

Hillside
Library

B

Woodsville Library   C

D   A
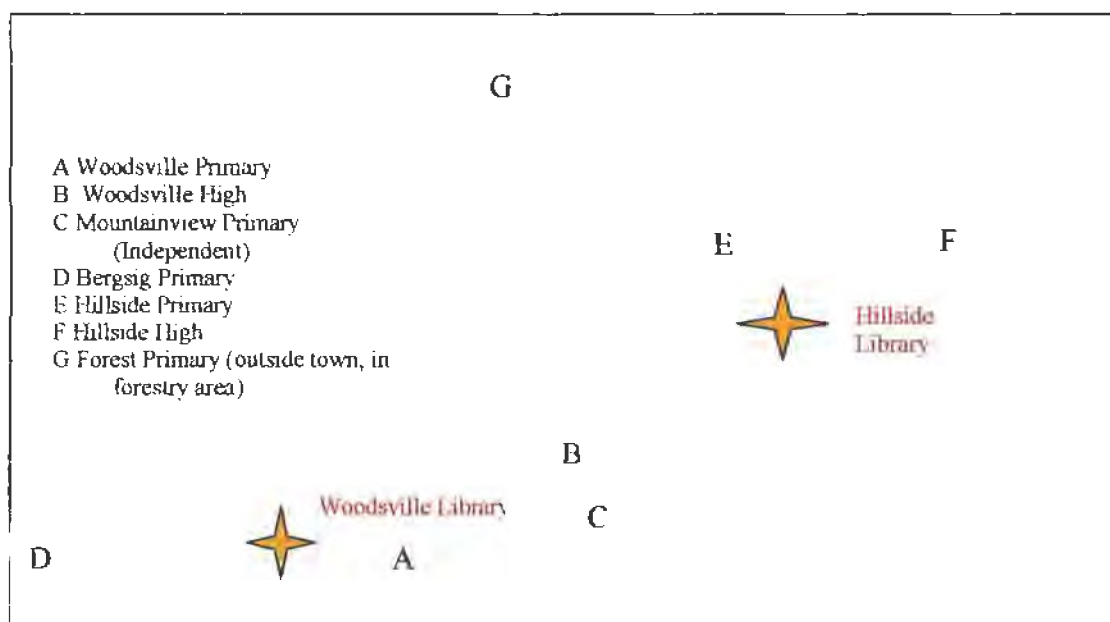
Figure 22: Woodsville's schools & public libraries
(The schools and geographic places are given pseudonyms since confidentiality and anonymity were promised)

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Hillside Library is to the north of the town in what might still be called the African township. Hillside is some four kilometres from the town centre, close to two large sawmills. The township has one high school and one primary school. Woodsville Library is situated in the commercial centre and has four schools within walking distance, one high school, one primary school, a relatively new private English-medium school of 55 learners, and, a little further away on the other side of a ravine, a primary school in what was formerly designated the "Coloured" township, Bergsig. Although declared "Coloured", Bergsig, in fact, had African citizens, who were removed in the 1980s, through the Group Areas legislation, to Hillside. The small rural primary school about six kilometres out of town, Forest Primary, is closer to Hillside but its principal talks exclusively of Woodsville Library.

On entering Hillside Library, the first impression is one of spaciousness. It has several round tables which each can seat five or six people. However, a closer look reveals it to be rather empty of shelves and books. It is also rather unkempt: a badly torn DDC poster faces people as they enter; three dusty ring-bound books (dating from the early 1980s I find when I pull them down) are on crooked display on top of the reference shelves; half the lights are out of order; and a yellowing municipal notice about membership fees is still stuck on the wall close to the one superseding it. Across town, Woodsville Library has a shabby carpet, some peeling fungi-infested walls, and a pervasive damp smell. It is crammed with shelves and the shelves are crammed with books. There is room for one large reference table which seats 16 people. Chairs are squeezed into every possible corner. However, an attractive display of books, changed once a week, greets the visitor; bright posters adorn the walls; classical music plays continuously; and the notice boards are full of current community notices.

Hillside's librarian in charge is Naledi Matolo, a North Sotho speaking woman of 35 years and a resident of Hillside. She has a matric qualification. Woodsville Library is run by Tara Botha, an Afrikaans speaking woman of 39, who has a BA degree and who is completing her B.Inf studies through the University of South Africa. Her assistant is Tenji Miti, a 30 year old resident of Hillside and a matriculant of Hillside High School. She has recently enrolled for Unisa's B.Inf degree. Both libraries have full-time cleaners.

The demise of apartheid education has brought major shifts in patterns of enrolment in the schools, with the formerly exclusively white schools in town having had a large intake of disadvantaged learners from the townships and rural areas. The township schools, as a result, have had to spread their nets wider into rural areas to the north and east in order to maintain their numbers. One result of the changes in their learner bodies is a general shift to English as

the language of learning as the schools respond to the new dispensation and compete for learner numbers. The two historically Afrikaans medium schools in town now have a parallel stream of English medium classes — for African children, largely, it seems. And the schools in the Hillside Township, whose learners are largely (although not exclusively) SiSwati-speaking, now have English as their language of learning. Bergsig, the area designated for Coloured people in the 1980s now has an informal settlement of Zulu-speaking people. According to Bergsig Primary's principal, Zulu-speaking children from this settlement and other children from rural areas to the east of Woodsville now account for 80 percent of the learners at what was the Afrikaans-medium school. The result is that the school has now switched to English as its language of learning.

8.2.1 Woodsville's schools' libraries

Section B of the educators' interview schedule, completed largely by the schools' principals, is headed *School Information Climate,* a term borrowed from Moore's study of information literacy in schools in New Zealand. Its use here is narrower than in Moore's work as its aim is merely to document access to and provision of information resources inside the Woodsville schools, with a focus on libraries and the Internet (Moore, 1998: 6).

The seven Woodsville schools illuminate the discussion in Chapters 1 and 2 where the paradox between what is, on paper, a "library-friendly" curriculum and the precarious position of school librarianship is highlighted [1.1.2; 2.3]. The "libraries" in the historically disadvantaged schools in Bergsig and Hillside are in fact storerooms for collections of textbooks and reference materials, clearly for the use of educators only. The library room at Forest Primary, the rural school in a forest clearing out of town, is used all day as a classroom and so is closed to other classes. The library was started after Tara Botha raised funds for shelves from the Woodsville Rotary Club.

The two historically advantaged schools, Woodsville High School and Woodsville Primary, have the "standard" library rooms of the pre-1994 Transvaal Education Department; but both closed them some years ago, after losing their librarian posts. The High School removed the books from the library to turn it in to a computer room with Internet access. This decision reflects clearly rather widespread perceptions among educators in the study that access to the Internet renders a school library redundant. The computer teacher at Woodsville High School articulates these perceptions:

GH *In your schooling did you have libraries? In your primary school?*
Teacher *Yes in Pietersburg we did because in those days we didn't have computers.*
GH *Do you think then that computers will take over libraries?*
Teacher *Yes. Because most of the computers come out now with the whole atlas on it, the*

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whole Encarta on it, come with the Oxford dictionaries on it....Why do all the library administration around the library when you do have access to a computer? It's much quicker. The only disadvantage that I can see is that children don't read anymore. (Interview 6)

Later, the principal confides that the computer room has not been a success, as the room is used for computer studies classes for most of the day and the school has not been able to maintain its Internet connectivity. The closure of the library has left some of the educators disgruntled and I hear from several of the Woodsville High School educators that there are attempts now to revive the library.

Woodsville Primary School has also rethought its decision to close its library. My informant, the computer teacher, tells me that, "It hasn't worked having the room used by all the subject and class teachers. It's a mess". Another educator describes the decision to reopen the library thus:

Yes. The library was closed for a while totally. And then we said we sit with all these resources and we're a school. How do we justify that? So we did get the thing back on the ground. (Interview 11)

The library is a large apparently well stocked room and has been allocated a budget of R10,000 for each of the past two years (Principal's interview 28 October: 6). The principal and the teacher-librarian give different versions of the role of the school library. The Principal paints a rosy picture in his claim that it is open for class use for 80 percent of the day with teachers' bringing the classes in for a "sort of period". The teacher-librarian's version is perhaps more credible since it is supported by other educators' comments in their interviews. It seems that the library is viewed as her "extramural" activity and is opened at break times, by special appointment for teachers to fetch books to take to their classrooms in the school day, and for one hour on two afternoons a week. A fairly long extract from the teacher-librarian's interview is given below since it provides evidence of the decline in school libraries in the advantaged sectors of South African schooling, which, before 1994, could be assumed to have well-stocked libraries staffed by full-time qualified librarians (Overduin & De Wit, 1987). Of particular interest are her comments on educators' conceptions of the library, since they may offer some explanation for the decline, beyond the often-cited failure of Government to provide policy.

Teacher	*I'm employed as a teacher and then the extramural activity – it grates me actually – is the library. But as you know it is actually two positions. It's far more than extramural. I mean the other people have netball for a term... but this is an ongoing fulltime job...*
GH	*In your day do you have periods for the library?*
Teacher	*No - that I don't have. In actual fact I have to spend my breaks doing books...That's' supposed to be extramural and that gets you down because you're tired. It's non-stop – two hours a week after school. But if you think of all the admin work that has to be done and all the packing away and checking and the shelves*
GH	*So in the day what happens to this room?*
Teacher	*It's not used. I have an arrangement with the Grade 7 teacher, she's also a librarian. She brings her Afrikaans class which lessens my stress. I can also have a break*

> *sometime. She brings them but they still have to be read out by me* [books entered on the computer system]. *And as you see there's a video machine. They often come and watch videos here. But apart from that I don't allow teachers to come. I don't like it because they scratch round and they don't put books back.*

GH   *Let's say I was doing a project on elephants with my class. Could I take books out into my class then?*

Teacher   *I can arrange a block. What I do find with these block loans and I always feel that's the teachers' responsibility, I don't get all my books back.*

GH   *Was there a fulltime librarian before?*

Teacher   *Yes the department scrapped the posts. About 10 years ago. They just disregarded the posts and with Curriculum 2005 it's a very important part of the school. What I do find about the majority of people, staff members, they are uneducated about what the activities of a librarian are. They just think it's a packing away of books. I bought R2000's worth of books standing in that storeroom of mine. Fortunately I have a mother who helps me cover books and the last two years I have a mother who's computer literate and she in actual fact computerised this whole thing.* (Interview 13)

Before 1994, the school had a fulltime librarian. Obviously, there are systemic reasons for the loss of the post: all non-classroom jobs were under threat after 1994 as new teacher/pupil ratios were enforced in an effort to re-allocate resources more fairly in post-apartheid South Africa. However, the Woodsville Primary teacher-librarian's comments that her colleagues do not understand her work might indicate a more fundamental issue. Perhaps it is educators' conceptions of her work – to be nothing more than "packing books" – that explain their assumption that what was a fulltime professional job can now be done by a Grade 4 educator in two one-hour sessions after school. They also might have contributed to their belief that the mere provision of Internet access in their computer room might replace the library programme. The suggestion that rather naïve views of information seeking might prevail among the Woodsville Primary educators is significant for the PhD study as their conceptions of the work of a school librarian might extend to that of public librarians.

In the last part of the extract above, the teacher-librarian remarks that, just as the librarian post was abolished 10 years ago, curricular change in South Africa brought a new need for the library. Her principal makes a similar point. And he adds that his school has now, in addition, to compensate for the lack of resources in the homes of most of the school's black children, who now make up about 50 percent of the school's learners:

> *Because resources – it's a necessity for the black people. Because they don't have books at home... The Grade Ones we take in they come from nowhere. They are far behind the white children. But yes they pick up. Nobody said sort of 'Now there's a room full of resources for the new curriculum'* (Interview 28 October: 4).

Whatever the view of the principal on the value of the school library, the teacher-librarian herself acknowledges that the access to her library is inadequate and that learners are not learning the skills they need. Her full-time class teaching allows her no time for information literacy education; yet this does not mean that she cedes the responsibility to the public

library. Her attitude to Woodsville Library is clearly ambivalent. She admits that she discourages her school's learners from using it, saying:

> *I'm ashamed to see all our children in there* [in the public library]. *...I keep them out of the public library. She* [Tara Botha] *makes me aware "What am I doing if Woodsville children are in the public library" She thinks I'm not doing my job properly. We are fortunate to have a good school library.* (Interview 13)

Her words lend support to Tara Botha's repeated comments that, since her appointment to the school, her relationship with Woodsville Primary has deteriorated (Field notes 4 & 6 October).

The significance of the virtual absence of school libraries in the Woodsville schools for the study is twofold:

- It must impact on the use of the Woodsville public libraries by school learners.
- It implies that learners are not being taught at school how to use a library and its resources. Schools, with libraries and school librarians, teach information skills in the course of the school day.

Another significant factor became evident in the course of the school visits. Mini-bus taxis transport large numbers of children from rural areas to the schools each day. Immediately, on the close of the school day, they line up outside the schools to take them home to rural areas, where there are no public libraries. These are children who can be assumed to have no Internet access at home and whose parents might well be inadequately educated to support school project work. Clearly, the lack of access of the children in the Woodsville schools from rural areas to *any* library is a matter for concern.

8.3   Vignette 1: a "disappointing" information literacy intervention

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Hillside Library, Wednesday 6 October 2004

It is the third day of the field study. Together with Tara Botha, the Woodsville Librarian, I am standing outside the library in Hillside, the historically black township to the north of Woodsville. We are waiting for Naledi Matolo, the Hillside Librarian, to return from Hillside Primary School. She has walked up the road to "fetch" some Grade 7 learners. The time arranged for their visit was 8.00am and, when they did not arrive, she left us to see what the problem might be.

The plan is to follow up the instruction on the Library's reference materials which Tara Botha began the day before with a group of 10 learners. While Tara engaged with the learners, Naledi Matolo hovered at the back of the group, occasionally being asked to translate Tara's words into SiSwati – the mother tongue of most of the children. Each of these children is today to bring two friends from school to teach them what they learned yesterday. The idea is that, in teaching others, they will reinforce their own learning. It is an approach

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that Tara Botha tried out the previous term with Bergsig Primary, a school on the opposite side of the town. Two days earlier, on arriving at Woodsville Library, Tara told me that I had come at an "excellent" time since she was to repeat the project in Hillside Library and she was sure it was going to succeed.

The sun is already hot and we are sheltering under the sparse branches of a thorn tree. The dry wind swirls the dust around us. As the minutes pass, I remember the doubt that surfaced in my mind the day before and which I recorded in my field notebook: "Doesn't Tara take a rather cavalier approach to school routine?" Looking at her watch, Tara mutters, "I knew I should have driven her up there". I step out to explore the scene in front of us. The sloping square outside the Library is formed at the T junction of three wide streets – the library, the municipal office and clinic buildings inside a fence to the left, the community hall at the top of the hill and a sloping field to the right, where today a marquee is erected for a three-week church mission. Today is pension day, which means that it is also market day. The square is bustling with traders and mini-bus taxis off-loading their passengers. I browse around the makeshift wooden stalls and the wares laid out on the dusty verges – clothes, pots, fruit, vegetables, chickens squashed into wooden crates.

At last, I see Naledi picking her way through the crowds and I rejoin Tara. Naledi's shoulders are slumped and, as she reaches Tara, she says bluntly, "They are not coming. The teachers don't want them to come now. They will come at 12 o'clock". Tara's face freezes but she says only, "It's very disappointing. It's very disappointing". She agrees to come back later and drives off. I tell Naledi that I am going to the school to introduce myself to the principal and to make appointments for interviews. I refuse her offer to come with me. The previous day's doubts have resurfaced and I wish to be seen as independent of the two librarians.

A group of children did come to the Hillside Library later that day. Each child was given a set of cards with quiz-like questions requiring the use of encyclopaedias, dictionaries, and atlases, examples of which were set out on different tables. One task, for example, was: "Find the meaning of the word 'quiver'". I observed a child carefully copy out the full entry, including all the standard dictionary information like "verb", and hand it to his "tutor", one of the learners from the day before, who were stationed at the tables. The tutor accepted the work without question and he moved on to the next table. The evident difficulties with the adult atlas at another table led me later to examine the reference shelves and to conclude that the library does not have adequate juvenile reference books. At the end, the new group were instructed to bring another set of friends the following day for a session, which Naledi Matolo would run. However, this did not happen – Naledi Matolo reporting, "They [the teachers] are busy with workshops". And indeed, the whole project petered out almost immediately.

The above incident provoked several questions which came to pre-occupy me in the weeks to come and, indeed, to frame the field study. The questions fall into two groups: those concerning the relationships between the two public library branches, Woodsville and Hillside and those concerning school and public library relationships:

- What did the incident reveal about the relationships between the two librarians – one a senior staff member in charge of the town library, Tara Botha, and the other, Naledi

Matolo, in charge of the township library? Who was ultimately responsible for this intervention – Tara Botha or Naledi Matolo? How might their relationship impact on information literacy education programming in the town?

- Why had the class not turned up? What, in the relationship between the school and the public library, might explain the failure? Had the same information literacy intervention with Bergsig Primary Grade 7 learners been the success Tara claimed? If so, how had it differed from the one planned for Hillside?

The purpose in this section is to look for some answers to these two sets of questions. They might provide insight into existing information literacy practices and challenges in Woodsville – and might provide useful information for any future planning, there and elsewhere.

8.3.1 Library usage patterns

Field notes and photographs in the course of the study document the disparity in use between the two libraries. Woodsville Library has a steady stream of visitors in the mornings, with adults dropping in to change their books, read the newspaper and chat with the librarian, Tara Botha. A few distance-education students gather at the reference table and, once a week, there is usually a visit from a pre-school class for a story-telling and activity. I hear from Tara Botha that most of her "regulars" now come in the mornings as the afternoons are "too hectic". Naledi Matolo's answer, when I first ask her if she would mind if I spent time in Hillside Library, is, "No, I'll be pleased of the company". And indeed, Hillside Library is virtually empty every morning. For hours in the cold spell of my second week, my observation times at Hillside were spent sitting at a table typing up notes or chatting with Naledi Matolo, as she sat huddled over a heater. On one morning, two or three elderly women came in to join the cleaner at the other heater. The same 10 books lay on the trolley for re-shelving for the first three weeks of the study. The Library has no regularly scheduled morning storytelling sessions. On my query, Naledi Matolo claims to have tried to start such programmes when she first took up her job. But in her words below she blames the teachers for her failure:

N Matolo	*After three months I started having programmes with the pre-schools and schools. I thought it was fine and interesting. But not that much better because it was a one time. You don't do it often. You do it for a particular reason.*
GH	*Why can't you do it with a particular school say every Friday morning?*
N Matolo	*They won't. They won't come every time you ask. You must go to them. And they say you must go there. ...The problem lies with the teachers. They don't use the library so they don't see the importance for the kids. Even if you sacrifice and say I'll come and fetch them it becomes difficult. You find you don't get the agreement.* (Interview 12 October: 4)

The disparity in usage between the two libraries continues in the afternoons. Woodsville Library is usually packed with school learners in the afternoon; Hillside might have 10 school students in at the most and a few tertiary students at one of the tables.

The frequent references to the under-use of the Hillside Library in my interview with Naledi Matolo on 12 October show her awareness of the problem. She attributes it to the lack of reading culture in her community and claims that she can do nothing about it:

> *Even the community, it's just they are reluctant. They don't want to use the library...*
> *Here I am just sitting. It's quiet. They don't use the library so you don't develop that much.*
> *My library's not busy. It's a situation I can't change. ...*
> *Or because my library's not busy. That's not my fault.* (Interview 12 October)

On meeting Naledi Matolo, I learned that she previously worked as a community educator for a HIV/AIDS NGO, a job, which she tells me she misses. Pursuing the issue of the developmental model of the public library, in her interview on 12 October, I asked Naledi if she had continued with her HIV/AIDS education in her present job in the library. She replies simply, "No". We then talk of her effort on International Literacy Day to bring a group of pensioners, who were queuing at the next-door municipal offices, into her library to read to them:

> GH   *The old people. Will they come back?*
> N Matolo   *Ja. If I can organise it, they will. Because they are near and they come everyday* [to the municipal office next door, where lunch is provided for pensioners]

However, by the end of the case study month, I noticed no attempt on her part to build on the initiative.

Comments from several of the Hillside teachers suggest that perceptions that Hillside Library is poorly resourced might play a part in its under-use. For example:

> *I go to the library in town because it's better than this one. ....It's got more books. There is nothing. They don't buy any new books. I already know there won't be anything. So why bother?* (Interview 1)
> *It's mostly English books but old English books – outdated.* (Interview 3)
> *It is a good library. The layout is good but unfortunately the resources are not enough. They don't match the expectations.* (Interview 23)

My own experience lends support to these comments. One afternoon, I spent a fruitless hour hunting through Hillside's collection for information on World Heritage Sites – after a query from some Grade 9 learners from Hillside High School. The afternoon before at Woodsville Library, in response to the same query, Tara Botha had found excellent information on the Encarta encyclopaedia loaded on the PC, several useful web sites and a recent reference book. I abandoned the search at Hillside after an hour and suggested to the learners that they make their way to Woodsville Library. The encounter gave me insight into Naledi Matolo's earlier comment, "It becomes disappointing when you don't have the information" (12 October: 6).

On my suggesting that the under-use of Hillside Library might be due to its poor stock, Tara Botha suggests that Naledi Matolo's lack of energy might be to blame for its inadequate stock:

> *That's where the librarian comes in. If she promotes the library then the library gets busy and then she'll get the books. It depends on the librarian.*

Resources are allocated to libraries by the Mpumalanga Provincial Library Service according to borrowing statistics, a policy accepted as fair by both Tara Botha and the Library Coordinator, who see no need to question it. The Coordinator says blandly, "Yes, they do it by circulation" (7 October) and Tara tells me:

> *I think it's fair. Why should a library that's not busy be incredibly well-stocked? While we who are so busy? Why should she sit with all the good books?* (Interview 8 October: 4)

Perhaps, the truth is that the under-use of Hillside Library will continue until there is a vision of a different kind of service.

8.3.2 Uneasy branch relations

The relationship between the two Woodsville libraries and their librarians is hard to define. At times, Tara Botha claims that Hillside Library is her "branch"; yet, at other times, she disclaims responsibility for it. Interviews, in the week following the event described in the vignette above, provide some enlightening data on the fundamental issue of how the two branches, and their staff, relate to each other and on the possible impact of the recent appointment of a library coordinator to supervise the six libraries of the new large local municipality – and on how these issues might influence information literacy education.

At times, a kind of contrariness can be detected in Tara Botha's words in talking of the under-use of Hillside Library, which leads to the proposition that Woodsville Library gains from the lack of productivity of its sister library. Tara Botha and her assistant at Woodsville, Tenji, frequently point out that the Hillside children prefer to come to Woodsville. On my asking why she does not place Tenji Miti at Hillside and bring Naledi Matolo to Woodsville, Tara replies:

> *That's why I won't put Tenji there. Then they* [children] *know she is there. Then they will know they need to use that library. Yes – then they will use that library.* (Interview 8 October: 11)

Here, she acknowledges a possible solution to the under-use of Hillside Library – if, that is, the under-use is to be attributed to the shortcomings of Naledi Matolo and if she, indeed, does want it to be more productive. A few weeks later, in reply to the same suggestion that she bring Naledi to Woodsville Library, she replies, "I couldn't bear the negativity" (Interview 22 October).

On my asking about the relationship between the two libraries and whether the merging of towns into the new local municipality will change relationships, both librarians foresee little change. Tara Botha states confidently:

> *She'll always be my branch. It's just like X* [township in library coordinator's town] *will always be M's branch.* [M is the acting library coordinator for the local municipality]
> *I don't think there will be any effect. I think it will stay the same as it is.* (Interview 8 October: 4)

Naledi Matolo agrees, although she does add a rider that she has some independence:

> *No. I don't get anything from there* [the local municipality]. *I only get it from Woodsville.*
> *I don't think so. I think I will still be getting it from Woodsville. ...*
> *I'm working under Woodsville. Really I'm working under Woodsville but I'm doing my own thing. But I'm supervised by Woodsville.* (Interview 12 October: 7)

Later on, there perhaps is a suggestion that she feels the information literacy intervention with Hillside Primary has been imposed on her, in her words:

> *I don't expect a thing from Woodsville. Sometimes I get – like the programme we're doing with the Grade Sevens. It's the idea of Woodsville. Sometimes I do my own things here – apart from Woodsville's ideas.*

Naledi's rider emphasising her independence is significant as, earlier in the interview, she reveals a grievance that her post has not been upgraded in the shifts that took place in November 2003, although those at Woodsville and elsewhere in the municipality were:

> *I find it unfair. Because my colleagues who are in charge of a library like in Woodsville they were changed to a better level. Why not me? Because I'm black maybe. Or because I'm at the township. Or because my library's not busy. That's not my fault....*
> *I'm not considered and I'm not recognised....*

Naledi's allusion to her being "black" and to her position in a "township" library recalls Klein and Myers's warning (1999: 77) on the need to consider the influence of conflicts resulting from unequal status and historical social context on the subject under study – in this case, public library relationships and information literacy education. Her words signal the possibility that her seeming passivity, in allowing the information literacy intervention with Hillside Primary to fizzle out, might be due to resentment at being overlooked in the general re-grading of posts at the end of 2003. Naledi Matolo remains on Grade 12 as does the Woodsville Library Assistant, Tenji Miti. Tara Botha was upgraded from Grade 9 to Grade 6. Naledi's contention is that she is in charge of a library and, therefore, should be higher than Library Clerk. On my asking her if she will return to the school to pursue the programme, she replies, "I can", but is ambivalent about whether she really will:

> GH   *But will you? What do you feel?*
> N Matolo   *I feel* [pauses]. *Maybe next year. Because they'll be in Grade 8.* (Interview 12
>   October: 6)

Tara Botha avoids any discussion of the failure of the information literacy intervention in the interview that follows it, two days later, but does hint at another possibility in talking in general terms of Naledi. Without prompting, she soon brings up their "problems", referring to a "first disciplinary hearing":

T Botha   *I expected too much of her. And at the end of the first year we had our first*
           disciplinary hearing. I put a lot of energy in that library. For the first two weeks I
           would give her the activity. In the morning I would be there and in the afternoon
           doing activities. She couldn't or wouldn't apply what she'd read in a book. Why
           couldn't she? She's an intelligent woman. Why couldn't she?
GH   *Why do you think?*
T Botha   *I think she didn't want to. Her classic excuse was "I don't know" ... It doesn't work*
           for me anymore these excuses. (Interview 8 October: 4)

It is noteworthy that the "disciplinary hearing", which is mentioned here, predates the November 2003 upgrading of posts that Naledi refers to and that is mentioned above as a possible explanation for her not continuing with the information literacy education project.

8.3.3 Missing connections: Hillside Primary and Hillside Library

In a later interview with Tara Botha on 22 October, when it is clear that the information literacy programme with Hillside Primary has definitely failed, I broach the issue again. Her words, in the long extract below, suggest that it is the relationship of school and public library that might be a fundamental factor in the failure as much as her and Naledi Matolo's personal relations. Her frustration is obvious. She attributes the failure to Naledi Matolo but does, in passing, acknowledge that Naledi said, "The principal wasn't interested". Towards the end of the extract, on my prompting, we return to the question of the relations between the public library and the schools and how the intervention was planned.

T Botha   *It says to me that I'll have to jump in there. I'll have to jump in and do it....*
           I'll go and speak to the headmaster very nicely. It's not acceptable to me. It's not
           acceptable. I don't know if it's the headmaster. I don't know what happened there.
           But to me it's a perfect reflection of what's going on in that library. It's perfect
GH   *What happened after the second step?* [When the third group of learners failed to
           come at all]
T Botha   *I have no idea. She* [Naledi Matolo] *said he wasn't interested. Either that or she*
           didn't explain it properly. Either he doesn't understand the importance of it. Or ...
           I'll have to go and see the headmaster. I must and be more aggressive in there.
           And you see – she doesn't care. It's very important. Once those kids – you should
           see the sense of achievement once they've grasped it...
           And them. I know quite a few of those teachers. Maybe it's time to invite them all
           again for tea, which I did initially.
GH   *When did you do that?*
T Botha   *Quite a while ago. Quite a while ago. You see that's the thing. Why must*
           everything come from me? I want a bit of input from her [Naledi Matolo]. *All the*
           initiative comes from me. I have to do it here as well. I need something from her.
           I'm not getting anything from her. [Continues in this vein]
GH   *One thing occurred to me. In the Western Cape we can't take kids from a school.*
           We have to be very careful... It has to be seen as part of the curriculum ...
T Botha   *It is. It is part of the curriculum. We never had that problem with Bergsig Primary.*
           They just walk down from the school. ... I always speak to the Principal

GH	*Did you speak to the Hillside Primary Principal this time?*
T Botha	*No. Because she* [Naledi Matolo] *invited the schools.*
GH	*You left it to Naledi?*
T Botha:	*Yes. I said: Go to the schools, speak to them and organise it.*

The extract shows Tara Botha's reluctance to consider the possibility that Naledi Matolo's failure stems from the lack of preliminary spadework for the information literacy education intervention. My interview with one of the Grade 7 teachers at Hillside Primary, a few days later, lends support to this tentative interpretation. In the extract below, at first he claims blandly to have a good relationship with the public library, even citing the request by Naledi Matolo to have his class visit the library. Then, as it becomes clear that I realise that the intervention failed and probe for reasons, he becomes more honest.

GH	*How would you describe your relations with the public library?*
Teacher	*I think "good". Because the other day they came, the lady who's working there came to request for some learners to come over. We have a healthy relationship.*
GH	*But that effort didn't work out did it? She took 10 and she wanted 10 more- then 10 more ...but it stopped ...*
Teacher	*Yes she took 10*
GH	*What happened?*
Teacher	*From what I heard from the learners, they have learned something. It's a good start. It's a question of working together with the lady and ourselves and encouraging the learners to utilise the library as it is supposed to be.*
GH	*So it was a good start?*
Teacher	*Yes*
GH	*I asked Naledi what went wrong when the next group didn't come.*
Teacher	*You see. You are doing a job you are charged to do. You are in the classroom to make sure learners learn. We have a problem when it comes to your classroom. When you have taken all 10 learners to the library, you must have an aim. You must be able to come back and see what you have done.*
GH	*Was it that it did not fit in?*
Teacher	*I think so. We would have sat together and had a timetable of a kind you know. Making a plan, revising it, making sure this thing is progressing.* (Interview 17)

One problem seems to be a lack of consultation. But more fundamentally, he does not seem to view Naledi Matolo as a partner in the educational programme. Later in the interview, a lack of trust is apparent when he says:

I don't think it's wise to send them over there without you every time. First I think, number one, the lady over there needed to have a particular partner in the school to work with. I don't think the people working over there in the library they shouldn't just sit back and expect the, especially the young learners, to use the library. I think learners should know - if the teacher is not there, they do have someone there who is acting as the teacher.

The other two Hillside Primary Grade 7 educators are rather vague, with one saying:

It happened a few months ago – No, was it last month? The librarian came here and asked the Principal whether we must group the kids so that they can pay a visit to the library. (Interview 23)

However, the school principal appears to have no recollection of the incident when I ask him later.

The Bergsig Primary's principal's positive attitude to the Woodsville Library is a strong factor in the apparent warm relations between that school and Woodsville Library, which Tara Botha refers to above. International research in school librarianship has found principals' attitudes to be crucial to effective information literacy education (for example Oberg, 1999; Wilson, Blake & Lyders, 1999; Hartzell, 2002; Henri, Hay & Oberg, 2002). The Bergsig Primary principal has, indeed, warm praise for Tara Botha:

The librarian is a very nice person. Very good – Tara. There we are presenting her with a bunch of roses because she's very involved with us. ...Yes from her side really she tries. Every year she phones us and she sets out a little programme and she gives us dates and we must please come. There are teachers who are keen and they will go on all the dates. But there are other teachers.
(Interview 28 October: 3)

However, her choice of words here, "a little programme", is intriguing. Together with the revelation in her interview that she does not remember the specific intervention of the previous term, it might indicate a gap between Tara Botha's perceptions of its importance and hers. One of the two Grade 7 educators at the school does remember it, saying that she hopes Tara Botha will repeat it. However, the other Grade 7 teacher is vague, seeming to know nothing about it at first. On my pressing him, he claims to have been away during the week of the intervention (Interview 8).

Two preliminary conclusions might safely be drawn in comparing Tara Botha's words with those of the educators in Hillside Primary and Bergsig Primary:

- Educators cannot be assumed to share Tara Botha's perspectives.
- As the Bergsig Primary principal implies in her last sentence above, not all teachers react to invitations in the same way. It might be significant that the educator, who praises Tara Botha's intervention, is a regular library user. She is one of the four respondents who, in planning an assignment, claim to consult the public library, and one of the two who discussed their last project with public library staff before assigning it to her class.

This section began with a vignette of an attempt at a formal information literacy education intervention in one school which led to two sets of questions: the first concerning the relationships between the two libraries and the second the relationship between the school and the public library. It has explored possible reasons for the failure of the attempt – shortcomings of the Hillside Library, uneasy relationships between the two public librarians, Naledi Matolo's passivity perhaps stemming from resentment at being overlooked. However, although all these might play a role, it seems clear that Tara Botha's too easy assumptions that the school understood her purpose might be a fundamental problem. Her own rhetorical question in our first meeting, "Don't they *know* how important it is?" is critical to the study

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(Field notes 4 October). It betrays her frustration but also asks a pertinent question. The following section provides another angle on the public library's work with school learners. Its focus is school learners' use of Woodsville Library in the afternoons and might serve to answer her question.

8.4   Vignette 2: afternoon pressures

Woodsville Library, Friday 22 October 2004

It is 2.30pm in Woodsville Library. Every nook and cranny is crammed with bodies. It is very noisy and Tenji Miti and Tara Botha frequently call out: "Hey Guys! This is a library! Keep it quieter!" Tenji Miti approaches me with a girl she has been talking to near the photocopier, where there is a long line of school learners waiting for her to copy pages, and asks if I can help her.

GH   *What do you need to do?*
Learner   *It's for Afrikaans. I have to write a paragraph for Afrikaans on an illness. And I must have pictures.*

I shepherd her to the medical books in the children's section just behind the copier – hoping to find a juvenile book on illnesses in Afrikaans.

GH   *Which illness?*
Learner   *Which illness can I do?*

She shows me a piece of paper with some words scribbled – hoes [cough], maagpyn [stomach pain], tuberkole [tuberculosis], bors-kanker [breast cancer].

GH   *Which are you interested in? Maybe you already know something about one?*

Silence from the learner. She stands looking unhappy. I guess that she wants to be "given" an illness. Seeing no easy book in Afrikaans on the shelves, I take her to the standard Afrikaans encyclopaedia set Kennis and pull down the Index volume. She hangs back so I open it up at "T" for Tuberkole and show her the reference to Volume 26 page 161. Still she hangs back so I show her that volume. Still she waits so I pull it down and open it up at page 161. I see an article, well-laid out with several pictures and diagrams. The learner glances at the pages and mutters something.

Learner   *I just need a few sentences.*
GH   *What do you want to find out about the illness?*

The learner looks blank. I wait for what seems a longish time but then find myself continuing

GH   *How about – "What is TB?" "What causes it?" "How do you know you have it – its symptoms?" "And then maybe how it is treated?" Look – it's all here under these headings. Why don't you read this and take what you need. The Afrikaans is easy, there are lots of pictures, and you won't have to translate from English.*

I now withdraw. A few minutes later I see her at the photocopier – Tenji is copying an article from World Book Encyclopaedia for her. The Kennis volume is lying on the table.

The vignette illustrates the value of participant observation in research. Together with other incidents, such as my fruitless search for information on World Heritage Sites in Hillside Library that was mentioned above, it taught me the risks of relying on detached observation alone. My interaction with this student mirrors the behaviour of the public library staff, which

I had been observing and recording in the busy afternoons. Just as I had observed them doing, I darted around the library, sometimes leaving the student standing in one place and sometimes with her in my wake. This student had no idea of my thinking processes as I went from section to section and had no interest in my explanations as I moved from book to book. What she wanted was a page to photocopy. The incident did more than just enrich my observations; it gave me direct experience of the reality experienced by public library staff and enabled me briefly to see through their eyes – one of the purposes of interpretive qualitative research.

The vignette serves to highlight the following issues to be followed up in this section:

- the prior learning of the students in the classroom before coming into the public library. Are they learning at school the information literacy skills that are included as generic and specific outcomes in all the learning areas of the South African curriculum?

- the role of educators. Are they aware of their learners' problems in completing their assignments?

- the responsibility of the public librarian in the information literacy education of school learners. Is it to provide a page or two to copy – which seems to be the expectation of the learners themselves? Or, given the possible absence of information literacy education in their classrooms and the absence of library programmes in their schools, is it to intervene more positively in their education and to contribute to their lifelong learning competencies?

- the receptivity of the learners themselves to information literacy education. My attempt in the above vignette to persuade the student to define her need, for example, was ignored.

- the capacity of public library staff for a more positive intervention. What support and tools do they need?

A closer look at the afternoon activities in the Woodsville Library might throw light on these issues.

8.4.1 Learners' assignments: the case of the Grade 9 CTAs

Throughout the case study month, Grade 9 learners were coming to the public libraries with assignments from the Department of Education's *Common Tasks for Assessment (CTA) Grade 9*, in the various learning areas. The CTA initiative is an attempt by government to establish common learning outcomes and to assess learning across the country at the end of

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the Senior Phase of schooling. The learners' books in each Learning Area follow the same format. Typically, desired learning outcomes are listed (often including information skills); the topic or theme is introduced; a classroom learning activity is given; then a task or home activity is given, a set of problems to solve and questions to answer through independent research, often in groups. Some booklets also include an addendum at the end – graphs, maps, and paragraphs from books.

The assignment on World Heritage Sites, mentioned earlier, might serve as a case to illustrate the learning challenges evident in the busy afternoons in the Woodsville public libraries. Appendix G provides a copy of some pages from the *Human and Social Sciences (HSS) Learner's Book*. They include the desired outcomes, the classroom discussion and pre-activity, the information pamphlet group task, and the five extracts that are provided as sources in the addendum at the end (South Africa. Department of Education, 2004). The desired outcome of the task is indicated by its heading "synthesising information" on page 8. The specific outcomes of the task are then listed as:

- the ability to understand the nature and use of sources
- the ability to deduce and synthesise information from sources and evidence
- the ability to use sources and evidence to formulate arguments and to state a position.

Immediately after the list of outcomes, the "resources needed" are listed:

- Sources B-E (paragraphs and a poem extracted from textbooks, the Constitution, and a web site, provided in the Addendum)
- A4 paper
- pen and pencil
- pictures from old journals and magazines.

The inadequacy of this list of resources is obvious on examining the assignment, "to design and produce an information pamphlet on the Drakensberg Heritage Site", and the Sources B-E in the Addendum. The task, thus, demands some technical skills and a synthesis of information on the Drakensberg site with four "topics" being given on page 10 as a guide to structure the pamphlet's content. The sources provided for the task are selected and tailored extracts – from a web site, a textbook and from the South African Constitution. If the emphasis in the task is on "synthesis" of information, rather than say "finding" relevant information, then of course the provision of sources is perfectly acceptable. Not all tasks have to develop all aspects of information literacy (Thomas, 1999: 51). However, the stated outcome "synthesising information" suggests the provision of a few sources for each topic so

that learners show they are able to organise, collate and integrate fragments of information and sometimes contradictory information (Loertscher & Woolls, 1999: 87). But each source in the Addendum seems to be geared for one of the given topics: for example the poem in Source D, headed "Another Account", is obviously suitable for Topic 3, and Source B, with the cryptic title "Pamphlet on Heritage", is suitable for Topic 1. Moreover, a closer look at the content of the sources shows their inadequacy even for their designated topics. They do not provide the information required to answer the questions in the four topics. Source B, for example, is short and vague and offers very little information of substance. (The mention of "old" journals and magazines in the list of suggested resources seems to indicate the cutting out and pasting of pictures for the pamphlet rather than their use as information sources).

The need to visit the public library or the World Wide Web is clear, although never mentioned. Indeed, none of the CTA booklets I gathered in the course of the month makes any reference to library resources or to libraries. The oversight mirrors the general absence of recognition in curriculum documents of the role of libraries, which was reported on in Chapter 2 of this dissertation [2.3]. The reality is that the CTA tasks brought scores of Grade 9 learners to the Woodsville public libraries. However my notes record the predominance of *black* learners, from both high schools. This, together with the month-long observation that white teenagers use the library mostly for their leisure reading, supports educators' comments in the two government schools in town that their "Afrikaans" (i.e. White) classes rely for such assignments on Internet access at home. Similar comments were made by the two educators in the tiny independent English-medium primary school.

Observation suggests that the generous provision of Internet access in libraries would not, in itself, solve the chief challenge confronting public library staff – namely, the inadequate information skills of their users. The major problem for the public library staff on the first encounter with the HSS task on 9 October stemmed from the confusion of learners, none of them first language English speakers, in reading the instructions. The first group of Hillside High school students seemed lost, lacking any grasp of what was required of them. After an hour of running around the library looking for material on archaeology, and only after insisting on seeing the CTA booklet, did we understand the assignment and their confusion. The students had presented Tara Botha with Topic 3 written on a piece of paper:

> How did the early inhabitants relate to their environment and to nature? What significance
> did nature play in their belief systems?

There was no clue in these sentences as to which "early inhabitants" were referred to. The students were working only on that topic and were unable to articulate that they needed

information on the early inhabitants of the Drakensberg. The wording of Topics 3 and 4 assumes that the learners will see them in relation to Topics 1 and 2.

This encounter and the one described in Vignette 2 recall the insistence of Kuhlthau and other information literacy theorists on the crucial importance of the early phases of the information search process. Both the Grade 9 HSS students and the girl in search of information on illnesses were "lost" because they were trying to focus prematurely; they first needed some background knowledge and context. Without this groundwork, it is perhaps inevitable that the public librarians' attempts to help their learning are unsatisfactory. To verify this statement, ideally these groups of learners should have been followed home and back to their classrooms for ongoing observation but this was beyond the scope of the study. However, the participant observation inside the libraries suggests three contributory factors:

- Students themselves lack insight into the process of information literacy. They do not know what they need and are impatient if they are not quickly handed pages to copy.

- Learners' reading in English is often inadequate. They struggle to make sense of library materials and, as in the above example, often just do not understand instructions given in their assignments.

- The individual learning support that is required to fill gaps is difficult in public libraries in the afternoons. In working with one student or one group, the librarian has to ignore the growing queues of learners in need.

8.4.2 Conceptions of the role of the public library in information literacy education

An even more fundamental factor might be the conceptions of information literacy and information literacy education amongst the Woodsville librarians. Observations of the service provided to learners in the afternoons and follow-up questions in their interviews might provide insight into the librarians' conceptions of their role in information literacy education.

The pattern in Woodsville Library is that a sudden flurry of requests for a specific topic alerts staff to a new project or assignment. A hurried search is done and books are then taken from the shelves and perhaps pages are printed from the World Wide Web. These are placed in a box on the floor behind the circulation desk [See photograph Appendix D] – to prevent the early birds taking all the books out. This habit short-circuits any independent information retrieval by the children, however. Indeed, one of the educators in the small independent school gives it as her reason for not warning the public library ahead of time of her assignments, saying, "I want the kids to find it themselves" (Interview 22).

The vignette that introduced this section describes the darting around of the librarian in search of answers to queries in the various sections of the library, while the learner waits. In the absence of subject indexes, it is difficult to do otherwise. Neither of the Woodsville libraries has any kind of index which might be used to teach learners the skills of information retrieval. The Mpumalanga Provincial Library Service's BEB computerisation project aims at library networking and at bringing the public into the information society (Hendrikz & Smit, 2003). However, in common with computerisation projects in other library services in South Africa (Hart, 1999b), the BEB project has not provided online *public access* catalogues. Thus, it might well in reality have only restricted public access to provincial databases, since the old public card catalogues have been replaced by multipurpose workstations, for the use of staff only.

It is significant that the library staff express no concern at the lack of access to their collections and to other libraries' via catalogues and indexes. On my asking how she finds information without indexes, Tara Botha replied, "We have the Dewey chart and we know where the books are" (Field notes 12 October). Tenji Miti nodded her agreement. Observations occasionally led me to doubt their words. For example, my field notes of 9 October record an incident involving a request for "something on vampires". After running around a little and with no subject index to guide her, Tenji was about to give up when I handed her a book from the folklore section at 398, which I had noticed in the course of my shelving duties.

Naledi Matolo provided me with the refrain that came to encapsulate the categorical issue here, when, on my asking how she remembers what she has, she tapped her head, saying, "It's in my head" (Interview 12 October). When I ask Naledi, whom Tara Botha and Tenji Miti describe as "intelligent" and "brilliant", what she is most proud of in her work, she replies:

> *Mostly I am proud because I can assist them from my knowledge in my head – not using the book. I can help them a lot.* (Interview 12 October: 6)

Here she takes pride in her own general knowledge. The suggestion is that the satisfaction in having the right answer to a query might be a factor in the lack of urgency in setting up public access systems. The pleasure of having information "in one's head" is that one can "give" it to people – in keeping perhaps with the conception that the role of the public library is to give information rather than empower people with the lifelong learning skills of finding it themselves. The implication of this conception for information literacy education is that there no conception of the need for public access indexes.

It appears that there might well be a connection between the Woodsville approaches to school interventions and conceptions of information literacy education. In the interviews of the first phase, both Tara Botha and Naledi Matolo came across as relatively progressive in terms of information literacy education. Both described themselves as educators for example, and Tara Botha claimed to have strong connections to the Woodsville schools. The second phase offers partial confirmation. Tara Botha clearly finds great satisfaction in working with children. Her storytelling sessions are imaginative and meticulously planned, as are her information literacy sessions. In addition, each Monday afternoon she runs a Soul Buddies group, involving 20 children from all the Woodsville schools. However, observation of her work with the Hillside Primary group and of her relations with the schools, together with interview data, suggests that she, in common with Naledi Matolo, sees the purpose of her information literacy education to be library orientation and to teach learners how to use the reference section. Her interventions take a generic approach and there is no attempt to work on specific projects with teachers. When she talks about what she would like from schools, she expresses no wish to be more involved in class project work. She perceives her role there as to set aside books and copies of web pages in the project box to give out on demand.

A fundamental question is whether the prevailing approach to information literacy education in the Woodsville libraries – exemplified in the first vignette as once-off instruction in the use of reference books in the library with no attempt to immerse it in the pupils' learning programme – addresses the gaps that are highlighted in the second vignette. Tara Botha's question, which was cited earlier, "Don't they [i.e. educators] know how important it is?", begs the question, "How important *what* is?". The "it" to her is the library. Perhaps, the analysis in this section suggests that, if she is to make progress in her relations with the local schools, she will need to re-examine her assumption that the "it" is self-explanatory.

8.5 "Don't they know how important it is?" School perspectives

This section summarises and analyses the data gathered in the schools in an attempt to answer Tara Botha's question. Chapter 4 describes the interview/questionnaire schedule for the 23 educators [4.3.2.2.2] and Appendix F gives its summary numbers. The interview protocol for the principals is included in Appendix I. Some of the data have already been referred to in the preceding sections. Table 18 gives the numbers of educators interviewed in each of the seven schools. The 22 educators represent probably about 90 percent of the total number of teachers in Grades 7 and 8 in the seven schools. The Grade 4 teacher-librarian in Woodsville Primary is the only designated teacher-librarian in the seven schools and seemed a likely key

informant. Conveniently, educators responsible for the library collections and computer rooms in the schools were among the 22 Grade 7 and 8 educators. Grades 7 and 8 were chosen as my earlier research suggested that learners in these grades are the heaviest users of public libraries, with project work being their major purpose in visiting the public library (Hart, 2003). Grade 7 is placed within the primary school and Grade 8 is the first year of high school. However, these grades both belong to the Senior Phase of schooling. Two of the principals, of Forest Primary and Mountainview Primary, are also Grade 7 teachers and gave both perspectives.

Bergsig Primary	2 plus principal	Mountainview Primary	2 incl principal
Forest Primary	2 incl principal	Woodsville High	6 plus principal
Hillside Primary	3 plus principal	Woodsville Primary	3 plus principal
Hillside High	5 plus principal		

Table 18: Respondents' schools

In retrospect, it is a pity that Grade 9 educators were not interviewed as well since, as described above, the Grade 9 Common Task Assesments (CTAs) were found to dominate the libraries' afternoons throughout October. However, it took time for the importance of the CTAs to become clear and scheduling appointments with teachers proved time-consuming, involving face to face negotiation with principals, who then negotiated on my behalf with the educators.

Section A of the interview schedule gathers data on the educator respondents. Their home languages are given in Table 19.

Afrikaans	9	English	2
Siswati	8	Sipedi	1
N. Sotho	2	Venda	1

Table 19: Educators' languages

Their average age is 37 years; they have been teaching on average for 10 years; and they have worked at their present schools on average for 4.6 years. A clear divide with regard to tertiary qualifications is evident – with the historically advantaged schools' educators having higher qualifications. Three of the six Woodsville High School teachers have Honours degrees and post graduate teaching qualifications and the other three have four-year technical and teaching diplomas. Four of the five Hillside High respondents have a three-year teaching diploma with the fifth an Advanced Certificate of Education adding to his three-year diploma.

The sub-sections that follow aim to build understanding of the educators' experience and perceptions of the following:

- libraries. The open-ended questions in Section C focus on educators' experience of reading, books and libraries – in their childhood and own education, since previous

research has speculated that they influence their use of libraries in their teaching (Olën, 1993; Maepa & Mhinga, 2003). Other questions in Sections D and G ask about their views on the implications of Curriculum 2005 for libraries and their relationship with the Woodsville public libraries.

- project work. One of the marks of educational transformation in South Africa is its emphasis on independent project work. Learners are continuously assessed by means of portfolios of work, a major component of which is project work. Projects provide the most effective arena for the learning of information literacy, as evidenced by several studies in the literature of information literacy education and my own research in Cape Town (Hart, 1999a; 2000b).

- information literacy and information literacy education – as in Question 22 in Section E and in the questions in Section H.

8.5.1 Educators and libraries

The questions in the interviews concerning past experience of libraries and reading are based on the premise that educators' present reading and library behaviours have their roots in the environments in which they were brought up. As Pretorius and Machet put it in their study of literacy education in schools in KwaZulu Natal, literacy behaviours are "socio-culturally constructed" (2004: 59).

8.5.1.1 Past experience of libraries

Questions 13 to 17 reveal, indeed, a divide in the study's respondents – between the white teachers, who were brought up with access to books and libraries, and the black teachers, who had few books at home, whose schools did not have libraries and whose neighbourhoods rarely had public libraries. Perhaps two extracts might serve to illustrate the divide. The first is from the interview with a 34-year-old Pedi-speaking woman who grew up in a rural settlement.

Teacher   *There were no special books. Only had the books from the school. No extra books. Because my parents weren't educated. My father was a bit learned. I don't know how. But he could read and write. But my mother couldn't read, couldn't write, but she was very much intelligent. I even remember my mother, she never went to school but every day she was checking our books and she could identify a right tick and a wrong one. So that's one thing that makes me to think proud of her...*

GH   *Did she tell you stories?*

Teacher   *No. When we were growing up, you know we blacks we stay together as extended families, so there was this man, he was my father's cousin. By that time he was old and he came to stay with us in our house, so he used to tell us stories...*

GH   *In the village was there a public library?*

Teacher   *No*

GH   *At school?*

Teacher   *In high school there was a library but it was also not resourced.*

GH   *When you went to college?*

Teacher   *Yes. When we went to college we did library as a subject. That's where I learned how*

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> *to use the library, how to find a book in the library, which section, how to arrange books.* (Interview 3)

The second interview is with a 34-year Afrikaans-speaking man.

Teacher   *We were part of the Dan Retief Kinder Club. You could order story books and they would mail it to you. There were lovely stories in it. I remember, some of my fondest memories is before we had television. I can remember before that we'd spend our evenings sitting next to my dad on our couch in the lounge and he would read us stories. Lovely. So we grew up with books, we would buy books, we would order books, we would go to the library.*

GH   *The public library?*

Teacher   *The public library in the town centre there in V.... There's quite a big one there. They had a whole children's section there and then the adult's section on the other side. We also had a library at the school. At the primary school.*

GH   *What sort of library was it?*

Teacher   *I know that we still had an official library period if I remember correctly I think once a week. They would explain how the library works and how to take out books and so on. There was a library teacher. That was her job. I think what did happen as well was that teacher would go and take a whole bunch of stuff out take it to the classroom and then you would work from those books in the classroom.* (Interview 9)

For almost all of the black teachers, their first experience of libraries was at their teacher training colleges, where many of them, in common with their white colleagues, did "Library" – a course intended to teach them how to administer a school library.

Only two black respondents remember being told stories by relatives and none of the black respondents were read to by parents, who were, most acknowledge, lacking in formal education. Two black teachers report that their parents were school principals but even they had only study books in their homes. Perhaps, culture, as well as lack of formal education, plays a role as suggested by the Hillside High School educator who, on my asking if her parents read to her as a child, replies:

> *"No. That's not our culture".* (Interview 4)

Their childhoods might well affect their present reading habits and attitudes to libraries. Almost all the white teachers claim to read as a leisure pursuit; with several having special interests such as biography and adventure. A few of them buy books – at the excellent second-hand book shop in Woodsville or at book shops when they visit larger towns or via the Internet. Otherwise they rely on family gifts and loans. For leisure reading, the black teachers, except for one, read newspapers and magazines. None of the black teachers buys books, unless they are required to for courses. Almost all the black teachers see books in terms of study and self-improvement. The same educator who, above, alluded to "culture" betrays her view of reading as a serious business, when she talks of reading to her four year old daughter:

> *It's hard to sit her down so that she can concentrate.* (Interview 4)

Nine of the educators and principals (four black and five white) claim to belong to Woodsville Library – with two more claiming that their wives belong on their behalf and another claiming that she takes her child there frequently. None uses Hillside Library – with the recently appointed principal of Hillside High School hearing for the first time of its existence in our interview. Woodsville Library comes in for some criticism from both groups of readers. The leisure readers complain that they cannot find their favourite authors' most recent books in it and the students cannot find the books they require for their studies.

8.5.1.2 Educators' perceptions of public libraries

The five questions in the educators' interviews that focus on public libraries are given below with summary figures. (N = 23 although some respondents did not answer certain questions).

Question		Yes	No	
20	Do you think Curriculum 2005 has increased the use of public libraries by school learners?	22	1	
34	[In your recent project] did you suggest to you learners that they use the public library?	7	12	
35	Did you discuss the project with the public library staff before you set it?	2	17	
40	In planning your class assignments do you ever consult or communicate with the public library staff?	4	19	
42	Do you think that the public library has a role to play in the educational programme of your school?	21	2	
47	Who, in your opinion, should teach information skills to school learners?	School 1	Public library 0	Both 20

Table 20: Educators' views on educational role of the public library

The educators appear to acknowledge firmly the role of the public library in Curriculum 2005, with unanimity in Question 20 that curriculum change will have brought heavier use of public libraries by their learners. Most explain their answer to Question 20 in language typical of the RNCS documentation. They thus talk of "independent research", "learner-centredness", "facilitating learning", and moves away from "rote-learning" towards "learners' accessing information for themselves". A gap between theory and practice might explain the contradiction between their answers to Question 20 and their evident failure to consult the public library in their teaching, as revealed in responses to Questions 34, 35 and 40, as shown in Table 20. One of the Hillside Primary educators acknowledges a possible gap between what educators are "supposed to" do and their classroom behaviour, when he says:

We used to impart knowledge to the kids. These days we engage learners in gathering information. We are supposed to. We might not be adjusted yet as educators. We need to come together. We need preparation. We need more workshops. (Interview 16)

The accompanying open-ended questions might throw light on the contradiction evident in these figures.

The open-ended Question 39 asks educators to describe their relationship with the Woodsville public libraries. Nine claim to have a good relationship – specifically with Woodsville Library and specifically alluding to the helpfulness of the "lady" there. However, three of these nine admit that their knowledge of the library is not direct – they have witnessed the service their children receive or have heard of it from their learners. Eleven reply that they have no relationship or contact with either library, including six out of the eight respondents in the Hillside schools. Two Hillside High School educators phrase their answer to this question in an ambiguous phrase, "I ignore it" (Interviews 1 and 4). The word "ignore" seemed to be carefully chosen and perhaps implies a disdain for the library. And indeed, the Hillside teachers' responses to Question 39 include several critical comments on the mediocrity of Hillside Library, which have already been cited as evidence of the perceptions that Hillside Library is inferior to Woodsville Library [8.3.1]. There is also a critical comment on Naledi Matolo from one of the Hillside High teachers, who says of Naledi Matolo, "She is inadequate. She's not trained" (Interview 4). Her comment might lend support to my earlier suggestion, in the discussion of the reluctance of the Hillside Primary teachers to send their class to Hillside Library [8.3.3], that teachers might not see public library staff as colleagues in the educational programme. The issue of the perceived status of public library staff might well be significant in their relations with schools. Some international research in information literacy education in higher education has found that the low status of librarians hinders the development of academic partnerships - with teaching staff misunderstanding the "invisible" work of librarians (Hutchins, Fister & MacPherson, 2002: 7).

Further evidence of a certain obtuseness with regard to libraries might be found in the responses to Questions 41 and 43, which ask teachers to elaborate on their view of the role of the public library in the educational programme of their school. The 19 educators who, according to Question 40, never consult the public library in planning their assignments seem surprised at the question. Some examples of their explanations include:

It never crossed my mind. (Interview 1)
I never thought about it. (Interviews 6 and 23)

Several just do not see the need:

I've never needed it. (Interview 9)
I've never involved them. There's no reason to. (Interview 5)

The gulf between public library and school is illuminated in the words of one of the Hillside High School teachers, when she refers to a situation that exasperates the public library staff:

If the first person comes – the public library staff pick up which project we're doing. After the first three or four children, they know and help us and put books aside. They help us. (Interview 20)

The 21 respondents, who acknowledge a role for the public library, share similar views on what that role is, describing it, mostly, as supplementing the resources of the school, for example:

When we teach the kids they must then go and get resources. (Interview 2)
Because not all the children have the Internet or resources at home. I think we schools must ask them to help. (Interview 20)
For sure. Some of the information that kids need for assignments we don't have. (Interview 18)
They supply learners with information. (Interview 1)
They have staff; they have things available. They put them out on tables. (Interview 9)
They can provide you with books and make copies for school for free. (Interview 19)
They have to make their way to the library to get the right information. (Interview 10)

These responses reveal a view of the library as a storehouse where information is "fetched". Only four of the 21 conceive of a larger role for the public library – in the learning of their pupils rather then the above "putting out" of materials:

If learners can use the library properly we can refer them to the library to do the assignments. The librarian teaches them the skills. (Interview 17)
A very important role. Should a child be acquainted with the public library we won't be having a problem with misinterpretation. (Interview 3)
They assist learners with their projects. (Interview 12)
It sharpens the reading skills – it's more about the mental side of learning. It introduces them to books. (Interview 15)

8.5.2 Educators and school projects

As shown above, there is consensus among the Woodsville educators that the South African curriculum requires learners to go to public libraries – to find or "fetch" information for their assignments and projects. Responses to the questions in Section E, *Your Experience of School Projects,* might throw light on the question of the prior learning and groundwork of learners before they arrive at the public library.

In the context of the new curriculum and of the shifts in enrolment patterns, educators acknowledge that they are struggling to cope with shortages of resources and with the uneven access to resources among their learners. In the course of their interviews, several educators at the previously advantaged Woodsville schools allude to the new challenges of meeting the needs of the disadvantaged at the same time as those of their traditionally more advantaged learner body. The educators often resort to a kind of code, preferring to talk of their "black" classes as "English" classes. One, for example, says that the emphasis on independent project work is increasing the gap between advantaged and disadvantaged as "the English classes don't have the Internet [at home]" (Interview 20). Another respondent worries that her assignments are too dull for her "Afrikaans class" as she does not want to set topics that demand sophisticated resources and that might therefore disadvantage her "English class".

These comments attest to the resource demands of the South African school curriculum. The words of one of the respondents at Woodsville High School, who taught previously at a well-resourced independent school, are telling. She congratulates me on my research subject saying:

> *I'm so pleased someone is doing this. OBE* [Outcomes based education] *is fine at my old school but the teachers here don't know what they should be doing. Why did they introduce the new curriculum without thinking of the resources? They were mad.* (Interview 20)

In this context, the strategies of the educators in handling project work are of interest. Questions 29 to 36, in Section E of the educators' interviews, gather information on recent projects. They reveal three strategies to overcome shortages of and disparities in resources:

- One strategy is to undertake all project work in class – as seven educators do. This ensures that what is required is in the room, for example, the textbooks, worksheets and newspapers which are the resources most frequently mentioned. This approach also ensures that children do their own work.

- The choice to rely on classroom work implies certain kinds of topics and practical activities. Examples from Question 29 are: a survey of learners' favourite subjects; making papier-maché furniture from newspapers; drawing graphs from data provided by the teacher; petition-writing to change a clause in the South African Constitution; applying for jobs advertised in newspapers brought in by the teacher; a mind-map from a section of a textbook.

- Some educators choose topics for which information will be available in the community. For example, one instructed his class to interview their parents working in the local sawmills for a project on the forestry industries. Another suggested that his learners interview Eskom workers fixing poles in the neighbourhood for their project on electricity. However, this latter educator, in explaining his rather lukewarm feelings about project work in response to Question 24, expresses concern that these sources are not always the most authoritative, saying, "Sometimes they [his pupils] come with something that is not true – sometimes it works, sometimes it doesn't" (Interview 8).

These data recall the findings of my earlier study of project work in disadvantaged schools in a circuit of schools in Cape Town where similar strategies were apparent. My suggestion then was that some of the "projects", although clearly an understandable response to the schools' environments, might not conform to the accepted definitions of project work in pedagogical theory (Hart, 1999a: 130). Typical learning outcomes of projects are personally choosing a subject and identifying relevant questions, planning of the project, selecting relevant sources of information, and, so on (Leith, 1981: 55, 59; Tann, 1988: 5). The Woodsville educators'

descriptions in Question 29, as well as their lists of outcomes in Question 32, suggest that most of the Woodsville projects are teacher-initiated activities rather than projects. One or two comments suggest that the "projects" are undertaken to provide marks for the assessment requirements of the RNCS.

Table 21, which summarises the resources available in school in the Woodsville educators' most recent projects, in response to Question 31, provides support for this conclusion. It shows that overall not many resources are used and that textbooks and worksheets remain among the most used. However, it is also noteworthy that public library books, brought into school by learners, are, together with worksheets, the second most frequently cited category in the Table. It should also be noted that the two respondents in the small English medium independent school both insist that the Internet, accessed at home, was an important source – as do two other educators in Woodsville High School.

Resources available to learners in most recent project	Responses
Textbooks	8
Newspapers/Magazines	8
Worksheets compiled by teacher	7
Public library books borrowed by pupil	7
School library books	4
Teacher's own books	4
Interviews	4
Class visit to museum or place of interest	2
Worksheets, pamphlets, from above visit	2
Teachers' resource collection in school	1
NGO materials	1
School video	1
Computer educational materials	1
School's visual materials	1
Books borrowed by teacher from friend/family	0
Books borrowed by teacher from another school	0
Public library books borrowed by teacher	0
Television	0
Video Library's video/film	0
Internet Access at School	0
CDROM	0
Pupil's own books	0

Table 21: Resources available in class in recent project: Question 31

Question 26 duplicates Question 25 in the first phase questionnaire [See 6.4]. It examines the educators' perceptions of learners' difficulties with the information seeking and handling which is intrinsic in project work. The question originates in Moore's study of information literacy among 40 educators in four New Zealand primary schools (1998). It presents respondents with a sequence of tasks demanded in project work, and asks respondents to say

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whether learners have problems "usually", "often", "sometimes", "rarely" or "never". Figure 25 summarises their answers.
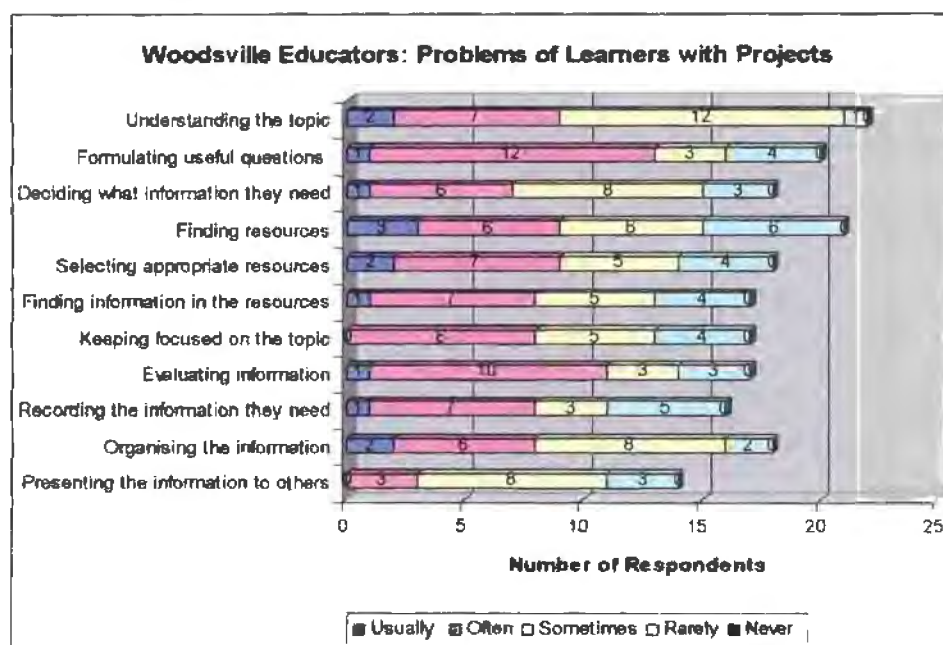
Figure 23: Question 26

Compared with their New Zealand counterparts, the Woodsville teachers perceive their learners to have relatively little difficulty with project work tasks. Only two tasks are rated by more than half of the Woodsville educators as "usually" or "often" problematic: "formulating realistic questions" and "evaluating information". This compares with the eight ranked as usually or often problematic by more than 50 percent of the New Zealand teachers. Moore does not give aggregate figures, presumably beeause of the wide differences between her four schools. But if an average is calculated from her figures, it can be seen that the New Zealand educators rate "recording information" as the most problematic task, followed by "formulating realistic questions" and "deciding what information is needed" (Moore, 1998: Appendix 9, Table 10).

The Woodsville educators are also more positive about learners' project skills than the Mpumalanga public librarians of the first phase survey, as is shown in the Figures 26 and 27. Figure 26, from Chapter 6, is sorted in order of the total number of respondents in Mpumalanga's public libraries answering "usually" or "often" when asked about learners' problems with the tasks. Figure 27 gives the same data as Figure 25 just above; but it orders the Woodsville educators' responses to match Figure 26 – so that responses might be compared.
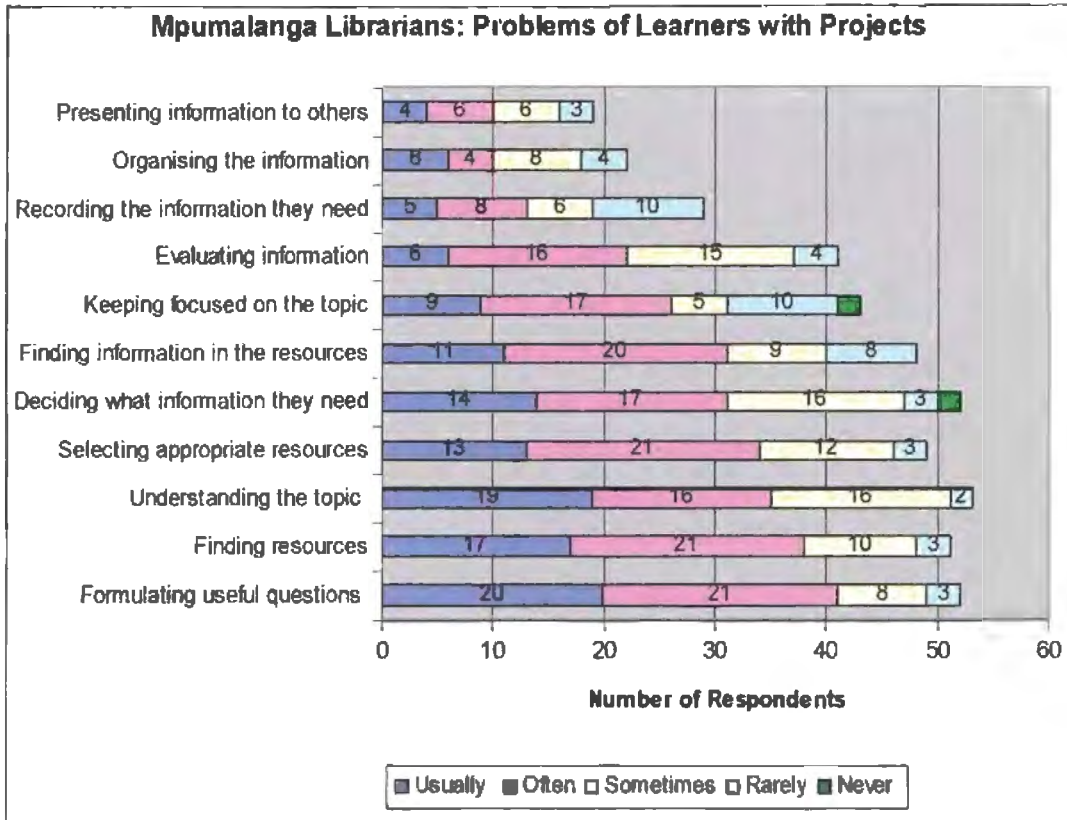
Figure 24: Question 25: First Phase Questionnaire
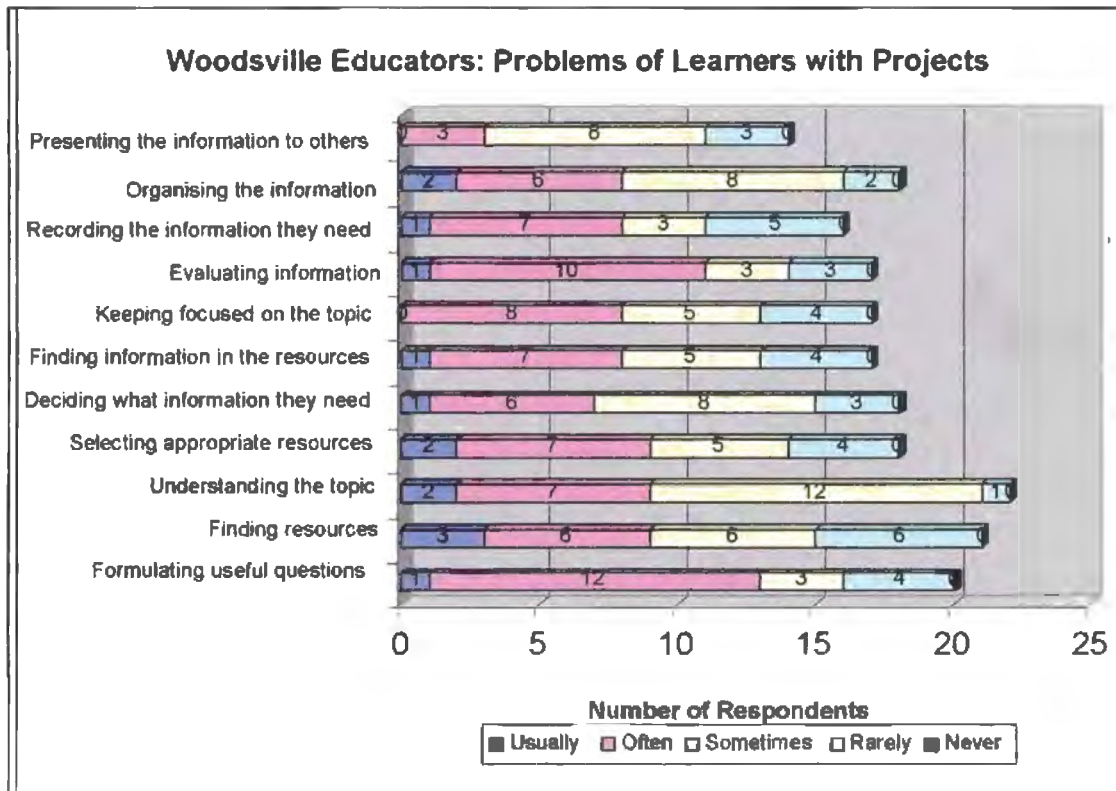
Figure 25: Question 26

In comparing their views of the earlier phases, apart from the agreement that "formulating questions" is the most problematic area, the Figures show a marked difference between the two groups; this is of interest, even if not statistically valid.

There are several possible explanations for the educators' relative optimism. Research in project work has found that teachers often underestimate the complexity of project work tasks. It has been speculated that the reason is that project work and its intrinsic information skills did not feature in their own education (Olën, 1993: 80; Kerry & Eggleston, 1994: 192). Indeed, responses to Question 27 show that only seven of the 23 Woodsville educators have had some training in project work. Another explanation might lie in the kinds of projects their learners are undertaking, which might mask the lack of information literacy of their learners. As shown earlier, responses to Question 29, in which educators describe their most recent projects, reveal that many are, in reality, small-scale activities or exercises.

8.5.3 Educators' conceptions of information literacy

Educators' conceptions of the role of the public library in their learners' assignments must surely depend on their conceptions of the skills demanded. In an earlier section, in reporting the interview with the teacher-librarian at Woodsville Primary [8.2.1], I speculated that educators in her school might have "naïve" views of the work of a librarian. She accuses them of seeing her job as nothing more than "packing books", ignoring the high level information skills demanded by library assignments and projects.

Question 22 asks respondents to define the phases or stages of project work – in keeping with Kuhlthau's model, described in Chapter 1 [1.2.1]. It duplicates the question asked of public librarians in the Phase 1 survey [Figure 18, 6.2.3]. Figure 23 maps their replies. It is of interest to compare the way in which the Woodsville educators and the librarians in the first phase respond to the question. It must, however, be borne in mind that the librarians are a representative sample of the Mpumulanga population, whereas the educators are a smaller group from a particular area.

Figure 26 grid — Interview rows vs. Stages 1–7 with Total column:

Interview	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3	Stage 4	Stage 5	Stage 6	Stage 7	Total
1								0
5								0
9								0
15								0
23								0
2								1
16								1
14								1
8								1
21								2
10								2
20								2
3								3
4								3
18								3
11								4
13								4
17								4
6								4
12								4
7								5
19								5
22								5
	9	2	11	11	7	4	10	

Stages

1. Analysing need
2. Recognising need for background knowledge
3. Deciding where to go
4. Finding relevant information
5. Engaging with information, reading, summarising
6. Synthesising information from different sources
7. Organising information, presenting, writing up

Figure 26: Educators' awareness of stages in Information Seeking Process: Question 22

Figure 26 shows an emphasis on Stages 3 and 4, the "finding" of information, interestingly in common with the public librarians in the Phase 1 survey. Table·22 shows the percentage of each group who make mention of a particular stage.

	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3	Stage 4	Stage 5	Stage 6	Stage 7
Educators (n=23)	39.1%	8.7%	47.8%	47.8%	30.4%	17.4%	43.5%
Librarians (n=57)	28.1%	7.0%	70.2%	45.6%	24.6%	14.0%	7.0%

Table 22: Percentages of mentions of seven stages

Their views are relatively very similar, with one striking exception. This is shown in the scattergraph in Figure 27.
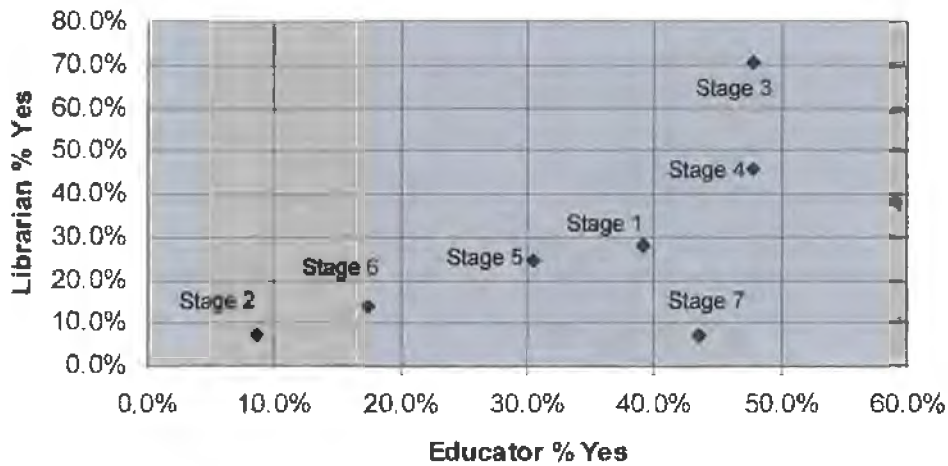
Figure 27
Woodsville educators' and Mpumalanga librarians' ISP responses

The major exception is clearly Stage 7, the writing-up and presenting phase, which 43.5 percent of the Woodsville educators mention, while only 7 percent of the librarians in the first phase do so. To illustrate the effect of this, a Spearman rank correlation was calculated between the ranked percentages of each group. This is a distribution-free test, which shows whether the percentage yes expressed by the two groups for the various stages tends to be ordered in the same way. It is more appropriate to use in this small sample situation that the parametric Pearson correlation. This nonparametric measure was first calculated with the percentages for all seven stages, then with percentages for only the first six. Table 23 gives the results.

Stages(N)	Spearman	t(N-2)	p-level
7	0.7091	2.25	0.0744
6	0.0956	11.66	0.0003

Table 23: ISP Stages 6 and 7 correlations

There is extremely high rank correlation (p<0.001) for the first six stages, but this becomes insignificant (p>0.05) when the seventh stage is included. While caution should be exercised in generalizing this to wider populations, there is clear evidence that there is some discontinuity between the views of the educators and the librarians between the sixth and seventh stages. The finding lends support to the suggestion in Chapter 6 that public librarians perceive their work to be complete once they hand the information to the learners and therefore just do not have an interest in the larger process.

Another noteworthy difference between the two groups lies in the awareness of the role of libraries in information seeking. Unlike the librarian respondents, most of whom see

information finding in terms of the library, not one of the educators mentions "library" or "librarian" in describing the information seeking of a learner in Question 22. Similarly, there is no mention of libraries in their descriptions of information literacy in response to Question 45 in Section H. In that question, among the 12 respondents who claim to be familiar with the concept, there is a consensus that information literate people know where and how to find information – but none mentions a library. It seems that libraries just do not come to mind when educators are asked to think of information seeking.

Question 46 reveals that 15 of the 23 educators believe that learners are learning information skills in school – although only 12 claim to recognise the concept of information literacy or information skills in response to Question 44. The answers to Question 46 vary within schools – with, for example, two of the respondents in each of the high schools saying that information skills are not being learned in their schools. Three of the 15 educators who answer Question 46 positively modify their answers in saying, "Yes - they are *supposed* to", perhaps referring to the fact that information literacy skills are listed as both a generic outcome and specific outcome in all learning areas of the RNCS.

8.5.4 A tentative answer to Tara Botha's question

The analysis of the data in this section leads to the likely answer to Tara Botha's question: "No – the Woodsville educators do not know how important the public library is". It appears that educators might not connect the library with the learning needs of their learners. On the whole, the library to them is a place where information is "fetched"; the work of the librarian is to hand it over. This conception reflects their simplistic conceptions of project work which underestimate the high-level information skills required. Moreover, their optimism that their learners are being taught information literacy is contradicted by the observation of learners in the Woodsville libraries, interviews with the public library staff and analysis of the CTA booklets.

8.6   Vignette 3: wider perspectives: a visit to Groenvallei

Wednesday 20 October, Groenvallei Library
It is 10.00am and again I am standing with Tara Botha outside a library – in Groenvallei (pseudonym), a small town in the north of the local municipality to which Woodsville belongs. This time we are standing with Margie Wes (pseudonym), the Library Coordinator for the local municipality. She has driven the one hour journey from her town through the mountain passes to Woodsville and then another hour with us through another set of passes to this town. The library is locked up – a sign "Back in 5 minutes" is stuck on the door.

The library is one of the six libraries in the recently formed local municipality. The Groenvallei library has cropped up in Tara Botha's conversation often, which is why I welcomed the chance to accompany the two women. Its regular librarian has been suspended – why I am not told. Margie Wes is here today

to meet the stand-in librarian, Lizelle, and to show her "a few things". But the staffing crisis involves more than this small town. Before her suspension, the librarian was asked to train another staff member, Dineo, a former municipal cashier, who has been appointed by the municipality to manage the still-to-be-opened library in Lara, a rural settlement north of the town. Three days into her training period, on the suspension of the Groenvallei librarian, Dineo was expected to step in and run the Groenvallei Library. Then, tragically, soon after that, Dineo's son died and she is now on compassionate leave. A local resident, Lizelle, has stepped in to run the Groenvallei Library, until the suspended staff member returns.

Ten minutes later, Lizelle arrives and lets us in. The next hour is spent with Margie Wes chatting to Lizelle, fielding her questions and showing her how to make borrowers' record cards. The local municipality's stationery budget is exhausted and makeshift arrangements are required. Lizelle reports that she has been inundated with requests for careers information from senior phase learners and for study guides. Tara points out that Groenvallei Library was issued with a set of study guides as were all the libraries in the Province. Otherwise, little concrete help is offered to solve Lizelle's problem. The emphasis in the training today, I note, is exclusively on the clerical work involved in running the library and on the photocopier. As I bid Lizelle goodbye, she confides that she has applied for the job as library clerk, as has her daughter. On my asking why, she replies that she likes reading.

The visit seems to have freed a tirade of criticism from Margie Wes and Tara. As we drive back to Woodsville, I listen as they cap each other's anecdotes about the incompetence of the local municipality's management. Margie Wes is angry at the appointment of Dineo to Lara by the Municipal Manager. She was not consulted and is waiting for two new staff members in her own library. The Lara library is still an empty shell, without shelves and books.

Interested that Dineo's training for her work at Lara apparently is now seen to be complete, I probe Margie's views on the education and training required of a rural librarian. After all, Dineo, until recently a municipal cashier, will be running an isolated library that will serve a huge undeveloped area. There seems to be no quibble over the fact that Dineo has no library education or experience or background. Tara chips in, telling me, "We are none of us qualified. She is literate and she is enthusiastic. She'll be fine".

The visit to Groenvallei focused my mind on the role of the public library in small rural towns and the rural settlements of the local municipalities – and on the capacity of its staff to fulfil that role. The vignette serves to highlights issues such as:

- the relations between provincial library service and the local municipality, since the absence of any mention by the two public librarians of the Mpumalanga Provincial Library Service in the appointment and training of Dineo and in the building of the library at Lara was striking
- the position of the public library within municipal structures – particularly in view of the recent restructuring towards large local municipalities
- the employment and education and training of public library staff
- the social role of the public library. The evident neglect at Groenvallei and the seemingly casual appointment of staff to the large new library at Lara led to questions as to what a public library is for.

The challenges facing the information literacy programmes of the Woodsville libraries, which have been highlighted in the two preceding sections, indicate that these issues might well be of fundamental importance. Shifts in direction will require the leadership and support of the larger structures to which they belong. My interviews, a few days after the visit to Groenvallei

Library, with the Manager of the local municipality and with the Director of the Mpumalanga Provincial Library Service aimed at exploring their perspectives on these issues.

8.6.1 Mpumalanga Provincial Library Service & local municipality relations

The interviews elucidate the uncomfortable relationship with regard to public libraries between the two tiers of government, local authorities and province. They uncover some dissension - with the new library at Lara at its centre. Francois Hendrikz, Director of the Mpumalanga Provincial Library Service, claims that he was not consulted in the building of the library:

> *I don't know anything about it. I don't know where it comes from. I don't know who funded the thing. We've never had any communication. ..You see the thing is they don't have money to buy petrol now how ... would they have money to stock a library and to keep it running.* (Interview 26 October: 5)

The Municipal Manager is a former traffic officer who is clearly proud of his rise to his present position, at a relatively young age. He acknowledges that both his job and his local municipality (of 5500 square kilometres, he says) are "huge". He has 11 divisions directly under him, as he refuses to fill the two deputy posts, claiming that this leaves him more "scope" (Interview 26 October: 16). The size of his job might contribute to the elusiveness that I hear of from public library staff over the month of the study.

Margie Wes's complaint on our trip to Groenvallei is that the Municipal Manager has been instrumental in having the library built at Lara and has appointed Dineo to be its librarian - without consulting her, the Library Coordinator for the local municipality. A newspaper cutting at the time of the ceremonial opening in June 2004, perhaps unwittingly, reveals the Municipal Manager's quandary:

> Although the shelves of the new facility were still empty, the XX Local Municipality, which would maintain and manage the new facilities, would stock the library with books in the new financial year (Name of newspaper withheld to maintain participants' anonymity, June 25, 2004).

The promise by the local authority to stock the library flies in the face of the long-established practice in which public libraries are stocked by the Province, although, as mentioned in Chapter 1, an apparent oversight in the South African Constitution has led to uncertainty over the funding responsibilities for public libraries. In his interview, the Manager admits that he has not the money in his budget and that he is looking for other funding channels:

> *As you know the process that local authorities are in, there isn't money available to equip a library like that because that library is bigger than the one in .... To equip that library with... you can't even say R500,000 worth of books is nothing. You'll need something like 1.5 to 2 million worth of books if you want to do it decently. So we've already applied through other channels...*

On my query, he seems rather vague as to what these channels might be:

Department of Education to see if they can assist with information or things like that. If the Province can't do it - National. The thing that happened here is this library and the community centre in the northern villages was built as a special project from the office of the Premier. And then a sort of agreement was established – that we would supply the content. And that's where we are right now. We also approached the Lotto. And I think there's more than enough justification in this request that they will assist us. (Interview 26 October: 3)

Allocation of funds from the Department of Education would surely signal recognition of the role the public libraries are playing in the school curriculum. However, it would be unprecedented and hard to imagine without the cooperation of the Mpumalanga Provincial Library Service, which is placed within its sister department, the Mpumalanga Department of Sport, Recreation, Arts and Culture. The Manager goes on to hint that his failure to follow procedures for gaining the funds he needs from the Mpumalanga Provincial Library Service is due to over-restrictive rules:

The provincial libraries are still there. We still maintain some of their rules and orders yes. But that is not, I think, the way to go in the next five years. I don't think so. I think it must be more open. I don't want to see a complex situation as it was previously.

In the light of the Municipal Manager's criticism here of the rigidity of the Mpumalanga Provincial Library Service, it is interesting to examine another section of the interview with the Director of Mpumalanga Provincial Library Service where he describes enthusiastically his recent visit to Maphotla Library, some 200 kilometres to the west. He tells me:

If I tell you what's happening in Maphotla you will get in your car now and go there. I'm so excited about what's happening there because of my projection of what was going to happen there has actually come true. (Interview 26 October: 15)

His enthusiasm for Maphotla has to be contrasted with his anger at the failure of the local authority to follow correct procedures in the building of the library at Lara. As reported in Chapter 4 [4.3.1.4], I found the library at Maphotla closed on my arrival there on 6 April 2004, only three days after its ceremonial opening. The large new building, expressly designed as a joint-use community school library, had been built and stocked by the Mpumalanga Provincial Library Service without the local authority's allocating funds for its staffing and maintenance. Once the ceremony was over, the local authority locked it up. The library eventually opened in September 2004 but without the issue of staff being resolved. It is still, at the time of writing, being run by the dedicated volunteer, whom I interviewed in April 2004, and for whom the Mpumalanga Provincial Library Service has provided ongoing training. In the extract below the Director brushes aside my query over the position of the volunteer.

F Hendrikz   *So obviously we'll adapt the thing as we go along which we've done already*

GH   *Has he [volunteer] got a post yet?*

F Hendrikz   *No, it's just voluntary. He's just a volunteer. But I'll follow it up with a letter. Anyway that's what we will do from the provincial side.*

The contradiction in the Director's attitudes to the two situations is puzzling. Perhaps his enthusiasm for Maphotla Library emanates from his sense of ownership of Maphotla Library. He has written of it as a model public library community project (Le Roux & Hendrikz, 2003) and seems to have no qualms in supporting it, whatever the behaviour of its local authority.

8.6.2 Education and training of public library staff

In the light of the traces of dissatisfaction and lack of trust in public library staff among the Woodsville educators, perhaps more pertinent to the issue of information literacy education is the question of the appointment and education of Dineo, a former municipal cashier, to run the large new library at Lara. It will be the only library within a sprawling rural settlement area and will serve perhaps scores of rural schools. As pointed out in Vignette 3, Margie Wes's anger over the appointment of Dineo stems from the slighting of her position by the Municipal Manager rather than any concern over the quality of the person appointed. Despite her confident words quoted in the vignette above, a few weeks earlier Tara Botha acknowledged some concern over whether Dineo would cope:

> *You see I'm already a little bit worried about that. They'll leave the training to J [the suspended*
> *Groenvallei librarian]. She's not up to it. Already I'm feeling a little bit tense. How's that library*
> *going to work?* (Interview 8 October: 3)

My interviews with the Woodsville libraries' staff suggest that Dineo will receive very little additional training before she takes over her position as librarian in charge – and sole staff member – at Lara. All three of the Woodsville librarians describe their initial training as learning the administrative and clerical procedures of running a library. They have had very little exposure to training since, apart from that required by the PALS computer system. It is a sore point with both Tara Botha and Naledi Matolo:

> *Because I was chucked in here – I had nobody, nobody – absolutely nobody to guide me*
> *No! No-one tells you what to do. No-one told me what to do with the children. I wasn't trained. I*
> *came in here. Naledi was here. She showed me for a month how to run the library.* (Tara Botha
> Interview 8 October: 6)
> *We don't know about these things. We are not trained* (Naledi Matolo Field notes 19 October)

The provincial regional librarian, who has been in an "acting" position for some years on the resignation of her qualified predecessor, rarely visits their libraries and took no part in their induction and training. My visit to her office revealed her to be overwhelmed with the building of the provincial database and the loading of the records of the last batch of acquisitions to her region (Field notes 7 October). The Director of Mpumalanga Provincial

Library Service recognises the gap and attributes it to the newness of his service, which is still struggling to establish itself:

We know that what we are doing now is not what was done previously. Previously there were people. There were proper support services everywhere. Different functions came with independence [from the ex Transvaal Library service] so we had to make use of our existing staff. So it took them away from what one call 'professional' functions, or adding value functions. (Interview 26 October: 2)

In his comment on the staffing of Lara, which he claims "horrifies" and "disheartens" him, Hendrikz blames the "downwards" trend in public libraries on the lack of understanding of the need for qualified staff among the new generation of municipal managers:

It's just with the change in the municipalities and their restructuring and their demarcation thing and the whole constitutional thing - those are the reasons which are contributing to the libraries and the staffing that went downwards. Municipalities in the past understood the role they had to play in the Province. Now they had no history with the library at all. They've inherited this thing which is an expense. They will see the thing won't close but do they want to keep it? They don't understand that there's a difference between just having a body there that sort of knows the ropes as opposed to a person that comes with a little bit of background and that can add value, that can understand when you send him a thing, what to make more out of it. (Interview 26 October: 6)

However, the Municipal Manager's justification of his appointment of Dineo, who is a resident of Lara, throws light on the political realities:

Manager	*Let's say we must look at a librarian. You have to take one from the people for the people. So we will have to make a librarian.*
GH	*Would you say that in appointing someone to your health services? The local doctor has to be from the people for the people?*
Manager	*No. But the answer I want to give you now can be problematic. It is a problem in that you have politicians that interfere on that level. It is not only for me to decide to say 'I think that person is equipped. I'm driving the department; this is what I'd like to see'. Because there's a political vision as well.*
GH	*So that's the reality?*
Manager	*Yes. So I can't take say someone from Johannesburg who maybe has a doctorate in libraries. They will never accept it. Never. ...On a political level they will never accept. Because you must remember the councillors in a year's time they are going for elections and then you can say – 'yes we've managed to get five people appointed here, two people there, five people there'.* (Interview: 15)

Francois Hendrikz agrees that the building of new libraries should provide employment for the local community – in the building and in the cleaning and assistant staff. But he claims that the work of public librarian is misunderstood and bemoans the fact that, in the present uncertainty, he cannot insist that the Provincial Library Service be consulted in the selection of staff:

We will appoint say the cleaner or the library assistant – just to see to it that the library is clean and well organised. If you do it like that, they are happy. In the old days it was requirement that we are supposed to be part of the selection committee when the municipality wants to appoint. Nowadays they just do whatever. (Interview 26 October: 11)

8.6.3 Questions on the social role of the public library

A possibly positive interpretation of the appointment of the clearly under-qualified and under-trained Dineo to the position at Lara is that it reflects the Municipal Manager's awareness of the need for the public library to reflect the aspirations of its communities. And an area of agreement between the director of Mpumalanga Provincial Library Service and the Municipal Manager, which bodes well for information literacy education, is their acceptance of the need for different models of public library service, more in touch with the needs of the community. In common with the Woodsville librarians, it is the educational role of the library that encapsulates their vision of what is needed at present.

In his interview, the Municipal Manager echoes Naledi Matolo's view cited above that township communities lack a culture of library use. In talking of the poor use of the library in the township in the capital town of the local municipality, he says:

> *We don't have a major turnover of people yet, so we still have a long way to go. We must still create this culture of reading, of participating, of 'it is free to you'.*

But he also suggests that perhaps the problem lies in the choice of books and the model of service:

> *It won't help you to put books in a library where the majority of people are not interested in those kinds of books. But to my mind the libraries in the old form of libraries, I don't want to see it like that anymore.* (Interview 26 October: 1)

On my asking him to describe his vision of an alternative public library, he turns immediately to its role in the school curriculum:

> *I would like to see more ---it must be something like learning institutions where children can come in. I would like to see our libraries to cater for the curriculum and the different levels. That I think is one of our major purposes at this stage. To make it possible for the children to get as much as possible information on the assignments that they get.* (Interview 26 October: 1)

The Municipal Manager recognises that public libraries in disadvantaged townships might well have to compensate for the lack of school libraries:

> *But I don't want to mention the word 'disadvantaged' anymore because we are already 11 years now in our new dispensation. But it is so that there is a backlog to specific communities where that is not possible, where schools in our townships don't have that kind of facilities. And that is why we've created libraries even now in smaller communities where there was never access to any kind of reading.* (Interview: 2)

As indicated in the earlier section on the relations between Woodsville Library and Hillside Library [8.3.2], Hillside Library's position within a historically disadvantaged township came to be a strong thread of enquiry in the study. The Director of the Mpumalanga Provincial Library Service denies the long-standing reliance in his service on membership and circulation statistics in the allocation of materials to libraries, claiming, "Membership is not

one of the things we stand or fall by". But he does recognise "problems" of inequality within municipalities:

The thing is, as you know, there's also problems within municipalities - between say the town library which is better resourced - which I don't know why - as opposed to the one in the township, previously disadvantaged lot. And we have gone out of our way from the provincial side to rectify those imbalances. I mean this whole BEB thing of ours of putting it online was exactly to equalise that access so that nobody can say well I'm sitting in a rural library and I don't have access to the same sources that you have .... But now they have all these lines and technical problems which we always have. (Interview 26 October: 14)

Here, the Director acknowledges the technical problems in sustaining the provincial computerisation and networking BEB (Building Electronic Bridges) project. However, elsewhere in the interview, he gives another reason for the problems – the failure of local authorities to honour the undertaking that they would carry Internet costs.

The inequality between town and township notwithstanding, the study in the Woodsville libraries indicates that a simplistic have/have-not relationship is not the whole reality of their co-existence. For example, neither library is adequately resourced and Naledi Matolo's puzzling passivity plays a part in her library's inferior position. Moreover, the layout of the town, an inheritance of apartheid town-planning, when "Coloured' were separated from "African", ensures that Woodsville Library has a disadvantaged township on its own doorstep – the formerly "Coloured" Bergsig .

8.7   Some findings from the case study

The challenge in the writing up of the case study has been the simultaneous summarising, narrating, analysing and interpreting of data, a distinguishing feature of qualitative research, according to Creswell (1994: 155). With regard to methodology, this chapter has confirmed three warnings in the qualitative research literature: the amount of time required for case study research – the limit of one month did not allow me to follow learners from the library to their classrooms, for example; the voluminous data it collects (Creswell, 1994: 153); and the challenges of confining its reporting to a reasonable number of pages (Stake, 1995: 124). At the start of the chapter, I used the metaphor of ploughing a field. Again it is an apt image as so much of interest was ploughed up - merely to be flung aside.

At first sight, the chief finding of the case study in terms of information literacy education is paradoxical. Woodsville educators and librarians are divided; yet their division comes from shared views of the role of the public library in information literacy education. The public library staff sees information literacy education in terms of library orientation and what Kuhlthau calls "source-based" instruction (1987; 2000); the educators, in their turn, almost all

see the library as a warehouse of information sources and of reading materials. This shared view restricts the role of the public library in the learning programme and perhaps explains the impasse public libraries experience. Unless the public library establishes itself as a *partner* in the curriculum, it cannot do more than merely cope with the hectic afternoon use of their facilities by ill-prepared learners. In terms of Bruce's theory that frames the study, both educators and librarians belong within her first cluster of conceptions - seeing information literacy basically in terms of access to sources. They thus have incomplete conceptions of the "process" of information literacy – of how the phases of information seeking are interdependent. The result is that the crucial importance of the cognitive negotiations involved in the early phases of the information seeking process is under-estimated. Tara Botha and the other library staff know the symptoms because they see them every day; but their library orientation programmes will probably not be the cure.

The study has uncovered some probable obstacles that, if dealt with, might clear the impasse in Woodsville at least. For example:

- Hillside Library is perceived as inferior – and might well be in terms of its stock and its staffing.

- The under-use of Hillside Library throws the spotlight on the conventional western model of public library, with its reliance on self-improvement and leisure reading. Its viability in a community with high illiteracy and poverty is questionable.

- For Hillside Library to transform its position in the community, leadership from elsewhere is needed to provide a vision of a new model of service.

- The relationship between the two branches is problematic. Until the relationship between Tara Botha and Naledi Matolo changes, little progress can be made.

- The libraries, at present, lack the retrieval tools, like public access catalogues and indexes, which are needed for information literacy education.

- Public libraries are missing from educators' consciousness. They lack cognizance of public libraries and their role in their learners' lives.

- Educators are not convinced that public library staff might be educators in their own right.

- The lack of status of public library staff, evident in cavalier appointment processes and the lack of priority given to their education and training, might affect the relations between schools and public libraries.

A question over the information literacy of learners in the Woodsville schools remains. Fifteen of the 23 educators believe that their learners are acquiring information skills at school

- with many of the 15 saying that they learn the skills via assignments and projects. However, observation in the libraries and interviews with library staff indicate that many of the learners who flock to the public library in the afternoon lack information skills. They lack the cognitive strategies required by project work, being unable to formulate relevant questions, to analyse the problem, to browse to build background knowledge, to analyse and evaluate information. Many are demonstrably unable to do more than photocopy pages mindlessly from books handed to them by the public library staff.

Another question concerns the information literacy of the many learners who, according to their educators, rely on the World Wide Web, accessed at home. Information literacy theorists often distinguish between "physical" access to information and "intellectual" access. The Internet certainly provides easy physical access to a vast amount of excellent information. However, the mere provision of access does not necessarily imply effective information seeking strategies or effective learning (Marchionini, 1997: 98, 170; Johnson, 1999; Manuel 2002; 198). Further research is required to follow library and Internet users back to their classrooms – to examine the outcomes of the library and Internet information seeking and to see what educators make of the final products. Ideally, the research would comprise both a study of learners in a public library, as in this case study, and observation of classroom work – similar to my Masters degree study in 1999 (Hart, 1999a).

The mentions of online resources come from educators in the historically advantaged schools – usually referring to their white learners, many of whom are assumed to have Internet access at home. Section 8.2.1 shows that the attempts by the two Woodsville schools to offer access to the Internet have so far failed. The comments highlight the potential role of the public library in bridging the so-called digital divide by providing public Internet access – a role promoted in the literature (for example Weiner, 1997; Todd and Tedd, 2000). Widening Internet access is the explicit mission of the Building Electronic Bridges (BEB) project of the Mpumalanga Provincial Library Service (Hendrikz and Smit, 2003). As pointed out in Section 8.4.2, more generous provision will be needed, however.

The case study in this chapter has, largely, been self-contained. Only in one section has there been reference to the first phase findings, where two duplicate questions were compared. The following chapter will return to the tentative conclusions of the first phase as given in Chapter 7 to view them afresh in light of the Woodsville case study.

CHAPTER 9
CONCLUSIONS

Chapter 9 has two purposes. It examines the convergence between the two phases of the study, returning to the research questions and looking for confirmation or contradiction of the interpretation that was given in Chapter 7. Then it draws some final conclusions from the convergence of the two phases – returning to the findings of Chapter 7 and enhancing them with insights from Chapter 8.

9.1   Introduction

This chapter connects the two phases of the study in order to be able to articulate the findings and conclusions of the PhD study. Creswell points out that a two-phase study demands such a discussion in order to triangulate or converge the findings of each phase (1994: 184). One of the dangers of a two-phase design is, he warns, that readers might not connect the two. As well as a design of two phases, the study also employs a mix of methods – quantitative and qualitative. The first phase has a large quantitative component; but the statistical analysis is expanded by qualitative analysis and interpretation. The aim in the choice of personal interviewing rather than a postal questionnaire survey was to allow for this mix. And the second phase, largely qualitative, case study of Chapter 8 engages in quantification in its analysis of the data gathered in the 23 educators' interviews. In an "exploratory" study of an area that is largely uncharted, the use of both qualitative and quantitative methods enables a richer and more convincing study, which hopefully conforms to the principles of trustworthy and authentic research identified in Chapter 4 [4.4]. Creswell provides five reasons for a mixed methods two phase design:

- to develop a study - with the preliminary phase serving to lead into the second
- to triangulate or converge findings
- to uncover overlapping and different facets of a phenomenon
- to identify new perspectives and contradictions
- to expand a study (1994: 175).

The following section explores whether these purposes have been achieved. The value of the two-phase design with its mix of methods will hopefully be affirmed. The theoretical framework of the study, social constructivism, as discussed in Chapter 1 [1.2], suggests that the participant observation of the second phase case study is *necessary* to the study, rather than merely enriching. Although the survey in the first phase provided rich interview data, the longer term iterative observation and interviewing of the case study give sharper insight into the reality experienced by public librarians.

9.2   Converging the findings of the two phases

The second phase case study was indeed informed by the first phase survey. As described in Chapters 4 and 7 [4.3.2.1; 7.4], the selection of Woodsville as the second phase case site came only after the analysis of the data of the first phase. In Chapter 7's summary of the findings of the first phase [7.4.1], eight areas were identified for further study, namely:

- the relationship of school and public library

- the learning experience of the afternoon visits by individual students to the public library

- the learning experience of the class visits to the public library

- the relations between so-called "branch" libraries, within the newly merged local municipalities

- the role of the regional libraries of the Mpumalanga Provincial Library Service

- the relationship between the Mpumalanga Provincial Library Service and the Mpumalanga Education Department's school library services

- the patterns of use between neighbouring town and township libraries

- the impact of staff morale on information literacy education.

However, once the case study began, the intention was to start afresh – in order to be open to contradictions and new perspectives. And indeed, within a few days the case study took on a life of its own – its beginning marked by the incident at Hillside Library, which is described in Vignette 1 in Chapter 8 [8.3]. After that incident, I became immersed in the Woodsville issues and made no reference to the first phase - at least on a conscious level. Moreover, the subsequent writing-up of the case study in Chapter 8 took no cognizance of the earlier phase – except for the analysis of two duplicate questions in Section 8.5. Yet, on re-reading Chapter 7, it is surprising how the theoretical issues that emerged in Woodsville echo those of the first phase. In keeping with the principle of the hermeneutic circle in interpretive research that was mentioned in Chapter 4 [4.4] (Klein & Myers, 1999), there is indeed a satisfying consonance between the two phases as will be demonstrated below.

In Section 7.2 of Chapter 7, having reviewed the research problem of the "readiness" of public libraries for information literacy education, I divided the research questions into three categories. I addressed each category in a subsequent sub-section, reviewing the research questions in the light of the findings of the first phase and looking for tentative answers in the data summaries and analyses of Chapters 5 and 6. The three groups of research questions, which are identified in Chapter 4 as pertinent to the research problem, are:

- the extent of and nature of existing information literacy education in Mpumalanga's public libraries

- the physical capacity of the public libraries for information literacy education

- the more subjective factors of public library staff's knowledge of, attitudes towards and conceptions of information literacy education and the larger issue of the educational role of public libraries.

For the sake of coherence, the discussion in this section follows the same approach - but without repetition of the findings of Phase 1, which are discussed at length in Chapter 7 [7.2].

The three sub-sections that make up this section examine the convergence in findings between the two phases in terms of the three groups of questions. However, the nature of the interpretive case study methodology makes it difficult to maintain firm barriers between the sections. Insights from the Woodsville case study often cut across these three categories in highlighting different overlapping facets of the phenomenon under discussion. For example the examination of the information literacy education in the Woodsville libraries shows how historical and personal factors interact. The physical facilities available in the libraries, personal relationships, personal constructions and historical contextual factors all play a part and cannot be compartmentalised.

9.2.1 Convergence on existing information literacy education

The first and second vignettes in Chapter 8 and the discussions that follow them serve to confirm some of the tentative findings on existing information literacy education of the first phase as discussed in Section 7.2.1. However, the case study's spotlight on the two libraries' experiences of information literacy education, their approaches to information literacy education and their relations with schools leads to more nuanced understandings. It also exposes areas for follow-up study.

The first phase uncovers the pressures experienced by public libraries on the introduction of Curriculum 2005. The longer gaze of the Woodsville case study allows for a closer analysis: for example, of the Grade 9 Common Task Assessments (CTAs), which dominated the afternoons in the Woodsville Library throughout October. Its description of the activities generated by the CTAs and its analysis of their demands in terms of information literacy serve to illustrate the gaps between curricular demands and the reality experienced by public library staff. The CTA booklets tacitly assume that adequate information is available; they make no mention of libraries. Yet, scores of Grade 9 learners in the two Woodsville high schools –

probably those without Internet access at home - clearly depended on the public library resources to complete them.

The Woodsville case study confirms the first phase findings that public libraries are indeed heavily involved in the information literacy education of school learners and confirms the salience of the issue raised in the first phase of the *nature* of the information literacy education undertaken in public libraries. The issue concerns:

- the quality of the learning experience in the busy afternoons in the public libraries
- the nature of the more formal group information literacy interventions that, from time to time, take place in the mornings
- the relationships between public libraries and their surrounding schools.

The Woodsville Vignette 2 provides corroboration of the need for more effective information literacy education in its description of an afternoon encounter with a learner who lacks background knowledge and the information skills required to complete her assignment. It gives insight into the photograph, taken in the first phase, of two girls standing passively at the desk with the librarian in the background looking for a book for them [See Appendix D]. The second phase reiterates that, with no meaningful relationship with educators in the schools, public library staff are inadequately prepared for the work that is indeed the major component of their working day - the support of learners in their school assignments. The quality of the learning experience in the library in the afternoons after school demands further examination in future research.

The observation of the Woodsville libraries' approaches to information literacy education illuminates the idiosyncratic nature of the relationships between school and public library. It highlights the importance of personal relationships between educators and principals and librarians – thus supporting findings of international research. The Woodsville study confirms some of the tentative findings of the first phase with regard to these relations – having found, for example, no evidence that the structured information literacy interventions in the Woodsville libraries are grounded in classroom work. They are "stand-alone", being unconnected to learners' current projects or assignments. However, the case study contributes a different perspective in its revelations on the gaps in thinking between the Woodsville public librarians and the educators in the Woodsville schools. The case study demonstrates the strengths of interpretive research in its exploration both of the site as a whole and of how its world is experienced and constructed by its participants (Dick, 1993: 56; Stake, 1995). For example, the analysis of the failed information literacy education initiative at Hillside Library

in Chapter 8 and of the educators' interview data serves to uncover how differently public librarians and educators construct their worlds. It certainly adds insight to the findings of existing research studies on the relations between schools and public libraries in terms of information literacy education, which were discussed in Chapter 3 [3.3]. Some earlier studies (for example Fourie, 1995; Shaw, 2000) point to shortcomings of teachers in terms of their use (or non-use) of libraries. One or two studies probe a little more deeply in looking for underlying factors – like teachers' lack of information literacy (Henri, 2000) or their lack of experience of libraries (Maepa & Mhinga, 2003). The Woodsville case study leads to the assertion that effective information literacy education depends on recognition that the gap is not just a symptom of failed communication or oversight on the part of teachers. Tara Botha, the Woodsville Librarian, cannot conceive that educators do not know how important the public library is in the learning programme; yet the reality is that the public library just does not feature in the educators' conceptions of their work.

As articulated in Chapter 7 [7.4.2], the first phase interviews with Tara Botha and Naledi Matolo gave the promise of a dynamic site for information literacy education – which is why Woodsville was selected. Both librarians reported excellent relations with their local schools and both seemed to have positive views of themselves as educators. Tara Botha, the Woodsville Librarian, described information literacy in terms of "changing perceptions" which, as mentioned in Chapter 7 [7.2.3.2], indicated an awareness of information literacy as a learning process. The power of the case study methodology is demonstrated in the need to reconstruct this finding.

Tara Botha's approach to information literacy education at first sight looks innovative. Her intervention with the Grade 7 learners of Hillside Primary and Bergsig Primary consisted of having successive waves of children into the library - with each new wave instructing the next. The exercises are carefully planned and the children clearly enjoy the novelty of instructing their peers. Moreover, at least with Bergsig Primary, she has succeeded in persuading the principal and educator that they should allow their classes to go to the library in the morning when she has the space and time to teach them. However, in reality, the innovation lies in the mode of teaching rather than in a fundamental shift away from the old South African book education or source-based library instruction, the learning outcomes of which have been shown to be questionable, as discussed in Chapters 1 and 2 (Beswick & Beswick, 1981; Kuhlthau, 1993a; Limberg, 1999; Kuhlthau, 2000; Kuhlthau & McNally, 2001). Tara Botha makes no attempt to link her teaching to the curriculum or to what the children are doing in class. There is little emphasis on the higher-level problem-solving required if the learners are to become independent information literate learners as evidenced

in a wide range of research in the field as pointed out in Chapter 1 (for example Doyle, 1992; Todd, 1995a; Moore, 2002; Dike & Amucheazi, 2003). The children are given cards with a word or topic to look up in the dictionaries and encyclopaedias, which are laid out on the tables. Each table is devoted to a specific kind of resource and so the children do not even have to choose which kind of resource might match each question.

9.2.2 Convergence on physical capacity of public libraries for information literacy education

The Woodsville study highlights four aspects of the question of the physical capacity of public libraries for information literacy education:

- the facilities within libraries – in terms of space, information resources and information retrieval tools
- the accessibility of information literacy education to learners who rely on the Internet
- the accessibility and availability of public libraries to schools
- the impact of historical and geographical contextual factors on the patterns of use of public libraries.

Photographs, taken in the course of the first phase visits to libraries throughout Mpumalanga, document the challenge of space. Many of the older township libraries are small rectangular rooms crammed with shelves. Even the larger libraries in the bigger towns are struggling to accommodate all the learners that flock to them in the afternoons. Woodsville Library is fortunate to have an activity room off the library, although, throughout October, this was occupied by municipal auditors, as it had been on my visit to Woodsville in April. Tara Botha's solution to her space problem, as described in Chapter 8, is to break classes into smaller groups. This solution, however, might stretch the patience of only half-convinced educators - as demonstrated in the failure of the Hillside Primary intervention. Perhaps, if the Hillside Primary intervention had not presumed that children could be taken from their classrooms over so many days, it might not have petered out.

Observation of Tara Botha and Naledi Matolo's work with the Hillside Primary children and of staff interactions with learners in the busy afternoons corroborates the questioning of the feasibility of effective information literacy education in libraries without catalogues of and indexes to their collections [5.3; 7.2.2]. Tara Botha's solution is to concentrate on general library orientation and on instruction in specific reference resources, as described in the preceding section. The suggestion in Chapter 7 [7.2.2] that the prevailing lack of indexing to project and pamphlet collections in Mpumalanga libraries might emanate from public librarians' conceptions of their role in information literacy education is borne out in the

observation and interviewing at Woodsville. The project collection in Woodsville Library consists of a box behind the desk. Children are handed the appropriate books or pages from the box as they approach the library staff for help. There is no suggestion in the interview data that the Woodsville library staff feel the need for better indexes. Conceptions of the role of public libraries in information literacy education will be returned in the following section.

Section 7.2.1 concludes with a comment on the sprawling rural settlement areas of Mpumalanga which have no public libraries – in order to make the point pertinent to the research problem that public libraries alone cannot be expected to be responsible for the information literacy education of South Africa's school learners. The Woodsville case study highlights the dire position of school librarianship in the Province, with only one of the seven schools in the town having what might be called a functional library and none able to report any contact with the provincial Department of Education's school library support services. The interviews with educators in the previously advantaged schools in Woodsville provide both sobering insight into the degradation of school libraries in their sector of South African schools and into the role of principals' and educators' conceptions in this degradation. Understandably, the emphasis in South African writing on school librarianship has been on the historical inequalities resulting from the apartheid era. The deteriorating position of school librarianship in *all* sectors since the early 1990s has been inadequately documented.

The second phase also highlights the plight of rural learners, who come into the town schools every day. It seems that they have no access to school or public libraries. At the close of school each day, rows of taxis wait outside the Woodsville schools to transport hundreds of learners back to their homes in outlying rural areas where there are no public libraries. The Woodsville study documents educators' strategies to cope with the uneven access to resources among their learners. It suggests that follow-up research is needed in schools to examine these strategies and also to examine how rural learners set about the assignments and projects that characterise the curriculum.

The second phase corroborates the thread of comment in the first phase on shifts in patterns of use of the public library - with learners from the more advantaged sectors of society, it is suggested by several respondents, turning to the Internet. There are two issues:

- Access to the Internet might well be an indicator of continued disadvantage.
- Internet users have an equal need for information literacy education as users of print media.

The bulk of the learners using both Woodsville libraries are black – who, in the socio-economic context of the small town, can be assumed not to have the Internet at home. Only

Woodsville Library has access to the Internet – and that access is restricted to the library staff. None of the Woodsville schools provides learners with online access in school computer rooms, as yet. In Chapter 8 reference is made to the comment in the research literature that mere access to the Internet does not imply information literacy [8.7]. On the contrary, access to the huge amount of unsifted information on the World Wide Web brings its own challenges (Manuel, 2002: 211).

One of the surprising findings of the second phase case study concerns the under-use of Hillside Library – even by school learners. In a province where, as reported in Chapter 4 [4.2.2], the Director of the provincial library services estimates that another 98 libraries are required (Le Roux & Hendrikz, 2003: 264), the observation of the quietness of Hillside Library has to be addressed. It throws new light on two aspects of the first phase:

- the tone of the Mpumalanga Provincial Library Service Director's speech at the opening of the new library at Kabokweni on 24 March 2004, an event attended by a large number of community leaders, which was mentioned in Chapter 4 [4.3.1.4]. The gist of his speech was a warning that no new libraries could be built unless communities were seen to *use* them.

- the low circulation statistics of many of the smaller libraries of Mpumalanga Province. The suggestion, in Chapter 5, is that these might mask the reality of heavy use by school learners, many of whom are not signed-up members and so do not borrow books [5.2.2]. The time spent in Hillside Library – in the mornings and the afternoons – encourages a reconsideration of the obvious quietness of many of the small rural and township libraries which I visited in the course of the first phase.

Hillside Library, built in the 1980s in a working-class township, is clearly unproductive. Its staff sit idly morning after morning; the learners and educators in the two adjacent schools evidently prefer to use Woodsville Library in the afternoons, some four kilometres away. Early in the study, the Hillside Librarian, Naledi Matolo, herself points to two factors in the under-use of her library, both, she claims, out of her control: working class township dwellers do not use libraries and township teachers do not understand the value of public libraries [See 8.3.1]. Constructivist research theory would see her comments as a useful window through which to see how she tries to make her world intelligible to herself and to me, the researcher.

The case study confirms the significance of context that is discussed in the theoretical framing of the study in Chapter 1 [1.2.3]. The social context of the Woodsville libraries is indeed integral to the study of their information literacy programming. The two Woodsville libraries exist in a small rural town still marked by the heritage of apartheid. Hillside Library remains a

disadvantaged township library – still inadequately resourced and still, indeed, perceived as inferior. Its slack capacity, as well as that of the Groenvallei Library described in Vignette 3 in Chapter 8, warns against any simplistic notion that the mere provision of library buildings will contribute to community development and what was called "community informacy" in Chapter 1 [1.2.2].

The iterative nature of the participant observation and interviewing of the second phase uncovers other explanations for the lack of productivity of Hillside Library, apart from its geographical position in a township - for example, the low morale and lack of education of its staff. Of course these, in their turn, have to be seen in the light of the social history of public librarianship in South Africa. Thus, for example, the libraries in the historically black townships of Cape Town were found to have significantly fewer professionally qualified staff than those in the historically white suburbs in my study in the late 1990s (Hart, 1999b; 2000c). Nonetheless, the case study suggests that both Naledi Matolo and Tara Botha are more active agents in the situation than they like to admit. The case study uncovers complex links between social context and personal constructions. The formation of the new local municipality has, at first sight, had little impact on the relations between the two libraries. Yet, the restructuring in local government has left Naledi Matolo aggrieved that she has been overlooked. She suggests that her race and her position in township library is the reason why she remains on a low grade. Her anger is clearly sapping her energy and stultifying any new initiative. Tara Botha, on the other hand, attributes Naledi Matolo's lack of promotion to her laziness – hinting at disciplinary action against her before the re-grading of library posts. It is clear that the ambivalence of Tara Botha towards Hillside Library leaves Naledi Matolo in an unenviable position. Sometimes, Tara claims it as her branch; at other times, she describes it as autonomous, under the control of Naledi Matolo – for example, in blaming her for the failed information literacy intervention in Hillside Primary. The suggestion in Chapter 8 is that Tara Botha's refusal to implement the solutions to Hillside Library's lack of productivity, which she herself identifies, indicates that the discrepancy in use between the two libraries suits her. The evident impasse leads inevitably to the question of the role of her management structures – in the Local Municipality or in the Mpumalanga Provincial Library Service. However, the Local Municipality's Library Coordinator shows no awareness that the municipal restructuring might offer an opportunity for a restructuring of branch relations. She interacts with Woodsville Library but not with Hillside Library, which she continues to see as a branch of Woodsville Library. And the Mpumalanga Provincial Library Service evidently has little influence in day to day management and staffing issues. It seems that Hillside Library will remain unproductive, serving little purpose in its community, unless a new vision is provided by more dynamic leadership.

9.2.3 Convergence on public librarians' conceptions of information literacy

The discussion in this section follows the approach in Chapter 7 [7.2.3], where the questions relating to the more subjective aspects of the concept of the "readiness" of public library staff in Mpumalanga for information literacy education were divided into three sections:

- public librarians' educational background – the premise being that both general academic education and professional librarian education are factors in the capacity and preparedness of public library staff for information literacy education
- public librarians' conceptions of information literacy education
- public librarians' conceptions of the educational role of public libraries.

9.2.3.1 Convergence on public librarians' education and training

Vignette 3 in Chapter 8, which describes a visit to Groenvallei Library [8.6], and the interviews with the Municipal Manager and the Director of Mpumalanga Provincial Library Service put the spotlight on the appointment of public library staff and their education and training. Findings on ad-hoc appointments and low levels of education in the first phase survey led to the warning that "the low level of professional (and academic and general) education of public library staff might impede innovation in library and information service programming" [7.3.2]. The second phase case study confirms the pertinence of this comment. The fact that it is the Municipal Manager, himself, who, without consulting the Library Coordinator, is responsible for the appointment of a municipal cashier to the newly-built but empty library at Lara points to the precarious professional status of public librarians within local authorities that was suggested by the first phase survey. His acknowledgment that the political pressures that led him to appoint Dineo to the Lara library would not apply to the appointment of health workers is significant. Also significant is the evident frustration of the Director of Mpumalanga Provincial Library Service who, in the present dispensation, cannot insist on professional standards [See 8.6.2]. He accuses the local authorities of choosing the "cheapest labour they can get" – being happy to appoint people who merely "know the ropes" (Interview 26 October: 21, 6). The interviews with the Woodsville educators, which give evidence of how perceptions of the status of public librarians impact on their view of librarians as educational partners, indicate the importance of the present lacuna in public library governance in South Africa for the research problem [See 1.6.3].

The case study highlights the insidiousness of the effect of low levels of education and training on public library services, which clearly contribute to the lack of productivity and complacency which are evident in the Woodsville libraries and at Groenvallei. The impact is "insidious", being both subtle and cumulative, as neither the community of potential users nor

the staff can be expected to be aware of their libraries' shortcomings or to envisage alternative models of service. On being appointed by the local authority, staff members are apparently trained in administrative routines only. In her interviews, Tara Botha cannot identify areas that she would still like to develop in her library service – despite the evident under-use of Hillside Library. As mentioned in Chapter 8, her version of a community information service is the Woodsville booklet, a directory of phone numbers. The anger of the Library Coordinator on the appointment of Dineo, a municipal cashier, to run the Lara library emanates from the lack of procedure rather than any misgiving over Dineo's lack of education or experience. On my asking for an almanac to answer a query at Hillside Library, Naledi Matolo tells me, "We don't know about these things. We are not trained". Yet, on my asking Tara Botha and Tenji Miti why they are studying for the professional librarian B.Inf degree, both indicate that they need it to move *out* of public library work. In this they echo some of the findings of the first phase which record the dissatisfaction of respondents who are professionally qualified or studying for advanced professional qualifications but who see no use for their degrees in their present jobs [See 5.4.3].

The first phase survey led to questions on the professional status of public librarianship in South Africa and to the lack of distinction between "professional" and "non-professional" responsibilities in public libraries [7.2.3.1]. The Woodsville study confirms the need for these questions. For example, in their separate interviews, the Woodsville Librarian and her assistant, Tenji Miti, both take pride in refusing to make a distinction between their jobs. They echo each other in their choice of words, "It's the same. We do the same". Yet, the study's observation found their work to have different emphases. Tara Botha is preoccupied with her work with children and youth – she spends many hours a week planning and running the pre-school and school visits and her Soul Buddies meetings. This aspect of her work, which formed no part of her initial training, seems to be viewed as "extra". Tara Botha does not hide the fact that she is applying for jobs outside the public library service – claiming that she is bored and has outgrown her Woodsville job.

The participant observation in the Woodsville libraries and the visit to Groenvallei lend support to the allusion by the Director of the Mpumalanga Provincial Library to the challenges of working with public library staff who, in his words, "cannot add value", "cannot make something out of what we send them" and who "cannot see the bigger picture" (Interview 26 October). The implication is that their lack of background education hinders their vision of the role of the public library – an issue which will be returned to below. International research has found that a lack of productivity in rural libraries can, in large part,

be attributed to inadequately educated staff (Vavrek, 1995; Luchs, 2001). The wider significance is alluded to in the discussion of the position of public librarians in South Africa in Chapter 1 [1.6.4], which quoted the warning by a senior American librarian that the lack of professionalism in public libraries here might hinder their credibility in seeking to negotiate new social roles (Kagan, 2002: 2).

9.2.3.2 Convergence on conceptions of information literacy education

The case study asserts that Bruce's notion of more and less "complete" conceptions of information literacy (and of information literacy education), as explained in Chapter 1 [1.2.1], might explain the impasse of the Woodsville public libraries in their relationship with the surrounding schools. This assertion echoes the findings of the first phase survey that many public librarians belong within Bruce's first cluster of conceptions which see information literacy in terms of knowledge of sources of information [7.2.3.2]. The Woodsville case study shows that demonstrating library reference books without teaching children to analyse *when* and *why* they need to use them in relation to their personal learning needs will not meet the needs of the kind of learner described in Chapter 8's Vignette 2. In terms of Kuhlthau's ISP modelling, another theoretical pillar of the study, the preceding discussion in Section 9.2.1 has suggested that the prevailing approach to formal information literacy education in Woodsville and in many other Mpumalanga public libraries has not evolved beyond the source-based once-off instruction characteristic of the book education of the 1980s.

The case study, thus, confirms that limited conceptions of information literacy might explain prevailing approaches. The assertion in Chapter 8 that both the Woodsville librarians and the town's educators share the same "incomplete" conceptions of information literacy converge with the findings of the first phase survey on the pressures being experienced by Mpumalanga public librarians. They have a sense that they are not meeting the learning needs of the scores of learners that flock to their libraries every afternoon; but they do not know what they should do differently because their conceptions of information literacy blinker their vision.

The specific contribution of the second phase is that it reveals that the vision of educators might be equally constrained. Both librarians and educators in Woodsville, it seems, see information literacy in terms of finding answers in information sources and the role of the public library in the learning programme to be the supply of information resources. They have little insight into the *process* of information literacy – of how the phases of information seeking are interdependent. Public librarians complain that children arrive at the library with no understanding of what they need. Their complaints are supported by the finding, in analysing their descriptions of project work, that the Woodsville educators under-estimate the

crucial importance of the cognitive negotiations involved in the early phases of the information seeking process.

The limited vision of public librarians prevents them from seeking out a more dynamic role in addressing the needs of their users by involving themselves in the earlier phases. The reality that neither public librarians nor teachers see librarians to be partners in the learning curriculum is the *result* not the *cause* of the problem.

9.2.3.3 Convergence on conceptions of the educational role of public libraries

The Woodsville case study highlights the reality that educators lack cognizance of the role of public libraries in the learning experience of their learners in its attempt to answer Tara Botha's plaintive question, "Don't they know how important it is?". As pointed out in Chapter 8, her question begs another question, "How important *what* is?". On the whole, the library to the Woodsville educators is a place where information is "fetched"; the work of the librarian is to hand it over. They assume that their learners know what information they need. As stated above, they lack insight into the interdependence of the phases of information seeking and the high level cognitive skills demanded in the search for relevant information. The PhD study, thus, shows the risk of assuming that educators share public librarians' perceptions of their educational role. Perhaps, the answer to Tara Botha's question is, "No".

In Chapter 6 [6.3], the response of a respondent to a question on the public library's educational role was quoted:

Our educational role will ensure our continuing existence.

In her words, she pins the future of public libraries in South Africa on its role in education. A consideration of the low circulation statistics revealed in the first phase and of the usage patterns of the Woodsville libraries lends support for her words. However, perhaps, it is more specifically the *curricular* role in supporting the needs of school-learners that sustains many of the Mpumalanga public libraries. The two phases of the PhD study suggest that public libraries need schools as much as schools need them.

Recognition of this reality might be seen in the interviews with the Director of Mpumalanga Provincial Library Service and the Municipal Manager, which were referred to in Chapter 8. The acceptance by the Director of Mpumalanga Provincial Library Service of the irregular position of Maphotla Library, which, in his interview of 26 October 2004, contrasts with his anger at the local authority's building of the library at Lara [See 8.6.1], might be due to recognition that the expensive new library will not be used if school learners do not use it. He

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brushes away my query over the continued failure of the Maphotla local authority to take responsibility for the salary of the volunteer librarian and goes on to enthuse at length over the system of timetabling of class visits which the volunteer has devised. And, in his interview on the same day, the Municipal Manager's vision of a new kind of public library is one whose chief aim is to support school learners, as shown in his words already quoted in Chapter 8 [8.6.3]:

> *I would like to see more ---it must be something like learning institutions where children can come in. I would like to see our libraries to cater for the curriculum and the different levels. That I think is one of our major purposes at this stage. To make it possible for the children to get as much as possible information on the assignments that they get.* (Interview 26 October: 1)

The assertion here is that the under-use of public libraries by adults in townships and rural areas might explain the enthusiasm of the Director and the Municipal Manager for the curricular use of public libraries.

However, both men might be out of touch with the day to day reality as experienced by public library staff. The Woodsville librarians' comments on the "elusiveness" of the Municipal Manager were reported in Chapter 8 [8.6.1]. In the extract below, the Director of the Mpumalanga Provincial Library Service, at first, is rather dismissive of my suggestion that public library staff are not wholly positive towards the heavy use of their libraries by learners. But on my persevering, he goes on to acknowledge the possible problems with "kids", "noise" and "chaos" – and lack of space.

F Hendrikz	*I've not picked up a negativity or a resentment – what all of them agree on is yes we have more work in the afternoons with all these school kids coming in – mainly due to the limitations of the tables and chairs and that sort of thing. And also all these assignments and stuff that comes to them that they have to get the information for. But I've picked it up as an appreciation at least that the children still understand, a lot of schools, the value of the library and not as "I would have loved to give more tea parties to the old age homes and have a reading club going". Those might be the traditional things which very few of them are still doing. But if not - they don't see the school thing as an impediment. ..*
GH	*I've picked up some who do – quite a few ...*
F Hendrikz	*I think it might be more on the irritation of having all these kids and noise and chaos*
GH	*And not having the staff?*
F Hendrikz	*So they are overwhelmed because they have to answer the phone and the fax and this and that and the following...So if you sit with 20 children there and it's not even meant to have 20 people in your library because it's physically too small then I can understand they are overwhelmed and would rather not have the children there.* (Interview 26 October 2004: 13)

The Director disregards my query on the provision of catalogues and indexes and on whether the learners are being trained to find information for themselves, implying that they are niceties rather than crucial tools:

But you see again it's a nice thing but they don't have the time for that.

He immediately moves on to praise the programme at Maphotla, which clearly shares the Woodsville approaches in putting out books for a project and in inviting small groups of learners to the library at a time:

> *He will know that they will be looking for history type of thing and he will put whatever history books he had got there so they can utilise is as much as they like. He will put his reserve collection out based on what the teachers tell him ... A nice innovation is that after this orientation thing the teacher nominates five children per day to go back to the library. Then what they do is - D gives them little assignments in the library – a little bit more hands on. Go and find me a picture of this. Can you find a word in that dictionary? You know that sort of thing (p. 17).*

The wider gaze of the Woodsville case study allows for some findings on the views of teachers on the role of the public library in the educational programme. The Woodsville teachers are shown to be struggling to cope with new social realities at the same time as adjusting to a transformed curriculum – which, they all agree, demands more learning and information resources. As discussed in Chapter 8, a contradiction is evident between their positive statements on the role of the public library in the revised curriculum and their ignoring it in their day-to-day professional lives. A variety of reasons are identified for the contradiction: for example, perceptions that the Hillside Library is inadequately resourced, lack of trust in public library staff and lack of experience of libraries in their own childhoods. However, in Section 8.5, an examination of the comments on the public library from both educators, who do not use it, and those who do, reveals that they share a view of the public library as a mere storehouse of materials. They lack insight into the information seeking process and fail to connect the preliminary background work in the classroom with the later phases of information seeking in the library. They, thus, assume that library use involves the fetching and the handing-over of information – as if information were a *thing*.

Ironically, both phases of the study show that this perception is shared by public librarians - and perhaps also by the Mpumalanga Provincial Library Service and municipal authorities. The implications of this restricted conception of the educational role of the public library are:

- It does not allow for an equal partnership between its staff and educators.
- It hinders public librarians from building effective information literacy programmes that would address the real needs of school learners.

9.3   Conclusions of the PhD study

The findings of the two phases having been converged, the final conclusions of the two phases of the study might be articulated.

9.3.1 Implications of the study for its theoretical framework

Chapter 1 provided three theoretical pillars for the study:

- Kuhlthau's ISP modelling in information literacy theory – the outcome of her years of observation of information-seeking behaviour in libraries

- Bruce's clustering of conceptions of information literacy in information literacy theory – the outcome of her PhD phenomenographic research study

- the developmental and educational model of the public library – drawing on the concept of social capital to connect the educational and developmental role of the public library.

As stated in Chapter 1, one of the aims of the PhD study was to explore the value of the above chosen research framework for its research problem rather than to build new theory – there being little international research in information literacy education in public libraries and none in *South African* public libraries, where a stronger educational role might be expected, given the shortage of school libraries.

The analysis and interpretation of data from Chapters 5 to 8 rely heavily on the theories of Kuhlthau and Bruce, which were described in Chapter 1 [1.2.1]. Each theory provides a complementary lens through which to view the data. The study confirms the value of the Kuhlthau ISP model, which is given again in Figure 28.

	Task initiation	Topic selection	Prefocus exploration	Focus formulation	Information Collection	Search Closure	Starting Writing
Thoughts	ambiguity ⟶ specificity						
Feelings	⟶ increased interest						
Actions	seeking relevant information ⟶ seeking pertinent information						
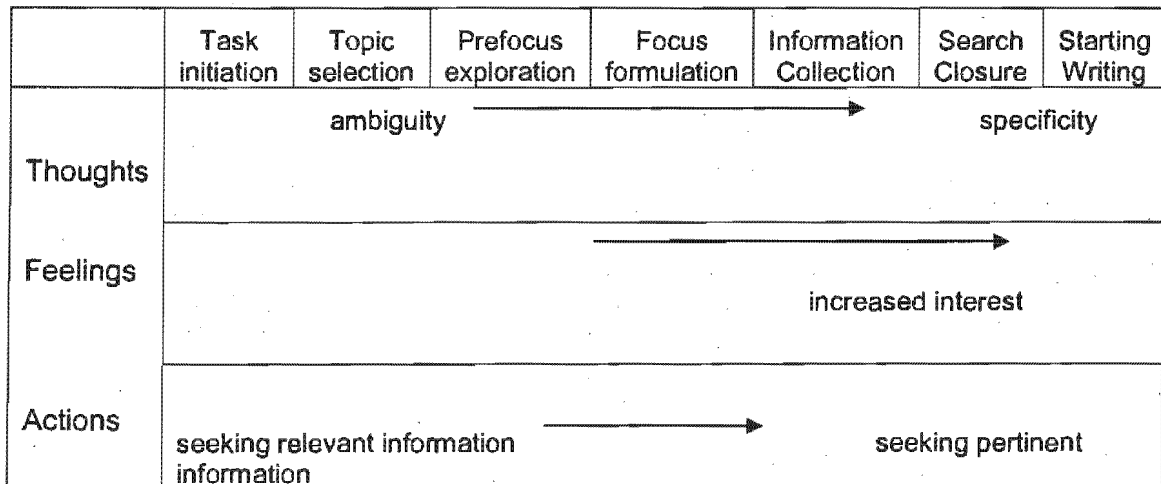
Figure 28: Kuhlthau's Information Search Process (ISP) model (Kuhlthau, 1993)

The unique contribution of Kuhlthau's research to information literacy education is her discovery of the interdependence of the phases of the information seeking process in academic projects and assignments (and that in other spheres of life) and of the crucial importance of the fourth phase when, as stated in Chapter 1, "Something shifts towards a personal ownership of the information; a personal angle is found; changes in original views of

the topic take place". Understanding of the need for this personal grasping of the information found is essential to learning how to learn. Information literacy is, in Kuhlthau's view, an ability for lifelong learning (1993: 16, 154), involving the use of information independently to build personal knowledge.

The model serves to explain the weaknesses in the library orientation and source-based instruction prevalent in Mpumalanga's libraries. It also provides insight into the unsatisfactory nature of the afternoon encounters between public librarians and learners. Learners, it seems, are not getting the support they need to negotiate the early phases of information seeking which do not proceed in a linear direction. The phases in the process are not self-contained. Perhaps a weakness in Kuhlthau's diagram is that the circular nature of the first four phases of the process is not made clear. (Indeed, other information literacy education theorists within her school of thought have subsequently preferred circular models). A closer look at the names of her phases and a reading of her research reveal that her model depicts a necessary retracing and redoubling of steps in the early phases. Learners need to analyse what information they need before they engage with it. To do this, they need to undertake background exploratory browsing for relevant information; only when they have built some preliminary background knowledge will they be able to articulate what it is that they really need or want - and *re*think their preliminary analysis. This rethinking sharpens their collection of information pertinent to their problem. The ISP model aids the interpretation of the PhD findings as follows:

- Problems occur if the early stages of the ISP are hurried. As described in Chapter 1 [1.2.1], Kuhlthau's research and that of others in her school (McGregor, 1993; Pitts, 1994), as well as my own study of project work in some Cape Town schools (Hart 1999a; 2000b), have demonstrated the high-level thinking required. Educators (and curriculum designers, the CTA booklets might suggest) underestimate the high level thinking required in finding relevant, then pertinent, information in the library.

- Educators and librarians – and learners themselves - need to be tolerant of and understand the necessity for the hesitant complex processes of building knowledge and how different support is needed at each phase of the process. Kuhlthau, herself, suggests that one of the applications of her modelling lies in showing librarians and educators how learners need different levels of and kinds of support depending on the phase of the ISP they are at (1993b; 1994).

- One explanation of the problems that public librarians experience in their encounters with learners is that they are expected to hand them rather specific information before the learners know why they need it and what to do with it. The setting aside of books

and copies of web pages on project shelves or boxes, to be handed over on demand, short-circuits the learning processes of the ISP. The collecting of information by learners in public libraries – photocopying from encyclopaedias for example – might well be premature. It happens before they really have a focus on what they need.

- At present, public librarians and educators remain within separate spheres, each taking responsibility for different phases of the model as if they are not interdependent. Educators set assignments in the first phase; librarians are then expected to hand over resources in the fourth - the necessary learning of the second and third phases often having been neglected.

- Librarians' daily experiences with learners have given them insight into the learning demands of information seeking but they lack the channels to communicate these insights to educators. Moreover, the Woodsville study shows that it does not occur to many educators that public librarians might have useful insights on learning and teaching.

The PhD study, it is asserted, affirms the value of Kuhlthau's ISP model in showing where the problem is. But for a deeper understanding of why educators and librarians fail to provide the support that learners need in their search for information in libraries, it is necessary to turn to the second theoretical pillar of the study – Bruce's clustering of conceptions of information literacy, the outcome of her PhD research among Australian university academics (1997) [See Figure 2 in 1.2.1]. Bruce assumed no prior knowledge of information literacy theory among her participants and set out to explore their conceptions of information within the context of relational learning theory, which sees learning in terms of relating and transforming conceptions - and building more "complete" ones (1997: 168). The outcome of her research is a clustering of categories of conceptions of information – the least complete being those that conceive of information to be a "thing" or commodity to be found in resources like books and the Internet, and the most complete those in which information is a means to build personal knowledge and a world view which will guide decision-making and behaviour. Thus, to Bruce, information literacy eventually is defined in terms of a transformation in people's conceptions of information – and of its role in their lives. She acknowledges that individuals or programmes are likely to favour one or other of her clusters; but she contends that a "complete" information literacy programme needs to break down the barriers between the clusters (1997: 173).

Chapter 6 of this dissertation, where Bruce's clusters are used to interpret the data on the Mpumalanga respondents' conceptions of information literacy and their educational role,

affirms the applicability of Bruce's work in a different context and among a different set of participants. Her clustering of information literacy conceptions in terms of their "completeness" provides complementary insights into the situation in Mpumalanga. People who belong within Bruce's more complete cluster see information literacy as a *process* of building knowledge, involving changing perceptions of reality – a là Kuhlthau's ISP. In a later review of information literacy theory, Bruce, indeed, explicitly connects her work to that of Kuhlthau, in pointing out that the implication of Kuhlthau's theory for information literacy education is that it involves more than instruction in a set of discrete skills - being rather the adoption of a "way of learning" (2000b: 97).

Using Bruce's theoretical lens to view the above application of Kuhlthau's ISP to the information literacy education in Mpumalanga's libraries leads to the conclusion that public librarians and educators and learners, on the whole, belong within the same cluster of conceptions. There are some exceptions, as pointed out in Chapter 6, but most see information as residing in resources and libraries and as something to be *got* from those resources. The impatience of the Woodsville learner in Vignette 2 in Chapter 8, on my asking her to spend time analysing her task, is understandable if viewed through this lens. In terms of these theories, the overall conclusion is thus that the public libraries are not *completely* ready for information literacy education. Public librarians and educators lack vision of the overall process of building knowledge – crucial to effective information literacy education.

Neither phase of the PhD study has found evidence of an active embracing of the third theoretical pillar of the PhD – the developmental and educational model of public librarianship, described in Chapters 1 and 3 as an alternative to the Western model of public library service. The first phase suggests that it is rather that the traditional Western model of service for the public library is being eroded by the urgent demands of school learners. The empirical study in Mpumalanga bears out the argument in Chapter 1 that information literacy education might benefit from an acceptance of a developmental and educational mission for public libraries. As already stated [9.2.3.3], the study finds ambivalence among its respondents towards their work with school learners. Even those who welcome it feel unprepared for it and there is consensus that they receive no guidance from their governance structures.

The Woodsville case study serves to highlight the unresolved issues. The Woodsville librarians welcome the heavy use by school learners; indeed it is what frames their day to day routine. But, as asserted above, the case study provides support for the tentative conclusion stated in Chapter 7 that public librarians' views of their role to be information *providers*

blinker their vision. The second phase study highlights their impasse, resulting from the need to negotiate a different relationship with educators.

9.3.2 Conclusions of the study

In Chapter 7 the conclusions of the first phase of the study are given tentatively [7.3.2]. Table 24 repeats them in its left hand column. The right hand column transforms these into final conclusions – confirming, expanding and modifying the tentative findings in the light of the convergence or triangulation undertaken in the preceding section.

. The Readiness of Public Libraries in South Africa for Information Literacy Education. The Case of Mpumalanga Province	
Phase 1 Tentative conclusions [7.3.2]	Final Conclusions
Public libraries are indeed heavily engaged in the information literacy education of school learners. The overall conclusion is that it largely comprises, at present, one-to-one support, although there is a fair amount of source based library orientation. How significant this education is in the learning programme of the learners requires further exploration of the relationship between schools and libraries in the second phase.	Public libraries are indeed heavily engaged in the information literacy education of school learners. School learners comprise the largest component of public library user. The shortage of school libraries and the resource-based revised curriculum explains the heavy use of public libraries by school learners. The overall conclusion is that the information literacy education in public libraries largely comprises, at present, one-to-one support, although there is a fair amount of source based group library orientation.
	Moving from source-based library orientation towards information literacy education will depend on a shift in conceptions of information literacy education. The shift in conceptions implies an acceptance by both public librarians and educators that information literacy education is a *shared* responsibility. At present, educators' conceptions of project work and of the role of public libraries in learners' projects do not allow for a more dynamic role for public libraries. The dawning recognition in the first phase interviews with public librarians of the need for more communication with schools emanates from their frustrating encounters with learners rather than from insight in information literacy education theory and experience.

	The Woodsville case study – despite the flaws in school/public library relations it uncovers – does signal tantalising possibilities for those libraries which operate within a contained community. The two libraries have each a manageable number of schools within their immediate communities – none with effective libraries. Hillside Library has the spare capacity to develop dynamic and innovative programmes.
Public librarians' "incomplete" conceptions of information literacy, information literacy education and of their educational role restrict their role in the learning process of information literacy.	Public librarians' "incomplete" conceptions of information literacy, information literacy education and of their educational role restrict their role in the learning process of information literacy.
	Gaps in conceptions between librarians and educators are significant for information literacy education. Whereas public librarians conceive of information literacy almost exclusively in terms of use of libraries and information sources, educators lack cognizance of the role of public libraries in information literacy education.
As suggested in the preceding section, the low level of professional (and academic and general) education of public library staff might impede innovation in library and information service programming. Information literacy education demands insight into constructivist learning and contemporary pedagogies – as well as into the attributes and tools of the information society.	The low level of professional (and academic and general) education of public library staff impedes innovation in library and information service programming. Information literacy education demands insight into constructivist learning and contemporary pedagogies – as well as into the attributes and tools of the information society. The Woodsville case study highlights the insidious impact of the ad hoc nature of staff appointments and of the low level of education among library staff. The study lends support to earlier studies that have linked low levels of education in staff to unproductive public library services (Vavrek, 1997; Luchs, 2001: 51).
Shortcomings in certain physical facilities, such as the lack of space and absence of retrieval tools, are inhibiting factors.	Shortcomings in certain physical facilities, such as the lack of space and absence of retrieval tools, are inhibiting factors.

The heritage of apartheid still impacts on the provision of library and information services – in terms of availability of services and, perhaps, quality of service. The Australian, Todd's comments on the significance of *class* to information access and seeking might be pertinent to the study of staff in the historically black and disadvantaged libraries of Mpumalanga. He suggests that, although the rich networks of the information society might be available in theory, the "information poor" perceive themselves to be devoid of any sources that might help them and perceive access to information to be restricted to and guarded by the privileged (2004: 33). This is another issue to follow up in Phase 2.	The heritage of apartheid still impacts on the provision of library and information services – in terms of availability of services and quality of service. The Australian, Todd's comments on the significance of *class* to information access and seeking might be pertinent to the study of staff in the historically black and disadvantaged libraries of Mpumalanga. He suggests that, although the rich networks of the information society might be available in theory, the "information poor" perceive themselves to be devoid of any sources that might help them and perceive access to information to be restricted to and guarded by the privileged (2004: 33). The second phase interviews with the Hillside library staff and educators confirm the significance of people's subjective beliefs about and perceptions of their social situations.
The low morale of public library staff might well impede the introduction of new programmes such as information literacy education. The evident low levels of job satisfaction have a variety of causes, such as changes in local authorities, perceptions of their low status within their municipal structures, inadequate resources, pressure of school learner numbers, and lack of appreciation of public libraries within their communities. Chapters 5 and 6 include dissatisfied comments from professionally qualified staff who see no future in public librarianship and from disheartened staff who have discontinued their professional studies.	The low morale of public library staff might well impede the introduction of new programmes such as information literacy education. The evident low levels of job satisfaction have a variety of causes, such as changes in local authorities, perceptions of their low status within their municipal structures, inadequate resources, pressure of school learner numbers, and lack of appreciation of public libraries within their communities. Chapters 5 and 6 include dissatisfied comments from professionally qualified staff who see no future in public librarianship and from disheartened staff who have discontinued their professional studies. The Woodsville case study confirms the impact of low morale on information literacy programmes. The Woodsville study reveals that negotiating new relations with principals and educators requires commitment and energy. These qualities might well have been sapped in the present environment as shown in the frequent negative comments in the first phase interviews and the participant observation study in Woodsville.
The relations among public library, local authority and province – and among libraries within a local authority – are clearly a significant factor in need of further examination. The first phase study raises questions over the standing	The relations among public library, local authority and province – and among libraries within a local authority – clearly impact on public library programming, including information literacy education. The impact of the merging of small

of public libraries in their municipalities. The cool climate is not necessarily a new phenomenon, municipal officials' understanding of the community role of public libraries having been questioned over the years (Zaaiman, Roux & Rykheer, 1988; Stilwell, 1996: 183). The difference now is that public libraries are not, at present, accountable to provincial and professional guidelines or standards (Hendrikz, 2004a).	municipalities and rural settlements into the large local municipalities on public libraries is an issue for follow-up study. The study raises questions over the low standing of public libraries in their municipalities. The cool climate is not necessarily a new phenomenon, municipal officials' understanding of the community role of public libraries having been questioned over the years (Zaaiman, Roux & Rykheer, 1988; Stilwell, 1996: 183). The difference now is that public libraries are not, at present, accountable to provincial and professional guidelines or standards (Hendrikz, 2004a).
The actual and potential role of the Mpumalanga Provincial Library Service in terms of information literacy education is rather murky. Traditionally in South Africa, the provincial library structures were expected to provide "support structures" and professional guidance to affiliated public libraries (Stilwell, 1996). The workshop on information literacy education, hosted by the Mpumalanga Provincial Library Service on 16 March 2004 [4.3.1.6], is a sign of its recognition of shifts in mission of public libraries. The field study will examine over a longer period of time how public library staff interact with Mpumalanga Provincial Library Service, via the provincial regional libraries, for example.	The study points to a failure in vision and leadership – from Local Authorities, the Mpumalanga Provincial Library Service Province and the Mpumalanga Education Department. The curriculum has '"fallen" on public libraries which have received little increased support for or guidance on the new roles demanded of them. Their role is not recognised in curriculum documentation. The failure, thus far, of local government and of the provincial library service to provide leadership has to be a significant assertion of the study. The actual and potential role of the Mpumalanga Provincial Library Service in terms of information literacy education is rather uncertain. Traditionally in South Africa, the provincial library structures were expected to provide "support structures" and professional guidance to affiliated public libraries (Stilwell, 1996). The workshop on information literacy education, hosted by the Mpumalanga Provincial Library Service on 16 March 2004 [4.3.1.6], is a sign of its recognition of shifts in mission of public libraries. However, the Woodsville case study has illuminated the rather minor role that the provincial library service and its regional structures in reality play in public library services. As long as local authorities undervalue the potential developmental role of their public libraries in, for example, appointing unsuitable staff, then innovative programming will be difficult.

Table 24: Final Conclusions

9.4 The research problem: some final comments

The above conclusions lead to a reconsideration of the research problem, first put forward in Chapter 1 and discussed in some length in Chapter 7 [7.1] - the readiness of public libraries in South Africa for information literacy education, with Mpumalanga Province as research site.

Mpumalanga was chosen because of the interest in the study of its director of library services and because it was believed that its attributes might throw into relief the research questions. Chapter 4 gives a fairly detailed description of the province. The context of a research study is of course crucial – as evidenced in the Woodsville study. However, the PhD study must also be interested in identifying common ground, hoping for the transferability that is the equivalent of the generalisability of positivist research (Atkinson & Delamont, 1985; Guba & Lincoln, 1994). It might therefore be useful to list the attributes impacting on its public libraries that Mpumalanga shares with other provinces of South Africa – in order to show that it is not an aberrant case. The following shared attributes, all mentioned in earlier chapters of the dissertation, can be stated with some certainty:

- a dire shortage of school libraries – with historically black schools the worst provided for (South Africa. Department of Education, 1999)
- the introduction from 1997 of Curriculum 2005 and the Revised National Curriculum Statement – which value constructivist learner-centred pedagogies (South Africa. Department of Education, 1997a; South Africa. Department of Education, 2002)
- uneven and unequal distribution of public libraries, with urban areas and historically white suburbs in urban areas better provided for than rural areas and the historically black townships placed on the outskirts of urban centres (Van Helden & Lor, 2002)
- a heritage of uneven resourcing of public libraries, with public libraries in the historically black townships having fewer staff and fewer qualified staff - for example (Hart, 1999b)
- a high proportion of youth – with 33.6 percent of the population in South Africa under 15 years of age (United Nations Development Project, 2003)
- new government structures – Mpumalanga being a "new" province established with four others in 1996; and new large district and local municipalities replacing the former towns and regional service areas (Butler, 2004: 99-103; South Africa, 2004)
- new provincial library services – splinters of the services of the four provinces pre-1996

- in common with five other "rural" provinces, Mpumalanga has about 65 percent of its people living in underdeveloped densely populated but still rural areas (Butler, 2004: 135) – being a merger of sections of a so-called "white" province and two former "homelands" (apartheid era Bantustans)

- the constitutional uncertainty over which tier of government is responsible for the funding of public libraries (Nassimbeni, 2001: 33; Print Industries Cluster Council Working Group on Libraries, 2005: 17)

- widespread questions over the capacity of local authorities (Portfolio Committee on Provincial & Local Government, 2003; Butler, 2004: 103)

- stringent public library budget cuts (Leach, 1998; Lor, 1998; Hooper & Hooper, 2000).

Having listed these attributes, the PhD study can still make no definite statement on the generalisability of its findings in Mpumalanga to the rest of South Africa; but hopefully the rigour of its methodology and reporting will aid its transferability to other contexts. In keeping with the evaluation criteria of abstraction and generalisation of Klein and Myers (1999), discussed in Chapter 4 [4.4], its findings have been continuously viewed through the lens of theory. The convergence of the findings of the two phases has aided the relating of part to whole and whole to part, which Klein and Myers claim to be fundamental to the hermeneutic circle principle and contextualisation of good research.

Two broad answers to the research problem can be offered:

- Public libraries are taking a major responsibility for the information literacy education of school learners – and, indeed, are having to fulfil a role that in other countries, such as the United States and Australia, is expected of the school library system.

- The library orientation that teaches "how this library works", which Chapter 5 found to be the most common structured information literacy activity, reflects the kind of information literacy education that respondents are prepared for in terms of their conceptions of their role. This is understandable once their conceptions of information, information literacy and information literacy education are probed. They tend to conceive information literacy in terms of finding information in sources; and information literacy education is seen as teaching people how to find or "fetch" information.

As stated in Chapter 7 [7.1], "readiness" comes from both physical capacity, in terms of space and resources, and more subjective factors such as beliefs, perceptions, knowledge, conceptions – and will. The findings on the interdependence of both sets of factors point to a major contribution of the study. Earlier research in library information literacy programming has, it is asserted, underestimated the subjective factors. The second phase case study in Woodsville shows, for example, how programmes can be undermined by feelings of being slighted or by complacent assumptions that educators share librarians' beliefs.

In introducing the research problem in Chapter 1 [1.1; 1.2.2], the question in the literature over the teaching capacity of librarians was alluded to (Peacock, 2001; Bruce & Lampson, 2002; Clyde, 2002). The PhD study provides mixed answers to this question. South African public librarians have had no choice – the shortage of school libraries together with the shift to a resource-based curriculum has obliged them to take on a more direct educational role than they might have wished or trained for. None of the respondents received any training in pedagogy or how to teach information literacy in their pre-service education. And hardly any report any education in the revised curriculum. Moreover, the general educational and professional background of many of the respondents might well be questioned – although this is a sensitive issue given the historical context of unequal access to education in South Africa. Whatever the merits of the argument for redressing past inequalities, the Woodsville case study suggests that the lack of education and of perceived status of public library staff might be a factor in the failure of school educators to consult them.

The second phase, in addition, serves to highlight the systemic factors, which are out of the control of public library staff on the ground but which make up the social reality within which they work. Information literacy education in public libraries tends to be "ad-hoc", dependent on the whim of individual staff members. They find no direction or support in documents from their local authorities or from the provincial library service. The point made in Chapter 7 [7.2.1] bears repetition – the absence of clear policy creates a dislocation between librarians' everyday experienced realities and what they feel they *should* be doing in terms of traditional public library practice.

Moreover, the uncertainty over who might be responsible for a policy on public library/school relations is significant. The ambiguous relations between Local Authority and Province affect the morale of staff on the ground and the quality of their services. The development of information literacy education requires more than the cooperation between individual library and individual school that Fourie (1996) recommends in her model of school/library communication that was mentioned in Chapter 3 [3.1.1]. In the existing situation in

Mpumalanga and other South African provinces, formalised and sustainable information literacy education implies cooperation between three separate systems: local authorities, the provincial departments responsible for public libraries, and the provincial education departments. The finding in Phase 1 that only two respondents have had any contact with the school library support services of the Department of Education [5.5.3] and the findings in Phase 2 on the gulf between public librarians' and educators' conceptions of the public library lead to the assertion that stronger leadership is required. The support of policy documentation is required, which, in turn, implies the need for negotiation at high levels.

Another systemic and historical factor, out of the control of the individual public librarian but pertinent to the research problem, is the shortage of libraries in the Province – both public and school. Given the uneven distribution of public libraries in Mpumalanga, the public library system alone cannot provide for the information literacy education of the youth of the Province, even if it develops sophisticated programmes in its existing libraries. The needs of the learners living in the sprawling rural settlement areas of the Province are highlighted in the Woodsville case study. Clearly, the public library system cannot work in isolation from the development of school library programmes.

9.5   Conclusion

This chapter has converged the findings of the two phases of the PhD study and has therefore been able to draw conclusions pertinent to the research problem. The visits to the 46 public libraries in Mpumalanga and the personal interviews with their staff yielded valuable data but the second phase case study was needed to confirm this. It allowed for a naturalistic exploration of a bounded system, what Stake calls, "a specific, complex functioning thing" (1995: 2). It thus provides a nuanced view of the relationships within it and its participants' perspectives of their social context. The following – and final - chapter will reflect on the trustworthiness of the study in terms of the seven principles that were outlined in Chapter 4.

In Chapter 1, the engaged nature of the project was made explicit. I undertook the project with a sense of urgency – having observed the impact of South Africa's new curriculum on learners and educators in earlier research. The study clearly leads to some recommendations for public librarians, the Mpumalanga Provincial Library Service and local authorities, which will be articulated in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 10
RECOMMENDATIONS AND REFLECTIONS

The final chapter looks forward and backwards. I make some recommendations for information literacy education in Mpumalanga Province and public libraries in general and suggest areas for further research. Then I reflect on the PhD study, in keeping with the reflexivity of interpretive research.

10.1 Recommendations for information literacy education arising from the study

The study has confirmed the need for and the importance of information literacy education in public libraries. It has shown that school learners are their dominant user group and that they lack the information skills required for their school projects and assignments – skills that are necessary for the lifelong learning outcomes of the South African curriculum.

There are three fundamental recommendations that underlie all those that follow below, namely:

- If the needs of South African learners for information literacy education are to be met, South African educationists must expedite the building and implementation of school library policy. Public library programmes just cannot reach all learners.

- The role of public libraries in the school curriculum has to be recognised, by the librarian profession itself most importantly – then by public library governance structures at provincial and local level, librarian educators and by educationists. This would empower librarians on the ground to design more effective programmes and to negotiate new relationships with school educators.

- More effective programmes require less constrained conceptions of information literacy, information literacy education and of the role of the public library. Public librarians need education in information literacy as an information seeking process, necessary to lifelong learning. Any future information literacy programme within the public libraries of Mpumalanga Province will be doomed if its librarians' subjective meanings and interpretations are not understood. The study has confirmed that librarians' and educators' views of information and information literacy must impact on the information education they design.

The study has identified enabling and inhibiting factors for effective information literacy education in South African public libraries. The following subsections enunciate recommendations for four different sectors: the librarian profession, the governance structures

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of public libraries and of schools at provincial and local levels, public librarians on the ground and librarian educators and information literacy specialists in South African universities' "library schools".

10.1.1 Recommendations for the library profession

These entail shifts in philosophy and systems and therefore, perhaps, are beyond the reach of the public librarian on the ground. They are as follows:

- South African librarians should return to the discussion documents of the early 1990s and articulate a vision of a social developmental role that takes into account Government's recent recognition of the power of social capital in community development. Given Government's increasing emphasis on the role of local government in the development of rural communities and on the need to bridge the digital divide, public libraries must be recognised as development agencies whose specific contribution is community "informacy". Their present and potential role in information literacy education gives them a unique position from which to argue their case. The long-awaited formation of the National Council of Library and Information Services (NCLIS) surely provides the arena for such vision building.

- The profession should seize the opportunity for enhanced recognition that information literacy education offers. The Mpumalanga study suggests that public libraries need schools as much as schools need them. The construct of information literacy education implies a larger role for public libraries than providing resources for school projects. Hopefully, the next 10 years will bring a vast improvement in the position of school libraries but this does not mean that public libraries will be able to revert to their traditional role, to be used by only six percent of South Africans. School programmes can be modified and expanded for the needs of the general community. Much of course will depend on the growth of the vision mentioned above.

- The library profession needs to engage dynamically with the education profession. Channels have to be found to communicate evidence of the crucial curricular role of public libraries for example. Both professions need to address the gaps in education legislation with regard to libraries.

- The constitutional lacuna with regard to the funding and governance of public libraries must be addressed urgently – by NCLIS.

- The professionalism of public librarianship in South Africa must be affirmed – as it is internationally. Standards statements which define professional competencies are urgently required. The lack of urgency of the national professional association, LIASA, in this regard is inexplicable.

- The PhD study has highlighted the needs of rural libraries. Perhaps the profession needs to recognise more explicitly that rural librarianship has its own demands.

- Similarly, the focus on the information literacy education of school learners has highlighted the information needs of children and youth in general. In a youthful society such as South Africa, children's librarianship deserves the special attention of the profession.

10.1.2 Recommendations for the governance structures of public libraries and of schools

These are aimed at the government and organisational structures within which public libraries lie and at the provincial education departments, specifically the curriculum design departments and the school library support services. Their feasibility might well depend on the changes in climate and government priorities implied in the preceding section.

- Public libraries need mission and policy documentation that recognises their role in information literacy education and the school curriculum. This will enable information literacy education in public libraries to evolve into sustainable programmes which are not dependent on the interest of individual staff members.

- If information literacy education is to move beyond library orientation and annual visits by library staff to schools in Library Week, the provincial library services should initiate consultations at high level among the various departments that govern public libraries and schools – in all three tiers of government.

- One of the outcomes of the above mentioned consultations must be more explicit recognition in curriculum documentation of the crucial contribution of public libraries to the RNCS.

- The provincial library services are well-placed to initiate education programmes in information literacy education for the staff within their affiliated libraries. The interest of the Mpumalanga Provincial Library Service in such programmes was one of the motivations for this PhD project. To effect meaningful change, however, will demand more than once-off workshops. The rich literature on the challenges of "educational change", both internationally and in South Africa, would provide useful insights for the planning of education programmes for public librarians.

- Local authorities must be persuaded to appoint more staff – and better qualified staff – to public libraries. The credibility and sustainability of information literacy programming in public libraries depend on the staff responsible for it on the ground. Prior "experience" is not the same as prior "learning". Public library work entails some routine administrative work, easily learned "on the job"; however, merely working in a library for some years does not guarantee professional competencies or

appreciation of what might be called the more philosophical aspects of public library work - including its role in information literacy education.

- The provincial library services should develop and then promote a set of desired competencies for public library staff. I suggest that the need is so urgent that they should not delegate this work to LIASA or the Standards Generating Body of Government since the process of building standards in the past few years via these bodies has proved to be a slow and discontinuous process.

- Provincial library services and local authorities have to address the physical obstacles to effective information literacy education, such as inferior reference collections and the lack of public access catalogues and reliable Internet connectivity. The encroachment of library space by local authorities is a sign of the low value they place on public libraries. Although the library buildings are often small, many of them are situated within municipal complexes with meeting rooms close-by, which, given the support of local authorities, could be used for class use.

- The school library support services that lie within provincial education departments need to educate school educators in information literacy and in the need for them to engage more dynamically with public libraries.

10.1.3   Recommendations for public librarians

Many public librarians experience the heavy school use of their libraries as something that "fell" on them on the introduction of Curriculum 2005. It is probably true that their harried afternoons will continue – it will take years to develop effective school library and information literacy programmes. Nonetheless, there are strategies that might restore some sense of control and bolster morale, for example:

- For effective information literacy education, the public library needs to become a "learning library". Public librarians need to view all their areas of work through the lens of information literacy education. They need, for example, to rethink their provision of information retrieval systems and of public access to their collections and to wider networks. Their systems should enable users to become independent and confident library users. Some of the present approaches to project collections short-circuit learning.

- Public librarians need to engage with the research and professional literature in information literacy in order to understand the learning needs of their users. The rich literature of information literacy in the school library sector has much to offer them.

- They might look to the school library support services within provincial education departments for advice since their staff have expertise in information literacy education and might be called upon as partners.

- Programmes for educators that focus on project work and on the skills it demands are the most effective way to reach school learners. The educator programmes must be more than "lectures" on the library – they need to develop insight into the crucial early phases of the information search process when learners need to negotiate a preliminary understanding of what they need and why.

- The quieter mornings are an opportunity for structured programming – which will empower at least some of their afternoon learner users.

- The programming has to connect to the real learning needs of the students and so consultation and co-operation with educators will be crucial.

- Insight into educators' conceptions of public libraries and of project work might lessen the frustration of dealing with educators who just lack cognizance of libraries and the pressures public libraries are experiencing.

- Public libraries cannot engage meaningfully with all schools in the vicinity. They need to focus on a handful of schools and on key grades.

- Individual efforts in one library might be shared across libraries within a municipality and provincial region. Thus, one library might pilot a programme with one school and offer it to other libraries as a model.

10.1.4 Recommendations for librarian educators and information literacy specialists

The PhD study has concluded that the education and training needs of public library staff have to be addressed. For example, information literacy educators need professional education, education in the resources of the information society, education in the information seeking process and education in the RNCS. These needs imply a role for South African librarian educators and academics. For example:

- Lessons might be gained from experience in other sectors which have found innovative ways to redress the inequalities of opportunity of the past. The teaching profession, for example, in partnership with universities, has put in place accelerated upgrading programmes to overcome the negative impact of the apartheid inheritance of thousands of under-qualified school educators.

- The value of existing librarian professional education in the South African context has to be examined. Does it prepare its graduates for developmental librarianship or for rural librarianship? Does it prepare them for their work with children and

adolescents? Does it prepare them for information literacy education with school learners?

- Accessible information literacy education materials, geared towards the needs of public librarians and grounded in the RNCS, are required. They need to provide models of integrated programmes.

- With research in the role of a public library with regard to the needs of South Africa as a developing society, researchers in library schools might contribute to the building of vision that was recommended earlier. Areas for further research that arise from the PhD study are suggested in the next section.

10.2 Recommendations for further research

The metaphor of ploughing a field is again apt. Much of interest was ploughed up in the study – only to be put aside as of only indirect interest to this study. For example:

- Follow-up research is required to follow library users from public libraries back to their classrooms – to examine the outcomes of the library information seeking and to see what educators make of the final products. Ideally, the research would merge a study of learners in a public library, as in Chapter 8, and the kind of observation of classroom work that I undertook in my Masters degree study in 1999 (Hart, 1999a).

- Research is needed in the needs of the learners who rely on the Internet at home and in those of rural disadvantaged learners who go home after school to areas with no public libraries. It would be interesting to assess the work of both of these groups in terms of information literacy outcomes.

- The study's finding on educators' beliefs that the Internet makes school libraries redundant calls for research in the impact of the Internet on information literacy education in South African schools that provide Internet access to their learners.

- The finding suggests also the need for in-depth research in educators' and educational policy-makers' conceptions of libraries and information literacy. The comparison of the 23 educators' views with those of the 57 public librarians in Chapter 8 was informative but calls for corroborative research. The research might throw light on the lack of urgency in South Africa in developing school library systems.

- Similar research might also investigate the conceptions of libraries and information literacy among local government officials.

- The present and potential impact of the new municipal structures on public libraries is an interesting avenue of investigation. In an earlier chapter, I suggested that the merged structures might provide the opportunity for public libraries to enhance their

services. But the suggestion is speculative. It arises from comments in the literature on the restructuring of local government in the United Kingdom and has no empirical basis.

- The doubts over the viability of Hillside Library, hardly used by adults yet serving an underdeveloped community facing urgent socio-economic challenges, suggest the need for research in what is needed to transform an ordinary township or rural library into an agency of development. Related research might be an investigation of cultural factors in public library provision.

Finally, as mentioned above, the study points to the need for new research – more theoretical and philosophical than the above areas – in the social role of public libraries in developing societies. The construct of social capital provides, I suggest, a potentially fresh and fruitful focus.

10.3 Some concluding reflections on the PhD study

In Chapter 4 [4.4], Klein and Myers's principles for the evaluation of qualitative research were listed (1999). One of them is researcher reflexivity. It is fitting, therefore, that I conclude the dissertation with some reflections on the research study.

As stated in Chapter 1, the PhD study came out of my research in schools and public libraries since the late 1990s. My Masters Degree study of project work in a classroom in a disadvantaged school in Cape Town led me to look at project work in its wider circuit of schools. This, in turn, led me to examine the information seeking behaviour of school learners in two public libraries in Cape Town. The context for all these studies was curricular transformation and the needs of South African youth for information literacy education. Curriculum 2005 had brought a new ethos and new pedagogies, described in Chapter 2; yet, as the Principal of Hillside Primary School points out in a quotation in Chapter 8, there was no concomitant injection of resources into schools. The purpose in my research has been to explore the contradiction and to examine how disadvantaged schools cope with it.

The PhD study provides another angle. Hopefully, it responds to the challenge given by Durrance in 1991, as mentioned in Chapter 1, for more research in public librarianship in order to "prepare and strengthen" it for the 21st century. Its focus is on the information literacy education of school learners. Yet, its exploration has thrown light on the four areas she recommended for more research: access to information, information needs and uses, library funding and economy, and the educational role of libraries (1991: 280).

The study affirms the value of the research design of two phases and the mixing of methods. The design enables the hermeneutical circle principle that an understanding of a whole comes from an understanding of its parts and vice versa. However, warnings on the research literature over the wastefulness of qualitative research were confirmed. Many data just have not been used. For example, little reference has been made to the interviews with the regional librarians or with the Head of the Mpumalanga Education Library and Information Service.

The second phase case study in Hillside brought two surprises. The quietness of Hillside Library was unexpected. It exposed my own assumptions – still in existence after the first phase - that information literacy education in public libraries was "extra", perhaps almost to be viewed as a burden for already busy libraries. The finding obliged me to rethink the obvious quietness of many of the Mpumalanga libraries I had visited in the first phase. It seems to me now that information literacy education might rather offer many public libraries a crucial opportunity for a new identity. This is an example of how a research project might change the horizons of the researcher – as well as those of other participants.

The second surprise was the ineffectiveness of the information literacy education in the Woodsville libraries. The case site was chosen as a potential site of "good practice". The weakness in the LIANZA study of information literacy education in New Zealand's public libraries (Koning, 2001) was, I felt, its failure to include examples of "best practice" which might serve as a model for public librarians in other contexts. In retrospective pondering of the choice of Woodsville, it is comforting to recall that other candidate sites all had specific problems that disqualified them – such as, the uncertain staffing situation at Maphotla Library or the obvious pre-occupation of another librarian-in-charge in the largest Mpumalanga township library on the illness of her husband. Hopefully, the reporting of the case of Woodsville, with its complex layers of problems as well as its promises, might resonate with other researchers and practitioners.

Dervin's advice on the importance of context quoted in Chapter 1 and Klein and Myers's warning on possible conflicts that result from historical factors like unequal access to power and resources helped me navigate the multiple interpretations I encountered in both phases. The relationships between public library branches and their staffs were found to be surprisingly significant to the research problem.

Finally, a comment on the research framework – Kuhlthau's and Bruce's information literacy theorising and the developmental model of the public library - is called for. The first two were

found to provide a useful lens through which to analyse and interpret the study's findings. However, perhaps the study might conclude that it is premature to talk of a developmental model of public library. It seems rather that public libraries in South Africa are in a phase of transition. This is an area for further research as mentioned above. It is clear that new vision and leadership are called for.

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University of the Western Cape

LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE

1 March 2004

Dear Colleague

PhD Research Project

I am a PhD student at the University of Cape Town. My research topic is "The readiness of public librarians for information literacy education". I have chosen Mpumalanga Province as my research site.

There seems to be a broad consensus that South Africa's new curriculum recognises and indeed demands *information literacy*. Traditionally and internationally school libraries have taken on education for information literacy as their mission. Yet in South Africa there are very few school libraries. The aim of my project is to explore the impact of educational change on public libraries in South Africa in the context of the shortage of school libraries. The central questions of my research are *if* and *how* public libraries are taking on an enhanced role in information literacy education.

Answering these questions involves interviews with public librarians throughout Mpumalanga Province – using a semi-structured questionnaire. I will also be interviewing the regional librarians and some key informants in the school library sector.

As discussed in my preliminary phone calls with you, I would like to interview the senior librarian in your library and probably one or two other members of staff.

I can assure you that the interviews are confidential. The names of participating libraries and staff members will never be mentioned in the reporting of my research.

Yours sincerely

Genevieve Hart

Genevieve Hart
Senior Lecturer

University of the Western Cape
Department of Library & Information Science
fax: 021-959-3659

Mr X
X Municipality
Fax

20 September 2004

Dear Mr X

Request for permission to undertake doctoral research in [Woodsville] Public Libraries, October 2004

With reference to our phone conversation earlier this morning, I am attaching the letter I sent to Mr M, which gives the background to my PhD research project. Its aim is to investigate the role public libraries might be playing in the implementation of Curriculum 2005.

The plan is to observe school learners in the two libraries in [Woodsville] and then follow them up in their schools. The project will take place throughout the month of October 2004. The librarians have told me that they would have no objection to my presence. I have permission from the Mpumalanga Education Department Regional Office to visit schools and to interview educators. I have had also the support of Mr Francois Hendrikz, Director of the Mpumalanga Provincial Library and Information Service, and of Mr Sam Ndawo, Head of the Education Library & Information Service, at the Mpumalanga Department of Education.

I can give the assurance that the normal functioning of the libraries will not be affected – and that the confidentiality and anonymity of the participants will be maintained. My report will not give the names of participants or of the libraries or of the schools. I have undertaken to keep the Mpumalanga Department of Education informed of my progress and findings – and of course will do the same with your municipality. I hope that I can make an appointment to meet with you in the course of the project – to tell you more.

Yours sincerely

Genevieve Hart – Senior Lecturer

Dr M T Mashinini
Deputy Director of Education
Mpumalanga Department of Education

25 August 2004

Dear Dr Mashinini

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO VISIT SCHOOLS FOR PHD RESEARCH

I am writing to ask for your approval to visit some selected schools in two regions in Mpumalanga and interview some of their Grade 7 and 8 educators.

I am undertaking a case study of school/public library relationships as part of the second phase of my PhD research project, for which I am enrolled at the University of Cape Town, under the supervision of Professor Mary Nassimbeni. The title of my thesis is: *The Readiness of Public Libraries in South Africa for Information Literacy Education – the Case of Mpumalanga.*

The first phase consisted of a survey of public libraries in Mpumalanga Province, to explore their experience of educational transformation and their capacity to teach the information skills needed by learners as they undertake the project work common in the new curriculum. In the second phase I wish to focus on one or two public library sites to look more deeply and more qualitatively at if and how the libraries support the learning programme in the nearby schools and also at educators' perceptions and experience of libraries.

I have identified two possible sites – the new library at M.... and the two library branches in the town of [Woodsville]. I would like to begin the case study at the beginning of October and plan to spend about a month on the study. To achieve this, I need to be able to go in and out of the schools in the vicinity of the libraries as I come across themes to explore – to interview educators.

Of course, I will negotiate access with the principals and will only work with educators who are willing to participate. Their names – and the names of the schools and their geographic areas – will not be identified in my writing-up of the project.

I have undertaken to keep Sam Ndawo informed of my progress and results – which I think might be of value to Mpumalanga Education Department.

Yours sincerely

Genevieve Hart
Senior Lecturer

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1 October 2004

Dear Principal and Educator

PhD RESEARCH PROJECT: LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

Thank you for helping me in my research project, which has the title *The Readiness of Public Libraries in South Africa for Information Literacy Education: the Case of Mpumalanga Province.* I completed the first phase in April 2004 and am now expanding its focus to include educators' perspectives.

As you know, South Africa's new curriculum is often described as "resource-based", with learners' being expected to undertake independent projects. My research is investigating the impact of the new curriculum on public libraries. It explores educators' and learners' need for and use of learning resources – against the backdrop of a shortage of school libraries.

In this second phase, based in [Woodsville], I would like to interview Grade 7 and 8 educators and school principals to find out their perspectives. Each interview takes about one hour.

I have received the approval of the Mpumalanga Education Department and its local Regional Office. And I can assure you that all interviews are confidential. All participants will be anonymous – no person, school or place will be named in my writing.

I appreciate your help and your time.

Yours sincerely

Genevieve Hart – Senior Lecturer

MPUMALANGA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Government Building
Kanyamazane
NELSPRUIT RSA

Private Bag X 1014
Kanyamazane 1214
Tel: (013) 794 0261
Fax: (013) 794 3234 Directors Office
Fax: (013) 794 1547 Logistics Section
Fax: (013) 794 1539 Personnel Section

EHLANZENI REGIONAL OFFICE

Litiko leTemfundvo   *umNyango weJundo*   *Departement van Onderwys*

ENQ   :   KHOZA JC
TEL   :   013-794 9006
CELL :   083 585 0339

TO   :   Genevieve Hart

FROM :   Chief Education Specialist – GET & FET
          Mr Khoza J.C

DATE :   15 September 2004

SUBJECT   :PERMISSION TO VISIT SCHOOLS FOR PHD RESEACH

1. Your letter dated 25 August 2004 refers.

2. Kindly be informed that permission has been
    granted to visit schools in our are for PHD
    research.

3. You are further reminded to adhere to professional
    ethics while conducting the research.

We wish you well

REGIONAL DIRECTOR
MR MJ LUSHABA

2004.9.16
DATE

Unite against HIV/AIDS
Our action counts

nquiries :

ef No. : ▓▓▓▓▓▓▓▓▓   30 September 2004

Mr G Hart
Private Bag X17
BELVILLE
7535

Fax number : 021 959 3659

Sir

REQUEST FOR RESEARCH STUDY: ▓▓▓▓▓▓▓▓

Your letter dated 17 September 2004 refers.

The Department of Protection and Community Services has no objection on your request.

On your arrival please make contact with ▓▓▓▓▓▓▓▓▓▓▓▓▓▓▓▓Library who will assist you.

If you need any further information, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours faithfully

RECEIVED DATE : 09/30 10:53'04   FROM   :

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APPENDIX B
PHASE 1: ALPHABETICAL LIST OF LIBRARIES VISITED
16 MARCH - 6 APRIL 2004
(Many names are in process of being changed at time of writing)

Balfour	Standerton Region
Barberton	Nelspruit Region
Bethal	Standerton Region
Breyten	Ermelo Region
Burgersfort	Lydenburg Region
Delmas	Middelburg Region
Dullstroom	Lydenburg Region
Embalenhle	Standerton Region
Emjindini	Nelspruit Region
Emzinoni	Standerton Region
Ermelo	Ermelo Region
Ermelo Regional Library	
Ethanda	Ermelo Region
Ezenzeleni	Ermelo Region
Groblersdal	Middelburg Region
Hendrina Power Station - Pullenshope	Middelburg Region
Kaboweni	Neslpruit Region
Kamlushwa	Nelspruit Region
Kanyamazane	Nelspruit Region
KwaGuqa	Middelburg Region
Kwamhlanga Regional Library & Library	Kwamhlanga Region
Kwasamabunhle	Middelburg Region
Kwazanele	Ermelo Region
Leandra	Standerton Region
Lebohang	Standerton Region
Lydenburg	Lydenburg Region
Lydenburg Regional Library	
Maphotla	Kwamhlanga Region
Marble Hall	Middelburg Region
Matsula	Nelspruit Region
Middelburg	Middelburg Region
Middelburg Regional Library	
Morgenzon	Standerton Region
Mpumalanga Provincial Library & Information Service, Nelspruit	
Nelspruit	Nelspruit Region
Nelsville	Nelspruit Region
Ogies	Middelburg Region
Ohrigstad	Lydenburg Region
Phola	Middelburg Region
Piet Retief	Ermelo Region
Sabie	Lydenburg Region
Sakhile	Standerton Region
Secunda	Standerton Region
Simile	Lydenburg Region
Standerton	Standerton Region
Standerton Regional Library	
Stanwest	Standerton Region
Valencia Park	Nelspruit Region
Volksrust	Standerton Region
Wesselton	Ermelo Region
White River	Nelspruit Region
Witbank	Middelburg Region

APPENDIX C

SECTION A: LIBRARY'S RESOURCES AND FACILITIES
(to be completed by senior librarian, if possible)

No
Respondent name

1 Name of library & its region

2 How many members do you have formally registered?

A	B	C
Adults	Children	Total

3 What were circulation figures for the month of February 2004? (How many
items were issued?)

A	B	C
Adults	Children	Total

4.1 Number of staff in total (FTE = full-time equivalent)

A	B
FTEs library staff	FTEs support staff (cleaners, security)

4.2 Have you "empty" unfilled positions in your library?

Yes	No
13	24

4.2.1 If you answered "yes" to 4.2, how many posts are unfilled?

5.1 Has the library a separate children's and youth library or section?

Yes	No
23	21

5.2 If you answered "yes" to 5.1, please estimate (in percentage terms) how much of
the total library week in the school term the children's library/section is staffed by
a staff member stationed in it (that is not coming across from adult section as
need arises) (eg 55%).

6.1 With regard to staff day-to-day responsibilities, please indicate if any of the staff specialise in the following areas? (Rather than everyone share general responsibility for all service areas)

A	B	c	D
Children's &/or youth services	Reference work	User education /information literacy education	Other? (Please specify)
5	4	3	2

6.2 If you indicated in 6.1 that there is at least one specialist in children's and/or youth services, does his or her work include any of the following areas of service?

A	B	c	D
Schools' services	Reference work	User education / information literacy education	Other? (Please specify)
4	4	4	0

7 Formal qualifications of staff. (Please make note if staff structure differs)

		A	b	c	d	e
7.1	Librarian	Professional LIS Degree / Diploma BBibl / HDLIS / BTech Lower/ National Diploma in LIS	Bachelors Degree	Matric	Pre-Matric	Other
		10	1	18	5	4

		A	b	c	d	e
7.2	Deputy Librarian	Professional LIS Degree / Diploma BBibl / HDLIS / BTech Lower/ National Diploma in LIS	Bachelors Degree	Matric	Pre-Matric	Other
		3	0	2	0	0

		A	b	c	d	e
7.3	Assistant Librarians	Professional LIS Degree / Diploma BBibl / HDLIS / BTech Lower/ National Diploma in LIS	Bachelors Degree	Matric	Pre-Matric	Other
		7	5	30	3	0

		A	b	c	d	e
7.4	Library Assistants	Professional LIS Degree / Diploma BBibl / HDLIS / BTech Lower/ National Diploma in LIS	Bachelors Degree	Matric	Pre-Matric	Other
		2	0	6	3	0

8   Please indicate which means of *information access & retrieval* are available to library staff, your adult users and your children/youth users in the library

		Library staff	In adult section	In children's / youth section	Joint-use
a	Card catalogue				
b	OPAC (Online Public Access Catalogue)				
c	Online access to other Provincial Service Libraries				
d	Internal indexes (eg to pamphlet / cuttings collections)				
e	Library's internal book lists (eg bibliographies on specific subjects)				
f	Journal / magazine indexes (either published or in-house)				
g	Provincial Service book lists				
h	Internet access to WWW				
i	SABINET and/or other information networks/database providers				
j	DDC posters and other notices & signs				
k	Index to reserve project collection				
l	Index to audiovisual collection (videos, photos, CDs)				
m	Other? Please specify				

9   Please indicate which of the following resources you have available to library staff, your adult users and your children/youth users in the library (ie directly accessible without staff member if desired)

		Library staff	In adult section	In children's / youth section	Joint use
a	Newspapers				
b	Journals and magazines				
c	CDs / Tapes / Audiocassettes				
d	CDROMs				
e	Email				
f	World Wide Web				
g	Pamphlet/cuttings collections				
h	Toys & games				
i	Videocassettes				
j	Special collections for literacy & ABET (Adult Basic Education) classes				
k	Reserve collection for school projects				
l	Teachers' collection				
m	Other? Please specify				

10.1   If you have Internet access in your library, please indicate how many workstations are available for public emailing and World Wide Web searching

☐

10.2   Please indicate how many OPAC workstations you have for public use, if any

☐

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SECTION B: INFORMATION LITERACY / USER EDUCATION PROGRAMMES
(to be completed by senior librarian, if possible)

11.1 Please indicate if the library is involved in an *on-going way** in any of these information literacy / user education / literacy programmes for adults and children & youth (in school or out-of-school), on a one-to-one individual basis, in self-help hand-outs, and to groups

		Individual – as asked for	Self-help guides	Groups
a	Literacy and ABET classes in the library			
b	Workshops / seminars on specific themes (eg HIV/Aids information; careers information)			
c	Regular (twice a year at least) writers' visits, readings	NA		
d	Computer literacy classes			
e	How to use email classes			
f	Internet WWW searching classes			
g	"How to use the OPAC or the catalogue" sessions			
h	"How to do your project / assignment" workshops			
i	User education / information literacy programmes sustained over more than one session with same class or group of users			
j	"How to use the reference collection" sessions			
k	Library orientation sessions			
l	CDROM training sessions			
m	Other? Please specify			

* *ongoing* means regular and alive and existing now – not a once off session in the past

11.2 Are you planning to begin any new information literacy / user education programmes as listed above in 11.1 in the near future – that is sometime in 2004? Please tick as appropriate.

		Individual – as asked for	Self-help guides	Groups
a	Literacy and ABET classes in the library			
b	Workshops / seminars on specific themes (eg HIV/Aids information; careers information)			
c	Regular (twice a year at least) writers' visits, readings	NA		
d	Computer literacy classes			
e	How to use email classes			
f	Internet WWW searching classes			
g	"How to use the OPAC or the catalogue" sessions			
h	"How to do your project / assignment" workshops			
i	User education / information literacy programmes sustained over more than one session with same class or group of users			
j	"How to use the reference collection" sessions			
k	Library orientation sessions			
l	CDROM training sessions			
m	Other? Please specify			

12.1 How many schools do you estimate you have within 3 kilometres of the library that would regard your library to be their closest public library?

A	b	c	d
Educare centres (Pre-school)	Primary schools	High schools	Total

12.2 How many of these schools, do you estimate, have a functioning school library with a teacher librarian responsible for it?

12.3 Are there any of the schools in 12.1 with which your library has a "special" partnering relationship – involving regular visits by some of its classes and/or teachers to the library or regular visits by library staff to the school?

Yes	No
17	27

12.3.1 How many schools do you have this partnering relationship with?

12.4 Please give details of this "special" relationship by indicating which of the following activities it includes

A	Regular story reading & telling	20
B	Once-off, annual or quarterly library orientation Visits by classes (tour & introduction to library services)	22
C	"How to do your project / assignment " workshops	6
D	Class visits sustained over a number of days or weeks, following programme of research/ library / information skills	5
E	Library staff visits to school	12
F	Regular, at least quarterly, personal contact with the school's teachers	10
G	Workshops on specific themes for teachers and/or school learners (eg HIV/Aids; careers information)	5
H	Computer literacy classes for groups from schools	0
I	Internet or WWW classes for groups from schools	0
J	Other? Please specify	6

13 Apart from the schools in 12.2, does your library have any other active partners in its user education / information literacy programmes / literacy programmes? Please indicate as follows

A	b	C	d	e	f	G
Business organisations	Provincial Library Service	Provincial Education Dept's School Library Support services	Provincial Education Dept curriculum advisors	Other libraries	NGOs	Other? Please specify
9	2	1	1	1	6	8

14.1 Does your library have documentation for user education / information literacy – either as separate documents or integrated into other policy documents?

A	B	c	d
No	Yes – in separate documentation	Yes -integrated into other documents	Other?
9	2	6	27

14.2 If you answered "yes" in 14.1, what terminology is used in the documents?

A	B	c	d
Information literacy education / training	User education	Library skills training	Other? (Please specify)
1	0	3	0

SECTION C: PERCEPTIONS OF INFORMATION LITERACY EDUCATION
(to be completed by both senior librarian as above, and whichever staff member(s) might be responsible for information literacy education to school going learners)

Information literacy education – teaching learners how to find and use information from a range of sources - is traditionally the mission of school libraries. But as you know, there is a huge shortage of school libraries in South Africa. So my purpose in my project is to examine if and how public librarians might take on responsibility for information literacy education. The aim in this section is to explore your perceptions of information literacy and information literacy education. There are no right or wrong answers! I just want to know how you feel and what you think.

A note on terminology: librarians often use different terms for broadly similar concepts. For the purposes of the survey, in some of the questions below, the terms "information literacy education" and "user education" and "library skills training" are used interchangeably. They all refer to programmes to teach users the skills of finding, handling and using information – often the context being the library and its resources. Other questions explore possible differences among the terms – as you perceive them,

15.1 Which of the following terms are you familiar with (before today when you filled in the above questions, which use some of the terms)? (Tick as many terms as you know)

A	User education	40
B	Library skills training / education	48
C	Book education	33
D	Media use studies	28
E	Bibliographic instruction	31
F	Information literacy education / training	36
G	Information skills training / instruction	37
H	Lifelong learning	35
I	Resource-based learning	30
J	Enquiry learning	25
K	Outcomes-based education	44
L	Big Six Skills	17

15.2　Are you familiar with the term "information literacy"?

Yes	No
46	11

15.3　If you answered "yes" to 15.2, please describe how you see an "information literate" person (a person with information skills). What are his or her attributes, behaviour etc?

....

....

....

16　Please give your responses to the following statements about information literacy by ticking the appropriate box

16.1　*"Information skills are the same as library skills"*

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree

16.2　*"Information skills are mostly about using information & computer technologies to retrieve information"*

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree

16.3　*"Information skills are essential to lifelong independent learning"*

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree

16.4　*"Information literacy education is a new name for what used to be called book education or media studies in schools"*

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree

16.5　*"Information literacy education is a new name for bibliographic instruction"*

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree

16.6　*"Information literacy is irrelevant to disadvantaged communities"*

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree

17.　"Information literacy" is often equated with "lifelong learning". What do *you* think the connections are?

....

....

....

18   Please give your responses to the following statements about the role of public libraries in education and information literacy education by ticking the appropriate box

18.1 *"A central mission of public libraries is to educate their users to meet their information needs"*

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree

18.2 *"Public library staff involved in information literacy education should be trained in teaching and learning methods"*

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree

18.3 *"The job of public libraries is to **support** formal school education – not educate directly"*

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree

18.4 *"South African public libraries need a more educational focus than public libraries in the developed first world"*

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree

18.5 *"I need guidance on how to teach information literacy"*

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree

18.6 *"I need more training in Curriculum 2005"*

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree

18.7 *"Our job in the public library is to help people find information"*

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree

18.8 *"Our job in the public library is not to help people use information"*

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree

19   Do you have any comments on the educational role of public libraries? Feel free to comment.

....

....

20.1 Please complete the sentence below

      "Information literacy education should take place in:

a	schools only	0
b	public libraries only	0
c	both schools & public libraries	57

20.2   Please comment on your answer to 20.1

....

....

21.1   Please complete the sentence below

"The numbers of learners coming into my library since the introduction of Curriculum 2005 has:

a	Increased	54
b	Decreased	0
c	Stayed the same	2

21.2   If you said that use has "increased" in 21.1, please explain and comment on possible reasons for the increase.

....

....

....

22   Please respond to the statements below – all to do with the use of the library by learners and educators (teachers)

22.1   "We don't have enough resources in the appropriate languages for our learners"

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree

22.2   "Teachers don't come into the library to discuss their projects before they set them"

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree

22.3   "In my library, we are not teaching learners information skills adequately"

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree

22.4   "Learners are not adequately prepared before they come to the public library to do their projects and assignments"

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree

22.5   "Since the introduction of C2005, we spend more of our budget on curriculum support materials"

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree

23   What is your relationship with the educators in your close-by schools? Please comment freely.

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....

....

....

24   Say a Grade 8 learner comes into your library to research "culling elephants in the Kruger National Park". Please discuss the steps you think he or she should go through to complete the assignment successfully.

....

....

25   Please read the statement below

"Learners coming to my library to do their school projects and assignments have problems with the following tasks"

		Usually	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
A	Understanding the topic they say they need information on	19	16	16	2	0
B	Formulating useful questions relevant to the topic	20	21	8	3	0
C	Deciding what information they need	14	17	16	3	2
D	Finding resources	17	21	10	3	0
E	Selecting appropriate resources	13	21	12	3	0
F	Finding information in the resources	11	20	9	8	0
G	Keeping focused on the topic	9	17	5	10	2
H	Evaluating information	6	16	15	4	0
I	Recording the information they need	5	8	6	10	0
J	Organising the information	6	4	8	4	0
K	Presenting the information to others (writing it up etc)	4	6	6	3	0
L	Other? Please specify	0	0	0	0	0

26   Please comment on your library's collection in terms of whether it meets the needs of your school learner users. For example, do you have enough materials – at the right level and in the right languages?

....

....

....

SECTION D: YOUR PERSONAL DETAILS

| Library |
| Respondent's name |
| Questionnaire no |

27 Your job title ....

27.1   Your age?....................................
27.2   Your gender?................................
27.3   Your home language?...................
27.4   Number of years in this library? ....
27.5   Number of years previous experience in other libraries? ....

27.6 What are your formal qualifications?

A	B	c	d	e
Professional LIS Degree / Diploma BBibl / HDLIS / BTech Lower/ National Diploma in LIS	Bachelors Degree	Matric	Pre-Matric	Other
16	1	26	10	3

27.7 Are you enrolled for a formal course of study at the moment?

yes	no
19	36

27.8 If you answered "yes" to 27.2, please indicate as appropriate

A	B	c	d	e
Professional LIS Degree / Diploma BBibl / HDLIS / BTech Lower/ National Diploma in LIS	Bachelors Degree	Matric	Pre-Matric	Other
9	0	5	0	3

28.1 In pre-service professional training, have you completed a course in information literacy education or user education?

yes	no	NA
1	19	14

28.2 Please indicate each in-service training or professional development activity or course in information literacy education or user education you have attended in the past three years (or since you have been in your present job, if less than three years). (Do not include formal education courses you might be enrolled for, such as Matric).

A	Some aspect of school curriculum: eg Curriculum 2005 / Outcomes Based Education / Project work Please specify if you can.	3
B	Information / library skills training (improving your own skills)	16
C	Training in how to teach information / library skills to library users	17
D	Library computer system course	41
E	Internet course	8
F	Children's literature	4
G	Children's needs / psychology	2
H	Computer literacy or other computer application	39
I	Other. Please specify	6

29.1 How computer literate are you? Tick as appropriate.

Know nothing about computers	Not very computer literate - but know library computer system	Fairly literate - feel I need more skills though	Computer literate	Am an "advanced" computer user
2	3	23	23	5

29.2 Please indicate your practical computer skills in the following areas by ticks. Also include a rating of your level of skill - from 1 for no knowledge at all to 5 for excellent skills.

	APPLICATION	LEVEL (1 to 5)
A	Word-processing	
B	Windows	
C	Spreadsheets (eg *Excel*)	
D	Building databases (eg *Access*)	
E	Internet email	
F	Internet : Searching WWW	
G	SABINET & other online database services	
H	Presentation software (eg Powerpoint)	
I	Web site design	
J	Other (please specify & rate)	

SECTION E

30   Are there any final comments that you would like to make on the question of the role of the public library in information literacy education /user education?

....
....
....

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR TIME!

I appreciate your help

Genevieve Hart
ghart@uwc.ac.za

APPENDIX D
PHOTOGRAPHS

1. Space problems

ATI · STUDENTS

YOU ARE KINDLY
REQUESTED TO STOP
LEAVING YOUR DIRTY
TOILET PAPERS ON
THE TABLES FLOOR.

THANK
YOU
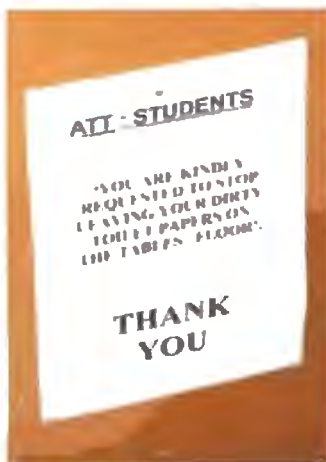
2. Photographs in study halls

R1,00
users fee

to be paid by

ALL PERSONS

using

reference hall.

3. Librarian searching for book while girls wait

4. Pot plant on catalogue cabinet
   "Otherwise they make a mess of the cards."

**5. Project box in
    Woodsville Library**

APPENDIX E
DIARY OF PHASE 2 WOODSVILLE CASE STUDY
1 October – 29 October 2004

Date	Activity
1 -3 October	Arrive, settle in, orientate to geography of town
4 October	Woodsville Library: meet Tara Botha, participant observation
	Visit Woodsville Primary & Woodsville High School to meet principals & make appointments
5 October	Go to Hillside Library: meet Naledi Matolo
	10.00am Hillside Primary information literacy education session
	Woodsville Library participant observation
6 October	8.00am: Hillside Library: Hillside Primary failed information literacy education [see vignette One]
	Visit Hillside Primary & Hillside High School to meet principals & make appointments
	12.00: Hillside Primary information literacy education session
	14.00: Interview teacher-librarian at Woodsville Primary
	Woodsville Library participant observation
7 October	Woodsville Library participant observation
	Visit library coordinator & regional librarian in capital town of the local municipality – 45 kilometres from Woodsville
8 October	Woodsville Library participant observation
	Visit Forest Primary to meet principal
	Interview Tara Botha at Woodsville Library
	Soul Buddies outing
9 October	Woodsville Library
11 October	Woodsville Library in morning
	Hillside Library in afternoon
12 October	Hillside Library participant observation
	Interview Naledi Matolo
	Visit Mountainview Primary to meet principal & make appointments
	Back to Hillside Library
13 October	Woodsville Library participant observation
	Bergsig Primary to meet principal & make appointments
	Hillside Library in afternoon
14 October	Woodsville Library: informal Interview with Tenji Miti
	Hillside Library in afternoon – library closed as electricians are fixing lights
	Hillside Primary - 2 interviews
	Woodsville Library
15 October	Woodsville High School: 3 interviews
	Take photographs of schools
16 October	Woodsville Library
18 October	Woodsville Library: interview Tenji Miti
	Mountainview Primary interview with Grade 7 educator/principal
	Participant observation

19 October	Woodsville Library participant observation
	Woodsville Primary interview
	Hillside Library afternoon
20 October	Woodsville Library
	Visit Groenvallei Library with Margie Wes, Library Coordinator [see Vignette Three]
	Woodsville Primary interview
	Viist Woodsville Museum
	Woodsville Library afternoon – long informal interview with Tara Botha
21 October	Woodsville Library
	Bergsig Primary two interviews
22 October	Woodsville High School: 2 interviews
	Bergsig Primary: interview
	Woodsville Library: formal interview with Tara Botha
	Woodsville Library participant observation [see Vignette 2]
25 October	Hillside High School: 5 interviews
	Hillside Library in afternoon
26 October	Drive to capital town of local municipality to interview Municipal Manager
	Then drive to provincial capital, Nelspruit, to interview Head of Mpumalanga Education Department's Education Library & Information Service, Director of Mpumalanga Provincial Library Service and Project Manager of Mpumalanga Provincial Library Service ;
27 October	Woodsville Library
	Mountainview Primary: interview
	Hillside Primary: interview principal
	Lunch with library staff
28 October	Woodsville High School: interview principal
	Woodsville Primary: interview principal
	Visit Information Centre in town
	Bergsig Primary: interview with principal
	Hillside Primary: interview with educator & with principal
	Woodsville Library participant observation
29 October	Say goodbyes

EDUCATORS AND PUBLIC LIBRARIES
EDUCATORS' INTERVIEW SCHEDULE
The sample consists of 23 educators – in seven schools. Summaries of responses are given where possible. Cases where the total does not add up to 23 are due to respondents' choosing not to reply to some questions.

I am undertaking a field work study in the public library – investigating the role it is playing in the educational programme of its nearby schools. The interview is for principals and for educators and should take about one hour. Confidentiality is assured – educators and their schools will not be identified by name.

A EDUCATOR DETAILS

1	School		2 Int.No.
3	Subjects / Learning areas		
4	Classes taught		
5	Training & qualifications	What?	
		Where?	
		Dates	
6	How long teaching?		
7	How long at this school?		
8	Home language		
9	Age		
10	Gender		

B SCHOOL INFORMATION CLIMATE

11	School library	c	Full-time librarian?	0
		d	Part-time teacher librarian?	0
	A Y / N	e	Teacher responsible for library?	
		f	If teacher or T/L, how much of day does he/she spend on library work?	
	B details	g	How much of the day is the library open for learners & educators? (ie not used as a classroom)	0
		h	Has the library a dedicated annual budget?	1
		i	Does the school receive support from the Mpumalanga Education Department's Education Library & Information Service?	0
12	Internet access	a	Y / N	

		b	Where and who has access?
		c	How many access points?

C YOUR LIBRARY EXPERIENCE

13 Could I begin by asking you to tell me the story of your experiences with libraries – since you were a child? For example, I'd like to know about your first experiences of a library or of books.

14 I'd like to know about your schooling and whether you had access to a school library or a public library.

15 Did you need to use a library in your tertiary education and your teacher training? What was the role of libraries in your tertiary education and your teacher education?

16 And now? How do you feel about libraries now? Do you find that you use libraries in your life ?

17 Have you found that your use of libraries has changed in the last few years? If so, please explain why and how.

D VIEWS ON CURRICULUM 2005 AND LIBRARIES

18 Has Curriculum 2005 changed the way you use information and learning resources in your teaching?

Yes	No	Don't know
14	6	2

19 If you answered "yes" to Question 18, please explain how and why you have changed.

20 Do you think that Curriculum 2005 has increased the use of public libraries by school learners?

Yes	No	Don't know
22	1	

21 If you answered "yes" to Question 20, please explain your answer.

E YOUR EXPERIENCE OF SCHOOL PROJECTS

22 Say a Grade 7 or 8 learner is given a project "culling elephants in the Kruger National Park". Please discuss the steps you think he or she should go through to complete the assignment successfully.

....

....

23 What do you see as the aims of project work?

24   How would you describe your overall attitude towards projects?

Very positive	Positive	Neutral/Unsure	Negative	Very negative
8	11	3	1	0

25   Please elaborate on your answer in Question 24. For example if you are positive describe what you see as the benefits of project work; if you are negative describe the problems that you see; and if you feel "neutral" explain why..

26   Please read the statement below

"In doing their projects and assignments, in my experience, learners have problems with the following tasks"

		Usually	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
A	Understanding the topic					
B	Formulating useful questions relevant to the topic					
C	Deciding what information they need					
D	Finding resources					
E	Selecting appropriate resources					
F	Finding information in the resources					
G	Keeping focused on the topic					
H	Evaluating information					
I	Recording the information they need					
J	Organising the information					
K	Presenting the information to others (writing it up etc)					
L	Other? Please specify					

27 Have you received any training in project-based teaching & learning?

Yes	7
No	15

28 If you answered "yes" to Question 27, please indicate what the training was.

Part of your teacher training at college or university	
In-service course/workshop by subject advisor, colleague etc	
Other	

29   Please describe the last major project that you undertook with one of your classes last term (or earlier on this year). Include at least:

- its title
- your planning for it

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- the staff and/or external people you worked with
- how you formulated the topic and sub-topics
- how you arranged the project activities
- how long it took and the stages (if any) the learners went through
- the hand-in product

If you have not undertaken a project with a class this year please go to Section F

30   Where did the learners do most of the work?

At home	8
In school	8
Both or Other (Specify) 3	

31   What resources did the learners have access to (at school) during the project?

A	School library books	4
B	Teacher's own books	4
C	Books borrowed by teacher from friend/family	0
D	Books borrowed by teacher from another school	0
E	Teachers' resource collection in school	1
F	Public library's books borrowed by teacher	0
G	NGO materials eg CRIC, Rape Crisis	0
H	School video	1
I	Television	0
J	Video Library's video/film	4
K	Internet access at school	0
L	CDROM (eg Encarta)	1
M	Computer educational materials	6
N	Worksheets compiled by teacher	8
O	Textbooks	1
P	School's visual materials eg charts	7
Q	Public library books borrowed by pupil	1
R	Pupils' own books	1
S	Class visit to museum or place of interest	3
T	Worksheets, pamphlets etc got on above visit	4
U	Interviews	8
V	Newspapers	5
W	Other? Please specify.	

32   What do you see as the learning outcomes (skills, knowledge, attitudes) of this specific project?

33   During or before the project did you spend time in class teaching skills (eg finding key ideas, note-taking, paraphrasing)?

Before	During	Both	Did not
7	7	1	5

34   Did you suggest to your learners that they use the public library?

Yes	7
No	12

35   Did you discuss the project with the public library staff before you set it?

Yes	2
No	17

36 If you answered "yes" to Question 35, please expand on what you expected of the public library in terms of this project.

F FOR TEACHERS WHO HAVE NOT UNDERTAKEN PROJECT WORK THIS YEAR

37   Please indicate the reasons for your not doing projects.

A	School policy	
B	I don't know how to run a project	
C	I believe that project work is ineffective	
D	We do not have enough resources	
E	Our pupils cannot do projects	
F	Other? Please specify	

38   Please elaborate on your responses to Question 37.

G RELATIONS WITH THE PUBLIC LIBRARY

39 How would you describe your relationship with your local public library?

40   In planning your class assignments do you ever consult or communicate with the public library staff?

Yes	4
No	19

41   Please elaborate on your answer to Question 40. For example, when and why you do consult public library staff or why you do not.

42   Do you think that the public library has a role in the educational programme of your school?

Yes	21
No	2

43   If you answered "yes" to Question 40, please describe what this role should be.

H   CONSTRUCT OF INFORMATION LITERACY

44   Are you familiar with the concepts of "information literacy" or "information skills"?

Yes	12
No	11

45   If you answered "yes" to Question 40, please describe how you see an information literate person – or someone who has information skills.

46   Do you think that learners at your school are learning information skills?

Yes	15
No	4
Don't know	2

47 Who, in your opinion, should teach information skills to school learners?

School	Public library	Both school & public library
1	0	20

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME!

APPENDIX G

Department of Education.
Human and Social Sciences (HSS). Common Tasks For Assessment
(CTA) Grade 9 2004. Learner's Book Section A

F

THE COMMON TASKS FOR ASSESSMENT (CTA)

Icons used:

(TASK 1)

This indicates that a new task has begun.

▶ **Activity 1**
This indicates that a new activity
of your task has begun.

Activities are done individually, in pairs or in groups. Individually | Pairs | Groups

CONTENTS

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1.1.5 The eastern and south-eastern portions of the 1:50 000 topographic map show an area that is farmed by commercial farmers. Use map evidence and explain why this is the best area for commercial farming. [2]

1.1.6 What method is used by farmers and forestry officials to stop bush and veld fires spreading in the area around Little Bamboo Mountain and Bamboo Mountain in the west? [1]

1.1.7 Mountain passes, such as Sani Pass and Pitsaneng Pass, were used for centuries by the San to travel up and down the escarpment. More recently, Basotho farmers have used the passes to bring sheep and wool from the plateau (Lesotho) to the towns below.

(a) Give, with explanations, two possible difficulties the San and Basotho would have encountered with the terrain when moving through these passes. [4]

terrain means land surface

(b) Where would they have sought shelter during the thunderstorms and snowstorms that occur in the area? [1]

[5]

TASK 2 — Synthesising information

✓ Total marks: 60   🕐 Time: 120 mins

You are expected to read the sources that you will find at the end of the CTA carefully and complete the tasks that follow, working in groups. You will have to demonstrate the following skills:

- The ability to understand the nature and use of sources
- The ability to deduce and synthesise information from sources and evidence
- The ability to use sources and evidence to formulate arguments and to state a position

As the San came into contact with other peoples in Southern Africa, some of them withdrew to the arid regions to avoid conflict, while others joined farmer families or became labourers on farms.

Resources needed:

- Sources B – E
- A4 paper
- Pen and pencil
- Pictures from old journals and magazines

2.1 Class discussion and pre-activity (Time: 10 min)

Do you agree that different cultures have different heritages? Explain your point of view.

In a multi-cultural society like South Africa, how do we determine common heritage or agree on which areas should be preserved as heritage sites?

2.2 Information pamphlets (Time: 50 min)

(Marks: 20)

Your teacher will allocate you to a group. Each group will be allocated a topic to be investigated and answered. (Groups of 3 – 5 members.)

Instruction: Each group must design and produce an information pamphlet on the uKhahlamba-Drakensberg Heritage Site. Design the pamphlet to illustrate the topic given to you by your teacher.

While in your group it is a good idea to find out what your team already knows about the question assigned to you. One person should write down the team's ideas. Once you have established what the group knows, use additional resources to fill in the knowledge gaps.

Assessment Criteria: Your teacher will be assessing how you work in your group; the final product that your group develops; how your ideas are expressed and arranged; and the overall presentation of your pamphlet (whether it has been designed in an eye-catching and balanced manner).

Use the following topics as a guideline. Develop the idea further based on your needs and abilities.

Topic 1: What is a heritage site and who is in charge of this world heritage site? Why was it declared a heritage site?

Topic 2: The location and distinguishing factors of the Drakensberg heritage site. What evidence can be found that would give us information about the early inhabitants of this site?

Topic 3: How did the early inhabitants relate to their environment and to nature? What significance did nature play in their belief systems?

Topic 4: Which factors led to the destruction, movement and relocation of the early inhabitants of the area?

Common topic: A common conclusion for all groups: How will the local communities benefit from the area becoming a world heritage site?

2.3: Creative response

✓ **Marks: 20**

🕐 **Time: 30min**

(Refer to Source C for this activity again)

You have had a busy time at this stop on your journey. You and your tour group have seen evidence of where the San lived as well as some of their artwork. Kerrik has spoken to your group and left. You and your fellow tourists now wish to spend some time thinking about what you have heard.

2.3.1. Group activity *(no marks have been allocated to this activity but you will need the result of this activity for the next activity.)*

Groups 👆👆👤 (Group size: 6 members per group)

Discuss the following questions in your groups. Once the discussion is over, your teacher will give you time to record your answers individually.

1. In your opinion, why does the San Foundation want to record the oral history of the San people?

2. What is the value of recording these oral histories?

3. What happened to the San people in Southern Africa?

4. How reliable is this source as a historical document? Substantiate briefly.

5. How do you think Kerrik's life experiences have influenced what he says?

6. Kerrik describes his life as a young boy. What does his story tell you about his way of life and the activities of his family group?

7. What is the significance of naming the cave used for initiation the "Eland Cave"?

2.3.2 Homework activity Individually 👤 ✓ **Marks: 20**

Using Source C, the story of Kerrik, and the information you gathered in your group, write a letter of about one page to the editor of your local newspaper in response to the article on Kerrik's story. Your letter should focus on the validity of Kerrik's story and comment on whether you agree or disagree that the oral histories of individuals need to be recorded.

ADDENDUM

Source B: Pamphlet on heritage

Heritage is really about things from the past that we value. These can be objects like buildings and monuments, places such as rivers and forests that may have religious or ritualistic importance, people and their ideas. Heritage is also something we want to preserve and pass on to future generations in the belief that it may enrich our and their lives.

Heritage is often defined as our legacy from the past, how we live in the present, and what we pass on to our future generations to learn from, to marvel at and to enjoy. Heritage provides us with points of reference that often shape our identity.
From *World Heritage in Young Hands* – UNESCO

Different cultures have different heritages. South Africa is a multi-cultural society. One group's heritage may differ from and even be in conflict with the heritage of another. Different groups also have different views on heritage.

Source D: Another account

"A long, long time ago, we, the Bushmen, roamed these mountains, masters of the unpredictable ways of nature. We were nomads then, moving with the great herds of game and the changing seasons. When the animals migrated we followed, leaving no houses or roads to mark our presence here. All we left behind was our story painted on the rock, in the shelters, the story of sacred animals and our journeys to the spirit world. These mountains once gave us shelter and the herds of antelope gave us sustenance and meaning to our lives."

(www.drakensberg-tourism.com)

> "The world was like a tight string,
>
> that would sing in the wind.
>
> Then the people came.
>
> They broke that string for me.
>
> Now the world is changed for me.
>
> The string is broken
>
> No more do we the bushmen hunt in these hills.
>
> The fire is cold.
>
> Our songs are quiet.
>
> But listen carefully, you will hear us in the water.
>
> Look carefully, you will see us in the rock."

(www.rhino.org.za)

Source E: Information on information boards

How the San lived:

The way of life of the San is one of the most ancient in Africa. They were hunter-gatherers. They moved from place to place within a certain area, but never moved too far away from water. They often lived in rock shelters or used branches and bushes to make a rough temporary 'hut' in which they scooped out shallow sleeping hollows.

The San considered that land belonged to everyone and not to any one person or group. The only gifts of nature that they considered could be owned were a nest of ostrich eggs, honey and water. The use of certain pools and springs was inherited, so that family groups would continue living in the same area for generations.

The basis of their food was veldkos (bush food) gathered by the women and children that provided two thirds of their nourishment, and meat was a treat.

The value of this lifestyle:

Even when the San could have changed their lifestyle, they chose to keep to their old ways – they were skilled at keeping the peace in their groups and made decisions by consensus; women had equal status with men.

The San lived in a state of harmony with their environment, which involved their religion, mythology and whole way of life. They did very little to harm the environment.

(From: In Search of History: Secondary Book 2)

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APPENDIX H
PHASE 2 WOODSVILLE CASE STUDY
INTERVIEW PROTOCOLS

INTERVIEW WITH TARA BOTHA
WEEK 1: FRIDAY 8 OCTOBER 2004

I've now been here for a few days and already certain themes are recurring – which I would like to follow up.

1. How do you see your work in relation to your young users' learning?

2. I have been enjoying seeing some of your work with school learners – with individuals and groups. Could we chat about it? For example, what do you see as the strengths of your programmes, the weaknesses, your main challenges, what you would like to do in the future?

3. I am interested in the relationship between the two libraries. How would you describe the relationship?

4. You are studying for your professional library degree. I'm interested in how your work might have influenced your work in the library and how you view it. Could you comment?

5. More specifically, has it included anything of use to you in your work with school learners? Anything on information literacy education ?

6. You have been honest in talking of your wish to leave your job here. I know there are family reasons but are there other factors that make you wish to leave?

7. Are there things you could wish for that might make it more difficult for you to leave, or even change your mind? If so, discuss the most important.

8. How are you feeling about my being here? Does it affect the way you do things?

TARA BOTHA INTERVIEW 2
22 OCTOBER

1. In our first interview you said that the Unisa Management course was giving you new ideas in your work. Could you elaborate on what you meant?

2. You've said that you feel you've "outgrown" the job here. Please explain. Are there things though that are undone – that you'd like to do?

3. You've told me that your "regulars" don't come in in the afternoons anymore? Why do you say that?

4. You've said that you are "passionate" about "reading" and "libraries". Why are you "passionate"? What, to you, do they do for people in your community?

5. Are you familiar with the concept of a Community Information Service? How do you see a CIS? Do your libraries act as a CIS?

6. You've told me that some people say to you that libraries won't survive because of new ICT like the Internet. What do you reply? What is the future for public libraries, do you think, in relation to developments in ICT?

7. I gather that you have an opportunity to get one or two new PCs. If you get the second PC promised by [M Wes], how will you use it? How did you react to her comment the other day that [Hillside] will get their PC back?

8. What are the outcomes of the work you've done with the [Hillside] Primary children this term and with the [Bergsig] classes last term? What do you think they have learned?

9. How are you feeling about what happened in trying to repeat the intervention at [Hillside]? What really happened?

10. I've been wondering about the difference between basing an information service on what is "in the heads" of library staff in which they basically find information *for* people and other approaches that might allow for independent information seeking and perhaps the development of lifelong information literacy in your users. Have you any comments?

11. What would you in your libraries need to move towards the second approach above if you wished to?

12. You said the other day that you found me "merciless" in my questions. Why did you say that?

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL WITH NALEDI MATOLO 12 OCTOBER

1. You've told me that you used to work for an AIDs NGO as an educator and trainer. How did you come to work in the library? How does that work compare with your work in the library? Are there things from that job that you are able to apply here?

2. What did you hope for when you got the job in the library? Has your work here lived up to your expectations? What do you enjoy? What are you unhappy with?

3. What training did you get when you took up the new job in the library?

4. As you know, my research interest is the work you do with school learners – with individuals and groups. Could we chat about it? For example, why is it important? What do you see as its purpose and outcomes? What are its strengths, the weaknesses, your main challenges, what you would like to do in the future with your schools? What do you need in order to make the work with learners and educators more effective?

5. I am interested in the relationship between the two libraries. How would you describe the relationship? How do you think the new larger municipality structure will affect the two libraries?

6. Please comment on your library stock. Does it meet the needs of your users?

7. You have often said to me that your library is very quiet in the mornings. Why is it so quiet then? What would you like to do to make it more productive?

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL WITH TENJI MITI 18 OCTOBER 2004

1. Could you tell me how you came to your job here?

2. What were your expectations of the job? Have they been met?

3. What do you enjoy about the job? What are you dissatisfied with?

4. I know that you are registered for a professional library and information service degree and have just written your first year exams. Why are you studying?

5. Have your studies so far had any impact on your work here?

6. What do you see as the chief challenges facing the two libraries?

INTERVIEW WITH MUNICIPAL MANAGER 26 OCTOBER 2004

Thank you for allowing me to spend time in the public libraries in your municipality this past month.

1. How do you see the role of public libraries in the various communities of your local municipality? What do you believe their purpose to be?

2. Could I ask you about your own experience of libraries – in your childhood and education?

3. My specific research interest is the impact of South Africa's new curriculum on public libraries. From your perspective, do you think it has had an impact on them? If so, what would explain it?

4. Could I ask you about any interaction you might have with the Mpumalanga Provincial Library and Information Service?

5. With regard to library services, how do you see the future relationship between Province and local authorities?

6. As you know, I am a librarian educator and am interested in how public library staff get selected and appointed. What role do you play in the selection and appointment of public library staff? What qualities would you look for in appointing someone who is to run a library in your municipality?

INTERVIEW WITH SAM NDAWO, HEAD OF MELIS, 26 OCTOBER 2004

1. Could you please describe your service – its base structures here, and its regional services through the Province.

2. Only a tiny minority of schools in Mpumalanga have functioning libraries. How are you coping with the challenges that confront you?

3. I have been into schools that had decent libraries a few years ago but who have let them die. They are shut up or used as classrooms; their books have been scattered; there is no money being spent on new books; they have no staff. I find it puzzling because, as they show me this decay, they are also telling me that the new curriculum demands resources – and I see the library as the most effective way to provide access to resources and to information literacy education. How would you explain the contradictions?

4. Last time we spoke, you said that you were beginning to work on a provincial school library policy. How is this work going? What broadly are you aiming at in the policy?

5. What do you see as the central mission of school library services within the educational system?

6. What advice would you give to a school wishing to establish a more dynamic school library & information literacy programme? What space is there for them?

7. I have heard comment that providing schools with access to the Internet will do away with the need for school libraries. The perception is that, if learners have access to the WWW in their learning across the various Learning Areas, they will not need libraries or dedicated information literacy educators. How would you respond?

8. Another issue I am thinking about a lot, after going into schools and libraries is the position of our indigenous African languages in our schools and libraries. Parents seem to bus their children to schools where the language of learning (LoL) is English or Afrikaans; schools need high numbers so have changed their LoL in response; public libraries don't stock books in African languages, claiming that people don't want them. What do you think about this issue? Does your service have any role to play?

9. Could we talk about how you see the role of public libraries in information literacy education – given the shortage of school libraries in Mpumalanga?

10. I've seen crowds of learners swamping public libraries in the afternoons. Do you think public libraries are coping with the needs of learners in your province?

11. I have found virtually no evidence of cooperation between public library services and school library services. Is this a fair comment? Is there a need for cooperation, do you think? If so, why?

12. Are there any initiatives to build bridges between the two services?

13. A final - perhaps loaded - question. As you know, my research question is basically "Are public libraries *ready for* information literacy education?". From your position, what would your answer be?

INTERVIEW WITH FRANCOIS HENDRIKZ, DIRECTOR OF MPUMALANGA PROVINCIAL LIBRARY SERVICE, 26 OCTOBER 2004

1. What developments do you foresee in the next year or two with regard to provincial and local government responsibilities for public libraries? Will NCLIS make this issue a priority, do you think?

2. What impact, if any, do you think the merging of small towns into Category B municipalities might have on public libraries? (There has been some comment elsewhere that larger authorities are good for libraries).

3. On the ground, the libraries seem to have little awareness of the Province and that they make up a provincial library service – I find them to be pre-occupied with their relationships with their municipalities, their local authorities. Would you agree with my comment? If so, what are the implications for you?

4. I have found evidence that morale among public library staff is rather low. Would you agree? If so, why are they so de-motivated, do you think?

5. I have heard complaints from respondents that their local authorities just don't appreciate libraries and their staff. Are their complaints justified, do you think?

6. What interaction exists between you as the provincial library service and the local authorities?

7. I have seen huge disparities between the services offered by the libraries in your province – with some clearly offering quality professional services and many others dysfunctional and unproductive. Would you agree? If so, what might explain the disparities?

8. Of all the interventions to improve services you might plan if you had unlimited funds and real clout with municipalities, which would you put first?

9. I have come across an obvious lack of professional knowledge and expertise among library staff on the ground, many of whom seem to have been moved across from municipal offices and have no library or information knowledge. Would you agree that the lack of education of public library staff is a major challenge? If so, what might be done?

10. I gather that there is a provincial committee examining librarians' positions and job titles. Could you tell me more about this?

11. I've been thinking about the question of "qualified" staff. Where should so-called "qualified" staff be placed, do you think? I see small one-person libraries serving sprawling communities. Don't these libraries need the best staff who can build innovative services and programmes?

12. I have become interested in the role of your regional libraries. At present they seem to be concentrating on building the provincial database and some of them are apparently very short of staff. Do you think their capacity might be built in order to expand their services? If so, what do you envisage?

13. Some respondents in my survey are clearly overwhelmed by the heavy use of their libraries by school learners. They are also worried that their traditional services are being neglected. How do you respond when they express these sentiments to you?

14. I have found virtually no evidence of cooperation between public library services and school library services. Is this a fair comment? Is there a need for cooperation, do you think? If so, why?

15. Are there any initiatives to build bridges between the two services?

16. A final - perhaps loaded - question. As you know, my research question is basically "Are public libraries ready for information literacy education?". From your position, what would your answer be?

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL WITH SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

1. I've been asking educators in your schools to tell me about their experiences of libraries. What are yours? Do you ever use libraries now?

2. How would you describe your school's relationship with your local public library?

3. In your experience, has the introduction of Curriculum 2005 and its revision had an impact on the way educators and learners use learning and information resources?

4. If they are having to use more resources, where are they finding them?

5. What is the position of your school library? What role does it play in the learning programme?

6. Have you ever been in contact with the Mpumalanga Department of Education's Education Library & Information Service which is responsible for school library support services?

7. Are you familiar with the concepts of "information literacy" or "information skills"?

Yes	
No	

8. If so, please describe how you see an information literate person – or someone who has information skills.

9. Do you think that learners at your school are learning information skills?

Yes	
No	
Don't know	

10. If so, how are they learning them?

11. Who, in your opinion, should teach information skills to school learners?

School	Public library	Both school & public library