EXPLORING THE USE OF FOLKTALES TO ENHANCE THE RESILIENCE OF CHILDREN ORPHANED AND RENDERED VULNERABLE BY HIV AND AIDS

by

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Submitted in fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Philosophiae Doctor Educationis in the Faculty of Education at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University

DECEMBER 2012

PROMOTER: PROFESSOR LESLEY WOOD
DECLARATION

DECLARATION BY CANDIDATE

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In accordance with Rule G4.6.3, I hereby declare that the above-mentioned treatise / dissertation / thesis is my own work and that it has not previously been submitted for assessment to another University or for another qualification.

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ABSTRACT

The recent increase in the number of children orphaned and rendered vulnerable by HIV and AIDS in South Africa has placed an added burden on schools as sites of care and support. Education policies mandate schools to develop strategies to support such children, but this is no easy task in contexts where teachers are already struggling to fulfill instructional requirements. Literature reveals that teachers in under-resourced schools, where the problem is more severely experienced regard this increased pastoral role as an added responsibility that they do not feel competent to execute.

Since there is unlikely to be any significant improvement in the circumstances of these children in the near future, there is a need to discover creative ways to address this problem. I was led to ask how teachers could support children to better cope in the face of adversity in a way that could be easily integrated into the academic curriculum, so as to minimise the perceived burden of providing care and support. Based on my knowledge of the value of bibliotherapy in promoting resilient coping in individuals, I was interested to see if folktales could be used in a similar way with groups of children.

Working from an asset-based perspective, and proceeding from a transformative and participatory epistemology, I adopted an action research design to explore the potential of traditional folktales to enhance positive coping responses in children orphaned and rendered vulnerable by HIV and AIDS. My choice of traditional folktales was influenced by the importance that resilience theory attaches to cultural variables in the resilience process. The participants were isiXhosa speaking children who were orphaned and rendered vulnerable by
HIV and AIDS (OVC) between the ages of nine and fourteen years (n=30) in Cycle One who lived in a children’s home or with foster parents. In Cycle Two, the study was conducted in a school setting with thirty (n=30) participants.

I conducted two cycles of reflective action research enquiry to ascertain how folktales could be used to enable teachers to meet both pastoral and academic requirements. In the first cycle, I used a pre-post time series design to explore if merely telling the stories would enhance the resilience of the children. Although this use of the stories was teacher-centred, I knew that it would be an easy and time-saving way for teachers to provide support, if it proved to be effective in enhancing resilience. Drawings and accompanying explanations were used to generate data pre- and post-intervention. The thematic analysis of the data revealed that, post-intervention, there appeared to be an increase in two resilience-enhancing indicators: the children appeared to have a more positive sense of self and improved positive relations with peers/friends. Critical reflection on the process also revealed ethical and methodological concerns and problems when working with vulnerable children.

The findings from this cycle informed my second cycle, in which I adopted a more participatory approach to engage the children in making meaning of the stories and explore how they related to their own lives. I used participatory arts based methods such as drawings, collages, drama and more usual qualitative strategies, such as focus group discussion and observation, to generate data. The findings from this cycle suggest that using such strategies will equip teachers with tools to enhance the resilience of OVC in a way that also promotes the attainment of instructional outcomes.
This study has contributed important theoretical, methodological and pedagogical insights. Theoretically, this study has contributed to the social ecological perspective of resilience by confirming that cultural resources, such as indigenous African stories (folktales) can enhance the resilience of vulnerable children. Lessons learnt from this study had a methodological contribution to the ethics of working with children and the use of culturally appropriate resources in the field, which were folktales. This study has also contributed to the meaning making implications of using folktales, which can aid the pedagogical strategies that teachers use.

Although this study was meant to be small-scale research and was not intended to be generalisable, the findings do suggest that teachers could have a resource that is time efficient, effective and could assist them to reach both their pastoral and academic goals.

Key words: Action research, folktales, HIV and AIDS, participatory methods, pastoral role of teachers, orphans and vulnerable children; resilience, teacher development.
I would like to acknowledge the contributions of all those people who helped to make this possible:

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CHAPTER ONE

OVERVIEW OF STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to provide an overview of this study. I will first provide the background to and rationale for doing this study. Secondly, I will explain the problem that I have identified from literature, followed by the significance of this study. Thirdly, I will present the purpose statement, research questions and the objectives of this study. Then I will present a brief overview of my design and methodology; how I ensured quality in this study, and ethical considerations. Thereafter, I will explain why I consider this study to be an interdisciplinary study, and then highlight how I intend to disseminate my findings. Finally, I will present an outline of the chapters that will follow and a summary of the study.

1.2 BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE OF STUDY

Literature indicates that one of the contextual realities facing the world is the increase in the number of children orphaned and rendered vulnerable by HIV and AIDS (OVC)¹ (Smart, 2003; Avert, 2007; UNAIDS, 2008; De Witt & Lessing, 2010) who are attending schools (Govender, 2004; Avert, 2007; UNAIDS, 2008). The term OVC refers to any child whose level of vulnerability has increased as a result of HIV and AIDS and could include children under the age of 18 years who fall into one or more of the following categories: have experienced the loss of one or both parents; are neglected, destitute, abandoned or abused; have a parent or guardian

¹The acronym OVC, denoting orphaned and vulnerable children, is commonly used by most international agencies such as UNAIDS. Although I am aware of the current trend to move away from labelling children who have been orphaned by HIV and AIDS, I opted to use this term in this study for ease of reference.
who is ill; have suffered increased poverty levels; have been the victims of human rights abuses; or are HIV positive themselves (Smart, 2003: viii). Although OVC is an international phenomenon, literature indicates that the majority of these children live in Sub-Saharan Africa (Hepburn, 2002; Smart, 2003; UNICEF, 2004; De Witt & Lessing, 2010).

Among the vulnerable group, orphans alone are estimated to total almost 1.9 million (UNAIDS, 2010), a figure predicted to reach 2.3 million by 2020 (Actuarial Society of South Africa, 2005). The prevalence of these children implies that teachers have to teach children who are at risk in terms of their psychosocial wellbeing (Bharghava 2005; Cluver & Gardner, 2007; Operario, Pettifor, Cluver, MacPhail & Rees, 2007); economic well-being (Monasch & Boerma, 2004; Collins & Leibbrandt, 2007); and general social well-being (Makame, Ani & Grantham-McGregor, 2002; Shear & Shair, 2005) which, in turn, impacts on their educational opportunities (UNICEF, 2006; Akwara, Noubary, Ah Ken, Johnson, Yates, Winfrey, Chandan, Mulenga, Kolker & Luo, 2010). Obviously, these children need care, support and love (Ebersohn & Eloff, 2006; Cluver & Gardner, 2007).

Generally, when a child is orphaned and rendered vulnerable by HIV and AIDS, it means that he² is exposed to a number of risk factors. A risk factor is any situation that threatens the healthy development of an individual (Armstrong, Birnie-Lefcovitch & Ungar, 2005). In the context of HIV and AIDS, a child is likely to witness the illness and sometimes death of his parent/parents (Smart, 2003; Chitiyo, Changara & Chitiyo, 2008; UNAIDS, 2010). Obviously, losing a loved one has negative psychological effects, such as trauma and grief (Ritcher, 2004; Bennell, 2005).

² For ease of reference, the male pronoun will represent both the female and male genders in this study.
When his parents die, a child is usually fostered either by his grandparents or other relatives (Foster, 2000; Smart, 2003); sent to residential care or a children’s home (Foster, 2000; USAID, 2004); or assumes the role of being a parent to his siblings (i.e. a child-headed household) (Robson & Kanyanta, 2007; Van Dijk, 2008). In most African cultures, it is not strange for children to be raised by grandparents (Henderson, 2006). However, in the age of HIV and AIDS, this situation poses extreme difficulties, as grandparents or relatives are often not in a financial position to take on this additional responsibility (Foster, 2000; Department of Social Development, 2002; UNAIDS, UNICEF, USAID, 2003; Freeman & Nkomo, 2006).

The grandparents who take care of these children are usually dependent on pension grants for their survival (Smart, 2003; Freeman & Nkomo, 2006; Van Wyk & Lemmer, 2007). OVC who live with caregivers, who are usually extended family members, are reported as not receiving enough support in terms of care and affection (Avert, 2007; Cluver & Gardner, 2007). Children who are sent to residential care or children’s homes are reported to be not fully developed socially, as they often find it difficult to adjust to life outside these institutions (Phiri & Webb, 2002). However, children’s homes seem to be the preferred option, as it is believed that they will always provide food and other services, unlike foster homes, where there is the possibility that these may be lacking (Foster, 2000; Zimmerman, 2005).

Although there is no evidence to suggest that OVC are poor, research shows that a number of these children come from families who depend on grants and pensions for survival. As a result, when their parents die, these children have nothing to inherit (Ainsworth & Filmer, 2002; UNICEF, 2004). In cases where these children have access to government social grants (Case & Ardington, 2006), such grants are often utilised to serve the needs of everybody in the foster home (Giese, Meintjies, Croke & Chamberlain, 2003; De Witt & Lessing, 2010). Often,
foster children’s needs come second to those of the biological offspring (Giese et al., 2003). All these experiences affect the children, who are most likely to be of school going age, meaning that teachers have to deal with children who are hurt and neglected. Literature indicates that when children have experienced trauma, they tend to hide their pain, which can result in negative outcomes, such as low self-esteem and fear (Foster & Williamson, 2000; Ebersöhn & Eloff, 2002; Hepburn, 2002; USAID, 2004; Makame, et al., 2002).

As much as schools try to meet these children’s physical needs by providing food through the government nutrition programme (Department of Education, 2004), this is not sufficient to meet their many other material needs, such as school fees, uniforms and transport (Cluver & Gardner, 2007; De Witt & Lessing, 2010). Sometimes, they drop out of school at a young age and are forced to work either in formal or, more often, informal employment, taking on economic responsibility for their households (Giese et al., 2003; De Witt & Lessing, 2010).

The findings of a study conducted by De Witt and Lessing (2010) revealed that children who had lost their parents were late for school more often, had irregular attendance and poor concentration, and were stigmatised by other students at school. Informal forms of employment, such as sex work, tend to increase the vulnerability of these children (UNICEF, 2004). OVC who suffer economic hardship tend to be victims of community gossip and discrimination. Even at school, teachers and other children tend to stigmatise them, which increases the likelihood that they will drop out of school (Foster & Williamson, 2000; Ebersöhn & Eloff, 2002; Smart, 2003).

The challenges described above have led most countries in the world to adopt the principles of the UN Convention on the Rights of Children (CRC) (Smart, 2003). One of the rights emphasised at this Convention was the right to education, as it was viewed as the key
platform to provide children with knowledge and information on how to deal with HIV and AIDS (Smart, 2003). For instance, Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human rights states that (Smart, 2003, ix):

“Everyone has a right to education. Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship....”

South Africa’s response to the challenges facing OVC has been to pass policies that recognise schools as the best places to provide for the needs of OVC (Giese et al., 2003; Hoadley, 2007; Van Wyk & Lemmer, 2007). For example, through the Norms and Standards for Educators (Department of Education (DOE), 2000, p.14), teachers are now required to “demonstrate an ability to develop a supportive and empowering environment for the learner and respond to the educational and other needs of learners and fellow teachers”. This is interpreted in the policy to imply playing a pastoral role, which includes, amongst other duties, the provision of counselling for learners who are experiencing academic and social challenges.

The Education White Paper 6 (Department of Education (DOE), 2001) mandated schools to address the many challenges that learners are facing by setting up systems that could provide a space for the caregivers and the wider community to interact and collaborate with schools on matters that affect OVC. Although there has been a lot of criticism of these policies in terms of their translation into practice, the recent Draft Integrated Strategy on HIV and AIDS, 2012-2016 (Department of Basic Education (DBE), 2010) suggests that the pastoral role of schools and teachers is imperative. This policy also confirms schools to be places of care and support to OVC, in addition to their core business of teaching and learning (Giese et al., 2003).
Various studies have reported on the difficulties of implementing these policies (Ebersöhn & Eloff, 2002; Giese et al., 2003; Bhana, Morrell, Epstein & Moletsane, 2006; Robson & Kanyanta, 2007; Van Wyk & Lemmer, 2007; Loots & Mnguni, 2008; Theron, 2009; Mohlakwana, 2010; Ogina, 2010; Torstensson & Brundrett, 2011; Wood & Goba, 2011). For example, there is evidence that teachers have conceptualised their pastoral role differently: some regard this role to be the sole responsibility of the Life Orientation teachers at their schools (Wood & Goba, 2011) whilst others perceive it to be the role of the government or individual convictions (Ogina, 2010). Literature also reports that some teachers feel that the pastoral role could only be practically effective in schools with plenty of resources (Giese et al., 2003; Bhana et al., 2006; Robson & Kanyanta, 2007).

Teachers not only view their pastoral role differently, but feel they have not been well trained to support OVC with the many challenges they are facing in life (Bhana et al., 2006; Ebersöhn; Ferreira & Mnguni, 2008; Mohlakwana, 2010; Ogina, 2010; Wood & Goba, 2011). For example, in a study conducted by Ogina (2010), teachers shared that they were not sure how to provide emotional support to the OVC who were in their schools. Other teachers were reported to find it difficult to translate the pastoral training obtained from departmental workshops into practice (Wood & Goba, 2011). Moreover, what appears to be common in the South African studies that I reviewed is that teachers feel that the pastoral role is an added responsibility to their many existing teaching and learning obligations. Although they feel that way, there is evidence that teachers are buying school uniforms or lunch out of their own pockets or simply providing a listening ear for the OVC (Giese et al., 2003, Theron, 2009), without any form of adequate training. Although such responses indicate willingness to help and compassion
for the children on the part of the teachers, such interventions are not sustainable and ultimately take an emotional (and financial) toll on them.

1.3 PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION

The dilemma described above, of teachers who need to be able to provide care and support for children who have been orphaned and rendered vulnerable by HIV and AIDS, but also need to continue to ensure that they are able to provide quality teaching and learning and complete the official syllabus, was of concern to me. As a teacher educator and former teacher myself, I could empathise with their situation. I know how difficult it is to continue with ‘normal’ teaching when children’s ability to learn is threatened by so many environmental and social factors. I know that most South African schools do not have social workers or psychologists, so I asked myself what teachers’ referral options were and how foster parents and caregivers could be expected to utilise these services if they were not situated at school. It seems as if it would take long for teachers to be trained to respond to the needs of OVC in a strategic and sustainable manner. So, if the situation does not change, the question arises: how could teachers help OVC cope with their adverse circumstances?

Projects in South Africa such as the Suitcase Project (Clacherty, 2004); Circles of Care (Cook & Du Toit, 2005); and the Memory Box Project (Denis & Makiwane, 2003), have contributed to the support given to children orphaned and rendered vulnerable. These interventions focus on building the strengths of communities in supporting OVC, however, their support strategies have not translated into helping teachers to support these children in schools. Other projects, such as Reds (Resilient Educators) (Theron, Geyer, Strydom & Delport, 2008) and STAR (Supportive Teachers, Assets, and Resources) (Ebersohn & Ferreira, 2011) have equipped teachers to promote resilience in schools, but their focus was not on how teachers could
be supported to reach both their pastoral and academic goals at school. Some studies have reported on how teachers were trained to make memory boxes in order to support the OVC (Ebersöhn, Ferreira & Mnguni, 2008; Loots & Mnguni, 2008). Findings after the implementation of this technique revealed that teachers were able to implement skills such as empathy, listening and counselling skills related to bereavement and grief. A memory box technique is but one of the intervention strategies to support teachers to deal with the challenges of OVC.

Previous studies have explored the use of cultural indigenous resources for other purposes and not to help teachers to cope with their pastoral and academic role. Ross (2008) used the Mmogo methodology, to explore how participants made meaning of their own lives. The participants used items such as beads and clay to create representations of their feelings. Green, Dlamini, D’Errico, Ruark and Duby (2009, p.390) explored a “culturally positive approach to behaviour change and HIV prevention”. They interviewed traditional leaders and ritual specialists to understand cultural influences on HIV and AIDS prevention.

I noticed that there was a paucity of studies on how cultural resources could be explored as a tool to be used by teachers to reach both pastoral and academic outcomes. In this study, I explored how folktales (iintsomi), a cultural resource found in children’s ecology could be used to enhance resilience. Folktales are stories that have been passed from generation to generation in verbatim form. As a result no-one can claim ownership or authorship of them (Kelin, 2007; Sougou, 2008; Kehinde, 2010). To my best knowledge, folktales have never previously been used with vulnerable children for such purposes.

My choice of folktales was based on literature (bibliotherapy), which advocates that the reading of stories could help readers deal with their challenges in a way that would contribute to
their positive development in life (Malchiodi, 2001; Heath, Sheen, Leavy; Young, & Money, 2005; Pehrsson, 2005; Du Toit, 2010; Morgan & Roberts, 2010; Rozalski, Stewart & Miller, 2010). The literature highlighted in these studies reveals that when one reads a story, one is likely to identify with the characters, and in that way may feel less isolated and begin to understand that other people have also gone through one’s own trials and experiences.

This process is also attributed to “cognitive behavioural therapy, which helps the reader to target maladaptive thought patterns and to substitute them with more rational thinking” (McKenna, Hevey & Martin, 2010, p.498). Stories have also been used in schools for pedagogical purposes (MacCabe; 1997; Weih, 2005); therefore, I believed that the use of folktales would add value to teachers’ academic goals in schools. This study is therefore significant in that it addresses the problem of teachers who are unable to cope with their pastoral role and explores how a cultural resource could encourage resilience in order to be utilised by teachers to reach both their pastoral and academic goals.

1.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY

When I embarked on this study, my intention was to contribute to the creation of new knowledge on several levels. Firstly, I wanted to contribute to the exploration of creative and novel methodological approaches that could be employed when working with vulnerable groups to encourage resilience. That would add to methodological knowledge in the field. Secondly, I believed that the lessons learnt from this study would make a theoretical contribution to the study of resilience, particularly in the development of culturally appropriate ways to encourage resilient coping in children and the youth.
Thirdly, on a practical level, if the folktales could prove effective in promoting resilience or strengths, it would mean that vulnerable groups would have a cost-effective resource at their own disposal. Teachers and caregivers could have a tool that they could use in empowering children orphaned and rendered vulnerable by HIV and AIDS. This study would therefore make a practical contribution to the improvement of the quality of life of such children, helping teachers to make a difference in terms of education and social change. Telling folktales could be a method that could reach a large number of children, without the danger of stigmatisation because all children, whether orphans or vulnerable or not would benefit.

Fourthly, on an educative level, this approach could influence curriculum designers to promote folktales as cross-curricular content in teaching. Finally, I embarked on this study with the desire and expectation that I would learn and grow as a teacher educator. The learning I gleaned from this study has in fact helped me to better educate pre- and in-service teachers to help children develop resilience, while at the same time developing literacy in them.

1.5 PURPOSE STATEMENT

The intent of this study was to explore and describe whether and how folktales could be used to enhance the resilience of children who have been orphaned and rendered vulnerable by HIV and AIDS (OVC). Resilience generally refers to the capacity to do well in life, despite significant adversity (Masten, 2001).

1.6 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Following the purpose of the study, my research questions were:

- How can folktales enhance the resilience of children orphaned and rendered vulnerable by HIV and AIDS?
• How can folktales be used by teachers to reach both pastoral and academic goals?

In order to answer my research questions, my objectives were:

• To explore the resilience enhancing potential of folktales.
• To investigate ways in which teachers could use folktales to support OVC in a way that enhances the attainment of both pastoral and academic outcomes.

1.7 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

In the next section I will provide a brief outline of the methodology and design that was employed in this study. I will provide full details of this section in Chapter Three.

1.7.1. Participants and setting

The participants in this study were children between the ages of 9-14 years, who were OVC and whose mother tongue was isiXhosa. I conducted the first cycle of this study in the participating children’s home and with children who lived with foster parents. In the second cycle, I conducted my study in a school setting. Details on the choice of setting will be explained in Chapter Three.

1.7.2 Transformative Paradigm

The philosophical assumptions that guided this study were based on the transformative paradigm (Mertens, 2005; Willis, 2007). Since I wanted to encourage the resilience of the participants through folktales, this lens seemed appropriate, because, firstly, it recognises indigenous knowledge in the construction of new knowledge (Mertens, 2009). Folktales, by their very nature, are embedded with indigenous values, morals and messages (Kehinde, 2010). Secondly, this lens appeared suitable for conducting research with children, who are traditionally categorised as a marginalised group (Christensen & James, 2000; Neill, 2005). Since a
transformative paradigm advocates change in people’s oppressive situations (Babbie & Mouton, 2001; Mertens, 2005), I realised that since I wanted to contribute to the lives of the participants by exploring how they could be supported to cope resiliently, this paradigm was appropriate.

1.7.3 Action research design

The use of an action research design facilitated different ways in which folktales could be explored to enhance resilience. An action research design was deemed appropriate for this study, because it fits well with research grounded on transformative ideals (Zuber-Skerrit, 2011). Action research regards research as a means of social change (Schratz & Walker, 1995) and for improving practice (Koshy, 2010). I believe that this study has the potential to improve teachers’ practices which in turn would improve the lives of the participants. Action research enabled me to embark on a journey of learning, where I could plan, implement, reflect and replan (Koshy, 2005, p.4); hence I had two cycles of learning in this study.

In cycle one, I merely told stories to children in a children’s home setting and to those who lived with foster parents, in a teacher centred way, for the following reasons: I was interested to see if this was enough to encourage resilience; whether using stories this way would confirm their resilience enhancing potential; and whether they could be used in primary schools as a daily intervention that could be easily incorporated into daily teaching activities. What I learned from this cycle alerted me to the potential for a more learner-centred way of using stories, and also led me to change the site to a school setting, hence cycle two of study.

1.7.4 Methodological approach

Methodologically, since I was exploring how folktales could be used, in the first cycle, I employed a pragmatic methodological approach by merely telling the stories in a teacher-centred
way. Participants in the children’s home and those who lived with foster parents engaged in this study by drawing and explaining or telling me about their lives both before and after I had told them the stories. The purpose was simply to ascertain the resilience potential of stories. The process of this cycle will be explained in Chapters Three and Four. In line with my action research design, my learning in the first cycle led me to the second cycle, as will be explained in Chapter Four of the study. In the second cycle, I retold the stories to the participants in a school setting. Thereafter, they engaged with the stories in different ways. I have explicated these activities and the process of research in this cycle in (Chapters Three and Five).

1.7.5 Data generation methods

My data generation methods included a ‘draw and write/talk’ technique (MacGregor, Currie & Wetton, 1998; Mair & Kierans, 2007); collage (Leitch, 2008); drama to elicit discussion (Mei-kao, Carkin & Fong Hsu, 2011); focus group interviews (Morgan, 1997); and field notes (Niewenhuis, 2010). In the first cycle, the draw and write/talk technique served as a tool for children to describe their lives before and after the storytelling sessions whereas in the second cycle drawings, collage (and accompanying explanations), focus group interviews and discussions served as a tool for the children to explore how folktales made them feel and related to their lives. Data generated through these methods enabled me to interpret whether or not folktales could encourage resilience. My reflective notes complemented the interpretation and generation of data. My learning from the research process provided insight in how teachers could use folktales to achieve both their pastoral and academic goals.

1.7.5 Data analysis

Since I subscribe to a research tradition informed by the transformative lens (Mertens, 2005), which views children not as subjects, but as people with views to contribute in knowledge
production, in my data analysis, I regarded their articulations as the “first layer of data analysis” (De Lange, Olivier, Geldenhuys & Mitchell, 2012, p.82). In other words, the semantic content (Braun & Clarke, 2006) of their explanations enabled me to code and identify themes which I then controlled against literature (Creswell, 2009) on resilience, bibliotherapy, the use of stories and folktales in general. In this study, I subjected the data, which comprised the following: drawings and their explanations, collages and their explanations, discussion transcripts and interview transcripts, to a thematic analysis (Denscombe, 2003; Braun & Clarke, 2006; Creswell, 2009). Since I was exploring the resilience potential of folktales, my coding of data and naming of themes was heavily influenced by my knowledge of the resilience framework.

1.8 RESILIENCE FRAMEWORK

Resilience is generally defined as the ability to do well despite the significant challenge that one is exposed to (Luthar, Cicchetti & Becker, 2000; Masten, 2001). This framework examines the strengths that individuals and their ecologies have. In my study, I acknowledged that children who are OVC are exposed to various adversities, as explained in section 1.1 of this chapter. However, I viewed the participants in this study from a strengths based perspective (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000, p.5; Snyder & Lopez, 2007). I did not regard them as victims, but as children with strengths, who could overcome their adversities. I also acknowledged that the communities from which they came possessed assets and resources (Ebersöhn & Eloff, 2002), such as folktales, which could be used to the children’s benefit.

Folktales are a cultural asset, because they are oral stories that are known by the members of a community. In indigenous African ecologies, these stories have been passed on from generation to generation and serve as an indigenous knowledge base that could be utilised for children at schools, since these stories contain moral lessons, which can influence how children
view the world (Parkinson, 2009). Literature on resilience currently focuses on investigating the potential of local resources in promoting resilience and contributing to the resilience processes (Masten, 2001). Based on my knowledge of the value of bibliotherapy in promoting resilient coping in individuals, I wanted to explore if cultural stories, such as folktales, could enhance the resilience of the participants in this study. Cultural metaphoric stories (folktales) seemed to be an appropriate choice to learn how cultural resources within specific contexts could contribute to the development of resilience.

1.9 ENSURING QUALITY OF STUDY

In this study, as will be explained in Chapter Three, I employed Lincoln and Guba’s (cited in Mertens, 2005, p. 253-258), components of trustworthiness and explained how I responded to Mill’s (2007) criteria for trustworthiness and quality in this action research study.

The credibility of the findings was verified by the evidence gained from the various methods that I used in this study since I employed triangulation (Patton, 2002), by comparing to see if the same patterns emerged. Since I was generating data alongside the analysis, I was able to verify the accuracy of the data by establishing from the participants if what I read in their data was what they meant to say, a process called “member checking” (Mertens 2005, p. 254). I followed up the written explanations by asking clarity through verbal explanations. The fact that I foregrounded what the participants said through the data has made this study credible. In my analysis of the data, I used field notes (Niewenhuis, 2010) to back up my analysis and data.

I made reference to resilience as my theoretical framework to indicate that it guided my analysis of data. In addition, I provided a clear description of the research context and research findings as a way of enhancing my transferability claim. I used my field notes, recorded in my
diary, to confirm the findings of the primary data. I adopted visual arts based methods, to encourage the children to participate in this study. I also provided a reflective account of the process of the research study hence I believe that the dependability factor was established. Children’s perceptions of folktales informed my conclusions in this study. Through this study, I provided insight in how teachers could use folktales to reach both their pastoral and academic goals. I believe that the findings of this study could serve as a catalyst for action, as I intend to disseminate these findings in training teachers and designing programmes that teachers could use to support OVC.

1.10 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Throughout the study, I adhered to the ethics of doing research with children. I had to employ a number of principles, as suggested by Morrow and Richards, (1996), based on the following issues: an informed consent/assent form; assurance of anonymity; withdrawal from the study at any time; flexibility of language; and use of a tape recorder. I was granted prior permission to conduct this research under the “Read me to Resilience” project by the Education, Research Technology and Innovation Committee (ERTIC) of the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, after I made an application for approval by the Research Ethics Committee according to the Committee’s standard protocol. When this approval was gained, I approached the caregiver at the participating children’s home and the teachers at the participating school for their consent, and the participants for their assent.

Having gained the consent of the gatekeepers and permission from the participants, I explained the purpose of my study and the research process to the participants. The information given on the assent forms assured the children that I would use pseudonyms when presenting data, throughout the study, in order to ensure their privacy and anonymity. The assent form also
stated that the children had the right to withdraw from the study at any time. The issue of flexibility in language was also stated, as was the non-use of technical terms of abbreviations in my vocabulary. For example, the letters to the caregivers or foster parents were written in English and I explained the content of the letters in IsiXhosa. Since I was working with a vulnerable group, measures to refer them to a local counsellor if they experienced distress during the research were stated clearly in the consent form. I also informed them that I would use a tape recorder during the interviews. Only after the children had agreed to sign the assent form, did I begin to conduct the research.

In Chapter Three, Section 3.7, I will reflect on how I applied ethics in my study and the practical realities related to ethics.

1.11 INTERDISCIPLINARY NATURE OF STUDY

The aim of this study was to explore and describe whether and how folktales could be used to enhance resilience in OVC. This study entailed multi-disciplinary research, which meets the requirements of fitting into the social sciences in a number of ways. It addressed the sociological aspect of OVC and how they could be assisted in building their inner and outer strengths. Educationally, this could be beneficial to educators, as most teachers are unsure how to emotionally support children who have been orphaned and made vulnerable by HIV and AIDS (Theron, 2007; Wood & Goba, 2011). Psychologically, the benefits of storytelling have been recorded in literature (Arad, 2004), however, the benefits of telling folktales to a group of orphans and vulnerable children have to the best of my knowledge not been widely reported. Also, within the anthropology discipline, storytelling is recorded as an integral part of many cultures in Africa (Parkinson, 2009). The fields of sociology, education, psychology and
anthropology are part of the social sciences discipline and this study, therefore, is positioned well within the social sciences discipline.

1.12 DISSEMINATION OF FINDINGS

It is important to disseminate the findings of the study, since I want to contribute to ways that teachers (and caregivers) could use to support OVC. I believe that workshops with teachers could be a platform for sharing my research findings. The aim would be to equip educators with knowledge about the power of folktales as an accessible tool to support the positive coping responses of OVC. Community members and caregivers could be workshopped in understanding the benefits that could be achieved from telling folktales and how they could use these stories to enhance the resilience of OVC. The stories will be documented in isiXhosa and English and be donated to the children’s home and school from which the participants hailed. The purpose is to make sure that knowledge is shared and used practically, to make a difference. Findings from the study will also be disseminated via conferences and articles.

1.13 OUTLINE OF CHAPTERS

The following is an outline of chapters that will follow Chapter One:

**Chapter Two:** In this chapter, I situate this study within a resilience theoretical framework and other theories that have informed it.

**Chapter Three:** In this chapter I offer a theoretical discussion of the research paradigm, design and methods chosen. I then offer a discussion on how I applied these methods in the field.

**Chapter Four:** In this chapter, I present and discuss the findings of Cycle One and reflect on theoretical and methodological learning from this phase.
**Chapter Five**: In this chapter, I give an account of the process and discuss the findings of Cycle Two of the research process. I also reflect on my experiences in this cycle.

**Chapter Six**: In this chapter, I reflect on the significance of the learning emanating from the findings of the first and second cycles of action research and present the research conclusions, recommendations and implications for future practice to justify my claim of having contributed to new knowledge creation.

1.14 SUMMARY

In this chapter, I presented the background to and the rationale for doing this study. I contextualised the problem that I identified in literature through a literature review of the challenges facing OVC and how teachers are increasingly concerned about their unpreparedness to support these children. I then provided a brief overview of the research design and methodology, data generation methods and analysis. Thereafter, I highlighted how I ensured the quality of this study and considered the ethics of working with children. Finally, I gave an overview why I considered this study to be multidisciplinary in nature, how I intended it to contribute to knowledge, and how the findings would be disseminated to teachers and community members.

In the next chapter, I will review literature on the resilience theory; literature on the use of stories in general and folktales. I will then comment about the significance of my study based on the literature reviewed. The following table (Table 1) presents a summary of the study.
Table 1
Summary of Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>To explore and describe whether and how folktales could promote resilience in OVC</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Paradigms</strong></td>
<td>Epistemological: Transformative paradigm</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Methodological: Integrated approach: Participatory Pragmatic ontology</td>
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<td>Action research</td>
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<td><strong>Research approach</strong></td>
<td>Qualitative</td>
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<td><strong>Theoretical framework</strong></td>
<td>Resilience theory</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Participants</strong></td>
<td><strong>Cycle 1:</strong></td>
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<td>- Children’s home and foster children</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- IsiXhosa speaking</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- 9-14 years old</td>
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<td>- OVC</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Intervention</strong></td>
<td>Story telling</td>
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<td><strong>Data generation</strong></td>
<td>Pre- and post-drawings and explanations/talking</td>
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<td><strong>Cycle 2:</strong></td>
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<td>- Schools</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- IsiXhosa speaking</td>
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<td>- 9-14 years old</td>
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<td>- OVC</td>
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<td>Retelling of stories</td>
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<td>Forming a collage</td>
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<td>Drama to elicit discussion</td>
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<td>Drawings and explanations/talking</td>
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<td>Collage and explanation</td>
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<td>Discussion elicited by drama</td>
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<td>Reflective focus group interviews</td>
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<td>Thematic analysis</td>
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<td>Credibility, Transferability, Dependability, Confirmability</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ethics</td>
<td>Assent/Consent, <em>loco parentis</em>, Pseudonyms, Flexibility of Language</td>
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CHAPTER TWO
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of my study was to explore and describe whether and how folktales could be used to enhance the resilience of children who have been orphaned and rendered vulnerable by HIV and AIDS (OVC). My research questions were: How can folktales enhance the resilience of children orphaned and rendered vulnerable by HIV and AIDS? Secondly, how can folktales be used by teachers to reach both pastoral and academic goals? In the previous chapter, I introduced this study by providing a background to and rationale for doing this study. I then explained the significance of the study, followed by the purpose; my research questions; and the objectives of study. Thereafter, I briefly outlined the research design, methodology, data analysis, the theoretical framework in which this study is situated and the trustworthiness of the study, followed by the ethical considerations. Finally, I described the interdisciplinary nature of this study and how I intended to disseminate the research findings.

In this second chapter, I will provide an overview of the resilience theoretical framework in which this study is situated. Next, I will review literature on how stories have been used in therapy and schools. Thereafter, I will provide an overview of the resilience potential of folktales.

2.2 OVERVIEW OF RESILIENCE FRAMEWORK

I framed my study within a resilience theoretical framework, which recognises that individuals have strengths that enable them to move forward in life in spite of the difficulties
they may be facing (Luthar, Cicchetti & Becker, 2000; Masten, 2001; Ungar, 2008). In the context of my study, this means shifting my thinking about OVC from a deficit perspective to a contextualised one that reveals how they respond to adversity in terms of strengths that enhance their positive development (Daniel, Apila, Bjørgo & Lee, 2007). Literature indicates that if individuals who are exposed to adversity are to overcome such difficulties, assets and resources should be present in their lives (Luthar et al., 2000; Fergus & Zimmerman, 2005). Assets could be high self esteem whereas resources may be the presence of a mentor in one’s life (Fergus & Zimmerman, 2005). In this study, the resources found in the children’s ecology were folktales (iintsomi) and I set out to investigate how these stories could enhance the resilience of OVC. In the next section, I will discuss how the concept of resilience has been conceptualised in literature, and then explain how the key concepts in resilience literature will be used in this study. Thereafter, I will review literature that illustrates how resilience research has evolved over time.

2.2.1 Defining resilience

Generally, human beings go through many and diverse challenges in life. However, most individuals manage to overcome these challenges, and that process is referred to as resilience (Masten, 2001; Boyden & Mann, 2005; Ungar, 2008). There appears to be many definitions of resilience in literature. For example, earlier studies conceptualised resilience to mean that one’s ability to overcome challenges depended on one’s inner individual capacities (Anthony & Cohler, 1987; Rutter, 1987). Although there has been criticism of these studies (Luthar et al., 2000; Ungar, 2010), there is evidence in literature that individual efforts could enable individuals to adjust positively despite the difficulties they are facing (Masten, 2001; Van Rensburg and Barnard, 2005; Theron & Malindi, 2010).
The critique on the individuals’ ability to overcome adversity highlights the role that is played by those individuals’ ecologies in the process of resilience (Braverman, 2001; Masten & Powell, 2003; Fergus & Zimmerman, 2005; Ungar, 2008; Henley, 2010). For example, literature reports that a child who grows up in a violent community may develop well in spite of exposure to the difficulties associated with that context, provided that child has a parent who supports him with his school work or encourages him to succeed (Dass-Brailsford, 2005; Fergus & Zimmerman, 2005). Ungar (2010) has also argued that in the process of resilience, the influence of the family, the state and the resources they provide in enabling individual resilient patterns cannot be ignored.

Resilience is also defined based on the judgments that researchers make about individual’s behaviour when faced with adversity. Masten and Powell (2003) studied young people from Cambodia who survived the trauma of war. Their judgment of their resilient patterns was based on how they lived their lives (making friends, academic competence) compared to other young people of the same age who did not experience such adversity. I agree with these counter arguments because I believe that the journey of life cannot be defined from one perspective but a multiplicity of experiences that define how one has overcome his challenges in life. These experiences can therefore draw from both the individual capacities and the resources that are at one’s disposal.

The complexity in the resilience framework is evident in the critique around resilience research. For instance, Luthar et al. (2000) have criticised this research on a number of issues highlighting that firstly, resilience research has many definitions as was evident in the earlier discussion. Secondly, resilience as a concept and a construct is associated with different terms such as coping, adaptation or well-being. Thirdly, when the construct of resilience is
operationalised in studies, there is usually no consistency. Finally, there are theoretical concerns around the notion of resilience. Earlier concerns about practical issues in the conceptualisation of resilience were raised by Braverman (2001, p.3). For instance, according to him “it is competence or adaptation rather than resilience that is the characteristic which can be identified in the child”. His view highlights the overlapping of terms in studies on resilience. However, Masten and Obradovic (2006, p.22) caution researchers about the limited time frame of resilience definitions since there are “many pathways to resilience”.

However, there are common issues on which resilience researchers seem to agree. For example, they tend to share the perspective that humans have strengths, despite the adversity to which they are exposed in life (Werner & Smith, 1982; Luthar et al., 2000; Masten, 2001; Ferguson & Zimmerman, 2005; Mancini & Bonanno, 2009; Ungar, 2010). They all agree that there should be the presence of significant adversity and the manifestation of positive adjustment outcomes for one to be resilient (Werner & Smith, 1982; Luthar et al., 2000; Ferguson & Zimmerman, 2005; Ungar, 2010). Recently, there seems to be agreement that resilience occurs within a particular culture and cannot be generalised across cultures (Ungar, 2008; Theron & Theron, 2010). Literature also reports that despite the criticism of this research, there have been consistent findings regarding the factors that contribute to the positive development of children and youth (Masten & Obradovic, 2006; Ungar, 2008).

The definition of resilience to which many studies refer to is that resilience is “a dynamic process encompassing positive adaptation within the context of significant adversity” (Luthar et al., 2000, p.543). Luthar et al., (2000) further explain this definition by stating that a resilient outcome will manifest only if one faces significant adversity and is able to show positive development despite that adversity. However, they also warn researchers to be aware that
“positive adaptation is theoretically operationalized differently” (Luthar et al., 2000, p.544). Quite recently, Ungar (2010, p.425) has defined resilience as “both the capacity of individuals to navigate their way to health sustaining resources, including opportunities to experience feelings of well-being, and a condition of the individual’s family, community and culture to provide these health resources and experiences in culturally meaningful ways”. He explains his definition to mean that when meaningful resources in a given environment are available and can be accessed, positive development can be facilitated. He frames this definition as a “social ecological interpretation of resilience” (Ungar, 2010, p.422). These different definitions exemplify that resilience is indeed a complex concept, as researchers define it in the context of their own studies (Braverman, 2001). Clearly, when conducting research using resilience theory as a framework, one needs to be aware of these variations.

I clarify the definitions of the resilience framework, because in my study I used the concept of resilience. It is evident from the literature that resilience manifests in the presence of risk and the processes that enable individuals to overcome such risks (Luthar et al., 2000). In this study, the participants were children who have been orphaned and rendered vulnerable by HIV and AIDS. The difficulties such children are reported to be exposed to were mentioned in Section 1.1. However, literature warns against assumptions that people who are facing a similar adversity will respond the same (Luthar et al., 2000). Hence in this study I did not view the participants as victims but as children who could adapt positively despite their circumstances.

I also viewed the communities where participants reside from an asset based perspective (Ebersöhn, & Elof, 2006) by recognising the strengths, capacities and resources that exist in these communities. One such resource were the folktales, hence in this study I explored how folktales can enhance the resilience of children orphaned and rendered vulnerable by HIV and
Chapter two: Review of Literature

AIDS and how they can be used by teachers to reach both pastoral and academic goals. Framing this study from a social ecological understanding of resilience (Ungar, 2011), implies that I recognised that the availability and accessibility of folktales to children can contribute to their positive development. Infact, the social ecological perspective of resilience acknowledges that positive adjustment is a process that manifests as a result of collaboration between the children and their social ecologies (Ungar, 2011). The notion of collaboration therefore supports Vygostky’s view of social constructivism (cited in Donald et al., 2010, p.55) that knowledge is co-constructed and learning is a social action, hence in this study participants engaged with the folktales and articulated their views on how they made them feel. I proceeded in this study from the understanding that resilience is not a fixed characteristic of the individual that cannot be developed and enhanced (Luthar et al., 2000).

Given that literature on bibliotherapy (Iaquinta & Hipsky, 2006; Du Toit, 2010; Morgan & Roberts, 2010) has alluded to the resilience potential of stories, in general, I aimed to find out how folktales could enhance the resilience of the participants in this study and be used by teachers to reach their pastoral and academic goals.

2.2.2 Key concepts used in resilience research

I noted that in resilience research there are many concepts such as risk factors, risk, adversity, protective factors, coping, competence and vulnerability as have been highlighted. These concepts are interpreted differently in terms of how they relate to each other. They overlap in their definitions or vary in their use by different researchers as the following section illustrates. Henley (2010, p.298) notes that “it is difficult to distinguish between protective enabling factors that develop resilience processes and the resilience and resulting competencies that these factors help to establish”. His assertion confirms earlier criticism by Luthar et al.
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(2000) which highlighted the lack of consensus on the terminology used in resilience research. In the next section, I will present the terms that I used in my study.

**Risk factors**

In resilience literature, this term is used interchangeably with adversity to indicate “exposure to circumstances of harm in environments in which individuals or families are situated” (Stevens, 2005, p.46). A risk factor could be substance abuse (Braverman, 2001); an exposure to war (Masten & Powell, 2003); disability and chronic diseases (Boyden & Mann, 2005); or emotional challenges resulting from having OVC in classrooms (Wood, Ntaote & Theron, 2012). For a resilience outcome to manifest, one should be able to do well despite one’s exposure to such risk factors. For instance, literature highlights that a child who has a positive outlook on life (Boyden & Mann, 2005), is exposed to resources (Ungar, 2010), has a caring caregiver and positive peer relationships (Werner & Smith, 1992) and is involved in community groups (Theron & Malindi, 2010) is generally more resilient emotionally and psychologically in spite of the risk to which he may be exposed. In this study, the risk factors to which OVC are exposed to were discussed in section 1.1.

**Protective factors**

In order to account why people do well despite adversity, literature on resilience places emphasis on the role of protective factors or processes that predict a resilient outcome (Braverman, 2001; Masten & Powell, 2003). When defining these factors, researchers use different terms. Protective factors are sometimes referred to as resources (Luthar et al., 2000), strengths (Theron, 2004), assets (Ebersöhn & Maree, 2006) or processes (Ungar, 2008). I will use these terms interchangeably in my study, as they seem to refer to the same process. These protective factors are either internal or external. Internal protective factors such as skills, genetic
qualities and traits have been found to facilitate positive adjustment in an individual (Kumpfer, 1999; Wright, Masten & Narayan, 2006; Theron, 2009). External protective factors are characterised as experiences of support, empowerment and meaningful pastimes, which may be found in the individual’s family, amongst his peers, within his school and community, and within his culture (Werner & Smith, 1982; Wright, et al., 2006; Theron, 2009; Donald, Lazarus & Lolwana, 2010; Ungar, 2010). They include caring parents (Werner & Smith, 1992), supportive friends (Malindi & Theron, 2010); health promoting schools (Gillian, 1998), and a sense of cultural belonging (Ungar, 2008). The outcomes of this study point to the resilience enhancing potential of stories, meaning that I was able to ascertain the protective factors (internal and external) which the participants identified as embedded in the folktales and which could enhance their resilience.

Coping

Coping refers to “ways in which a person deals with hardship and adapts to risk” (Ebersohn & Maree, 2006, p.16). In some studies, coping was conceptualised not as an individual feature, but as a process that results from a dynamic interaction between a person and his environment (Armstrong, Binnie-Lefcovitch & Ungar, 2005; Henley, 2010; Skodval & Daniel, 2012). In this study, I will use the term coping to explain evidence of the strategies that participants in this study use in order to grow well in their context.

Competence

Competence is described as a variety of adaptive behaviours of children that enable them to achieve resilience (Masten & Powell, 2003). In literature, it is used to refer to areas such as social functioning, academic success or emotional health (Braverman, 2001). In this study the term competence was used to explain the various strengths that the participants in this study
articulated or identified from the stories, to mean academic, social or emotional positive development.

2.2.3 **Protective factors that are found within an individual**

Earlier studies on resilience reported that children who were exposed to challenges such as parental mental illness (Anthony & Cohler, 1987) could develop well in life because of their individual qualities. The individual qualities suggested included skills such as autonomy, temperament such as tenacity or genetic qualities like intelligence (Anthony & Cohler, 1987; Rutter; 1987). In other words, these researchers believed that individual personal traits and characteristics were the determinants of the ability to function well despite exposure to adversity.

Resilience research that foregrounds individual traits as an outcome of resilience has met with considerable opposition. For instance, Ungar (2010) comments that the conceptualisation of resilience as attributed to individual qualities disregards the positive and effective role that can be played by the ecology of the individuals. Earlier, Cook and Du Toit (2005), highlighted the significance of the opportunities that communities and cultures could provide in order for children to “develop their sense of control, self efficacy and a positive sense of self and identity” (p.248). In other words, individuals’ internal strengths cannot be unleashed if their environments do not provide opportunities for such processes. There are studies that have summarised these intrapersonal or individual characteristics, such as (Kumpfer, 1999; Theron, 2004; Van Rensburg & Bernard, 2005). I have summarised those characteristics in Table 2 and reviewed some of them below:
Table 2: Individual characteristics contributing to resilience (Kumpfer, 1999; Wright, Masten & Narayan, 2006; Masten & Obradovic, 2006; Theron, 2009)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skills</th>
<th>Temperament</th>
<th>Genetic qualities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Problem solving skills</td>
<td>Sense of humour</td>
<td>Attractiveness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assertiveness</td>
<td>Sunny temperament</td>
<td>Good health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autonomy</td>
<td>Tenacity</td>
<td>Intelligence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good interpersonal skills</td>
<td>Positive self concept</td>
<td>Birth order</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal locus of control</td>
<td>Positive attitude</td>
<td>Special talents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impulse control</td>
<td>Positive emotion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional regulation</td>
<td>Drive</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavioural regulation</td>
<td>Enthusiasm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning skills</td>
<td>Hopefulness/positive</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social maturity</td>
<td>future orientation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexibility</td>
<td>Affectionate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive meaning making</td>
<td>Achievement orientation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Skills

*Internal locus of control*

Resilient individuals are reported to have a greater internal locus of control, which makes them hopeful and able to think positively about themselves and others (Werner & Smith, 1992; Joseph, 1994; Van Rensburg & Barnard, 2005). An internal locus of control allows one to believe that one has a life purpose, which leads one to plan and perceive of oneself as able to influence one’s environment and future destiny (Kumpfer, 1999).

*Autonomy*

A sense of autonomy which is linked to an internal locus of control gives individuals the ability to cope with their adverse circumstances (Van Rensburg & Barnard, 2005). As a result, individuals with autonomy are not threatened by difficult situations, as they have the ability to...
renew hope and act more assertively in difficult situations (Boyden & Mann, 2005). An ability to be alert and autonomous is regarded as a protective factor (Armstrong, et al., 2005).

*Problem-solving skills*

A problem solving skill is a component of resilience (Anthony, 1987; Masten, Best & Garmezy, 1990; Ungar, Brown, Liebenberg, Cheung & Levine, 2008). Literature indicates that individuals who have problem solving skills tend to be more confident and more inclined to take control of their life situation. (Van Rensburg & Barnard, 2005).

*Interpersonal social skills*

Resilient children have a sense of empathy and good listening and communication skills and are willing to care of and take responsibility for others (Kumpfer, 1999). However, literature indicates that when these coping skills are combined with the availability of social supports and the willingness to use external supports, they can buffer risks in their lives (Masten & Coatsworth, 1998).

**Temperament**

*Self-efficacy*

Ungar (2008), notes that children and youth can learn from their experiences and failures and develop self efficacy, which is regarded as protection against adversity. Self efficacy is an individual’s belief that he can perform a task successfully (Bong & Skaalvik, 2003, p.6). The premise is that people are capable of achieving success if there is a dynamic interplay of personal, behavioural and environmental factors. In other words, their inner capabilities can be based on children and youth’s sense of autonomy and the ability to control what is happening in their lives.
High self esteem

Research reveals that high self esteem (Masten & Powell, 2003; Theron, 2004) contributes positively to resilience as children tend to accept their own potential and limitations. Generally children face difficult situations with confidence (Buckner, Mezzacappa & Beardslee, 2003). This confidence is linked to their sense of self efficacy as they regard themselves as being competent to perform certain tasks and are able to influence the choice of tasks they engage in (Kumpfer, 1999). Masten and Powell (2003) are of the view that individuals with high self esteem think positively about themselves.

Sense of humour

A sense of humour (Malindi & Theron, 2010) is identified as a resilience contributing factor. It seems to help the children and youth who are at risk to cope emotionally. In other words, one way of dealing with their experiences is to laugh about them (Malindi & Theron, 2010). Humour is an interpersonal skill that also helps individuals to establish and maintain friendships (Kumpfer, 1999).

Positive emotion

Resilient individuals are characterised as reasonably happy people (Mancini & Bonanno, 2009). The ability to be hopeful, positive and optimistic may occur because of mastery of experiences and good mental health practices, eating well and getting exercise, in addition to working and playing well (Garmerzy ,1983; Cluver & Gardner, 2007).

Genetic qualities

Intelligence

Intelligent children are regarded as having good problem-solving skills, which implies that they can adapt to adverse situations (Kumpfer, 1999). In some cases, since they are
intelligent, they perform well at school, which in turn contributes to higher self esteem (Masten & Powell, 2003). These children could find school as a place in which they are positively affirmed as they manage to pass with top marks and receive compliments from their teachers. Children of depressed and schizophrenic parents were found to generally possess superior intellectual capabilities (Werner & Smith, 1982).

**Gender**

Generally, girls have been found to be more resilient than boys, as boys appear to be vulnerable outside their home care (Werner, 1995). Rutter (1987) suggests that boys react emotionally and behaviourally in more negative ways to negative family situations than girls.

Individual resilience studies seem to have contributed to understanding resilience research, as the discussion above indicates. This research paved the way for other researchers to question what could cause different outcomes, other than innate abilities. In the next section, I will discuss the interpersonal protective resources that play a role in the resilience process.

### 2.2.4 Interpersonal protective factors

What seemed to have challenged these initial studies was research conducted by Werner and Smith (1982) which revealed that it was not only the inner attributes of individuals that could predict resilience, but other factors as well. This study emphasised the influence of protective factors, such as significant relationships with relatives and support and encouragement from other people such as family members or peers as an outcome of resilience. Other studies that followed confirmed these findings (Masten, Best & Garmerzy, 1990; Luthar et al., 2000; Fergus & Zimmerman, 2005; Masten & Obradovic, 2006; Theron, 2009). The discussion that follows will review literature on interpersonal protective factors.
Table 3: Examples of interpersonal protective resources (Werner & Smith, 1982; Masten & Obradovic, 2006; Theron, 2009)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family</th>
<th>Community</th>
<th>Culture</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Small families</td>
<td>• Supportive and pro social peers</td>
<td>• Cultural belonging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Socio-economically advantaged families</td>
<td>• Supportive teachers</td>
<td>• Religious/spiritual practices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Competent mothers</td>
<td>• Effective schools</td>
<td>• Positive values/belief systems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Positive attachments (particularly to primary caregiver)</td>
<td>• Effective public health services</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Supportive grandparents</td>
<td>• Effective social services</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Supportive siblings</td>
<td>• Positive school experiences</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Consistent and positive parenting practices</td>
<td>• Mentors (elders)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Parental harmony</td>
<td>• Pro-social organisations (sports, clubs, youth groups)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Ordered home atmosphere</td>
<td>• Safe neighbourhoods</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Educated parents</td>
<td>• Cohesive neighbourhoods</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Interested parents</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Family traditions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Security and sense of belonging</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Family protective factors

Resilience studies that focus on children recognise the role played by families in enhancing resilience. In a study that was conducted by Bowes, Maughan, Caspi, Moffitt and Arsenault (2010), on the role of families in promoting resilience after children were bullied; the findings suggested that warm family relationships and positive home environments could help to lessen the effect of negative outcomes associated with bullying victimisation. This study confirmed earlier studies on the family as a protective resource that help children cope with difficulties in life (Werner & Smith, 1992; Ungar, 2004; Walsh, 2006).

Characteristics of families have been identified in resilience research as influencing how the child copes in adversity. Families who provide support to their children during times of adversity promote their healthy development. In a study conducted by Dass-Brailsford (2005) to
understand how young black people in South Africa who experienced poverty achieved academic success. Findings revealed that, amongst other things, participants reported that their warm, nurturing and supportive families contributed to their academic achievement. Examining the relationship between exposure to violence and posttraumatic disorder, Salami (2010), has revealed that that the participants who received support from their family members and friends showed positive signs of dealing with stress associated with exposure to violence.

Other family protective factors noted in literature include the religious beliefs of families (Gunnestad & Thwala, 2011); families working together in dealing with challenges (Ungar, 2004); bonding with at least one adult (Werner & Smith, 1992; Van Rensburg & Barnard, 2005), a family that encourages competence (Fergus & Zimmerman, 2005); and families who care for their children (Werner & Smith, 1982). Family traditions are also reported to serve as protective factors to children and youth (Donald, Lazarus & Lolwana, 2010). Braverman (2001) conducted a study of children who used drugs and alcohol establishing that successful parents, strong relations with parents and skilful parents contributed to the children’s interpersonal skills as these enabled them to decline to use substances when offered. The young people in his study were monitored by their parents and their actions were supervised.

Extended families also contribute to children’s resilience, for instance, grandparents are said to be very useful in affirming children’s identity (Cook & Du Toit, 2005). Cousins and aunts can also provide emotional and material support to children who are facing adversity (Dass-Brailford, 2005). This means that children who are aware of their family traditions and feel a sense of belonging within those families can make positive progress despite their adversity.
The presence of a mother in families has been reported to be a resilience enhancing factor. Shmukler (1990) asserts that when a child has good relations with his /her mother, it is more likely that his/her capacity for resilience would be strengthened. This finding was later confirmed by Theron (2007) who contends that the participants in her study regarded their mothers as their strongest support structure which helped them to grow and develop.

*Environmental protective factors*

Peers (Malindi & Theron, 2010), schools (Gillian, 1998) and communities (Boyden & Mann, 2005) are regarded as protective factors that promote resilience. In a study conducted with street children by Malindi and Theron (2010), findings revealed that these children regarded their relations with peers as very significant in their lives as they found solace in each other. Friends also relate easier to one another and when children feel accepted by their peer group, they are predicted to have a positive self concept and perform well at school (Masten & Coatsworth, 1998; Van Rensburg & Barnard, 2005). Boyden and Mann (2005, p.8) also note that friendships can contribute to “a child’s self esteem, competence, empathy and the ability to form meaningful relationships”.

Literature indicates that individuals who have access to community protective resources tend to thrive well in life (Boyden & Mann, 2005; Cook & Du Toit, 2005). For example, individuals who can access resources such as sports grounds, sponsorships from community businesses; and have community members who motivate them to play sport tend to show resilient patterns (Luthar & Zelazo, 2003). Likewise, those individuals who view their communities as sources of support, advice and encouragement generally adapt well in their adversity (Boyden & Mann, 2005). Churches in communities have been found to be very helpful in providing practical and emotional support to those who are at risk. A study by Gunnestad and
Thwala (2011), on how religion enhances resilience, revealed that the participants regarded the church as a community resource that helped them cope when they lost their parents. Their coping was attributed to the emotional support that the church members provided to them.

Communities who encourage individuals to further their education and utilise resources such as libraries contribute in removing risk factors that may be detrimental to the well-being of individuals (Ungar & Liebenberg, 2005). In addition, young people who have adults in their communities whom they regard as role models tend to be influenced by them (Masten & Reed, 2005; Van Rensburg & Barnard, 2005).

Generally, children and youth spend most of their time at school and therefore schools can be nodes of promoting resilience among children that are facing adversity by exposing them to a variety of coping and life skills (Theron, 2007; Johnson & Lazarus, 2008, Donald et al., 2010). In fact, in South Africa, schools are regarded as nodes of support for vulnerable children (Smart, 2003). Gilligan (1998) argues for the importance of schools in developing children’s well being. In his conceptual paper, he presented various factors that could benefit children faced with adversity. Teachers, who care, love, support and encourage children build their resilience, as a result, children came to view the school as a safe place (Gilligan, 1998). In turn, their positive self efficacy can be enhanced (Gilligan, 1998, p.15). A teacher who has close relationships with learners can assist them in coping in their adversity since learners can confide in him/her (Werner & Smith, 1992).

Schools can provide a nurturing environment for those children who do not receive support from their extended families (Dass-Brailsford, 2005; Theron, 2007). Teachers who recognise the strengths of learners can create a health promoting environment of caring
relationships in schools which is an essential component of resilience (Gilligan, 1998). In the context of this study, schools play an important role in promoting resilience among children and youth who are at risk. As alluded to in section 1.2, literature reports an increase in the number of OVC in schools, and teachers are not coping with their pastoral role since they feel that they are not well trained for this role. This means that if schools cannot be a supportive environment for children, their positive development may be negatively affected.

I concur with Gilligan (1998) that schools need to have teachers who can serve as role models and provide support to children in the midst of adversity. In other words, teachers need to adopt a caring attitude, provide a loving classroom atmosphere, give hope, show empathy and promote good values to at risk children and youth (Johnson & Lazarus, 2008; Donald et al., 2010).

*Cultural protective resources*

Current research on resilience focuses on the cultural context and how cultural assets could be utilised as a means of support for children who are vulnerable. According to Ungar (2008), for one to be considered resilient, one’s community should be able to provide opportunities to access its resources in a culturally appropriate way. This implies that the culture of a society can be a determining factor in enhancing resilience through its beliefs, values, behaviour, rules and traditions. In the next section I will discuss the cultural protective factors in the context of South African resilience studies.

*South African resilience studies*

Although Western literature dominates resilience research, I noticed that this field was also emerging in South Africa. On reviewing literature on resilience research undertaken in
South Africa, it was evident that it drew from previous studies that foregrounded culturally and contextually specific mechanisms that advance resilience (Ungar, Brown, Liebenberg, Othman, Kwong, Armstrong & Gillian, 2007). The South African studies also acknowledge that resilience is nurtured by multiple resources that are rooted in culture (Theron & Theron, 2010) as they mostly examine the positive development of children faced with adversity.

As indicated in section 1.1, South Africa is one of the countries with a significant number of OVC; therefore, the South African studies on resilience seem to be concerned with how these children survive when faced with multiple and severe adversity, also focusing on promoting resilience through intervention strategies. What is also evident is that these studies subscribe to the notion that not all children facing significant adversity develop problems in life (Govender & Killian, 2001; Dash-Brailsford, 2005; Van Rensburg & Barnard, 2005; Pillay & Nesengani, 2006; Malindi & Theron, 2010).

Poverty is one of the adversities that children face (UNICEF, 2004). South African children are no exception. Govender and Killian (2001) conducted research on how children who lived in poor areas and were exposed to violence were coping. They found high levels of stress among the participants. Although the participants were exposed to the same adversity, the findings suggested gender differences in terms of how the participants coped. Boys were reported to use problem focused strategies, which led them to believe they could take control of their lives, whilst girls utilised emotional focused strategies such as wishful thinking and acceptance of their situation. This finding confirmed earlier studies on gender as a resilience enhancing factor (Rutter, 1987).
Dass-Brailsford (2005) conducted a study with young black adolescents who achieved academic success despite their experience of poverty. The findings suggested individual characteristics such as being goal orientated, motivated, having initiative and experiencing self as having a sense of agency as well as factors that promote support, such as the role of their family and teachers as their resilience trajectories. Spirituality, an important cultural value in South Africa was evident in this study in that young people believed that attending church services and worshipping their ancestors contributed to their positive adaptation. The same study also revealed that some youth believed that prayer gave them the inner strength to be able to go on in life.

These findings were later confirmed by Gunnestad and Thwala (2011), who conducted a study in South Africa to examine how faith or religion influenced the ability to cope in difficult circumstances. This study was conducted with children who were orphans. Just like in the study by Dass-Brailsford, prayer and church attendance seemed to be coping strategies. Moreover, faith, hope, values and Bible stories about people who experienced difficulties, were additional coping strategies. Hope is conceptualised in this study as related to trust and perseverance which are factors that enhance resilience. The values that were noted, were love for others, honesty, friendship, and to be helpful. Values can ‘help children make good choices for themselves’ (p. 179).

Likewise research on children who have been sexually molested (Van Rensburg & Barnard, 2005) revealed that they could function well, despite their experiences. Literature identifies a number of factors that occur in the individual or family that facilitate resilience. Children in this study were found to have close bonds with their mothers; believed that they had control over their lives (locus of control); had a positive self concept; received support at school.
These findings are in line with earlier studies on resilience literature, which regard school as a protective factor; a place of security away from painful circumstances (Gilligan, 1998), close bonds with one parent and individual characteristics (Werner & Smith, 1992).

Pillay and Nesengani (2006) have explored and described the challenges that affect young people who head households whilst their parents work away from homes. They outlined a lot of challenges such as difficulties to concentrate at school; unfair treatment from teachers and lack of school equipments; absenteeism and high dropout rate, which all serve as obstacles to the young people’s positive adaptation. However, despite these experiences, they conclude that the participants in their study were coping well because some of them articulated positive stories about their lives which enabled them to cope in their adversity. Their resilience was attributed to their commitment to Christianity, sense of agency in boys and the support of their peers.

Recently, Malindi and Theron (2010) have explored the resources that enabled street youth towards their resilience. Data from the interviews revealed that they were enabled towards resilience by protective resources such as close relationships to their peers and individual resources such as assertiveness, sense of agency, social regulation, unconventional ways and religion.

I did not review all the South African studies but highlighted a few to demonstrate that research on resilience is emerging in South Africa as well. The findings in these studies have confirmed earlier Western studies on resilience and also revealed that resilience is context and culturally bound (Ungar, 2008) as the impact of the social context on the child depends on how he views his/her life experiences (Ward, Martin, Theron & Distiller, 2007). Cultural values as a resilience protective factor are therefore evident in South African studies. Recognising the
importance of this, other South African researchers advocated for extra-curriculum activities that promote cultural knowledge to enable children and youth to learn their cultural values and norms (Ebersöhn & Eloff, 2002; Killian, 2004).

Although these studies have focused on building theories of resilience that embrace cultural antecedents, the gap in knowledge is how protective resources that are found in children’s culture could be utilised as a means of enhancing resilience. This view resonates with research that has revealed that communities have inherent strengths in the form of resources that can foster resilience (Landau, 2007; Ungar, Brown, Liebenberg, Cheung & Levine, 2008). In the context of this study, cultural stories, known as folktales (iintsomi) were identified as the assets that the participants had in their community that could enhance resilience. I therefore explored how they could be utilised as a means of promoting resilience in OVC.

2.2.5 Resilience as a dynamic transactional process

There is evidence in literature that both intrapersonal and interpersonal protective factors enable the manifestation of resilience outcomes when resilience is conceptualised as a transactional ecological process (Masten, Cutuli, Herbers & Reed, 2009). This means a resilience outcome manifests when individuals engage in processes that promote positive development whilst their ecologies influence and support these processes in cultural ways (Ungar, 2008; Masten & Wright, 2010). Ungar, (2010,p.425) defines this transactional process as “both the capacity of individuals to navigate their way to health-sustaining resources, including opportunities to experience feelings of well-being, and a condition of the individual’s family, community and culture to provide these health resources and experiences in cultural meaningful ways”. This definition supports Bronfenbrenner’s ecological theoretical framework (cited in
Stevens, 2005, p.48) which indicates that a child’s development is influenced by his context, culture and broader socio-historical circumstances.

Current literature explains the pathway to resilience in terms of the transactional process, to mean that a child must take action towards accessing meaningful resources. These resources must be available and easily accessible to him. For example, Theron and Dunn (2010) describe how young people from divorced families were enabled towards their resilience. The findings revealed that participants were able to access support from their families, friends, schools, community and religion and in turn managed to cope well in their adversity. Earlier, Belgrave, Chase-Vaung, Gray, Addison and Cherry (2000) found that young people who carried adult responsibilities, compared to other adolescents of the same age, attributed their positive feelings about themselves and their positive behaviour to the values that were taught in their culture. Likewise, Holleran and Waller (2003) contend that Mexican adolescents exposed to risk were able to navigate towards their traditional Mexican values and beliefs. Therefore values such as family closeness, ethnic pride, bravery, courage, loyalty and respect for others were meaningful resources that contributed to their resilience.

In this study, I explored how cultural stories (folktales), which are easily accessible in the participants’ ecology, could enhance resilience. The recent increase in the number of OVC in South Africa has placed an additional responsibility on schools as sites of care and support. There are policies in place that mandate the teachers to play a pastoral role regarding the OVC in their schools and they are reported to be struggling. In under resourced schools, literature reveals that this problem is more experienced. I was led to ask how teachers could support children to better cope in their adversity. Based on the literature on the value of bibliotherapy in promoting resilient coping with individuals, I was interested to see if folktales could be used in a similar
way with groups of children. In the next section, I will review literature on how stories have been used in therapy and schools. Thereafter, I will discuss how folktales speak to the resilience framework.

### 2.3 HOW STORIES HAVE BEEN USED IN LITERATURE

Stories have been used in different contexts and in different ways throughout literature. For the purposes of this study, I will review literature on how they have been used in therapy and in schools.

#### 2.3.1 Stories in therapy

On reviewing the literature, I noted that stories have been used in therapy as a tool to help patients understand their problems (Arad, 2004; Brown, 2006; Fritz, 2006; Bergner, 2007; Brink, 2008). These stories are either read or told to the patients. Telling a story is based on the notion that when a person is listening to a story, he normally regards the content of the story as not related to himself but to the characters in the story (Arad, 2004). Hence it becomes less threatening to him to talk about the problems that affect him. In this way, patients may see important relationships that they may not have realised before, and this can help them achieve a better understanding of their difficulties and, in some cases find ways to change their behaviours (Arad, 2004; Bergner, 2007).

Children who have seen therapists have also been told stories as an approach to deal with their problems (Arad, 2004). Literature indicates that most therapists when dealing with children use Gardner’s mutual story telling approach (cited in Arad, 2004, p.252), in terms of which a child is asked to tell a story with a beginning, middle and an end. Thereafter, the therapist chooses themes from the child’s story and tells a similar story of his own. In this way, the
therapist tries to integrate the child’s fictional story with a real life situation. In most cases, that approach enables the child to realise that he can solve and cope with his problems.

Also, animal stories are used in therapy as a way of understanding the personality traits of the patients (Arad, 2004). Although animals feature as characters in stories, the purpose of using animal stories in therapy is to allow the patients to project their feelings, situations and wishes on the animals and not themselves. In folktales, for instance, a snake is associated with evil, a bird with luck, and an ox with wealth (Kehinde, 2010). This suggests that, in therapy, associating problems with animals could help the patients understand their personalities, strengths and weakness as they are associated with those particular animals.

When stories are not told to patients, they are read, an approach generally known as bibliotherapy (Maich & Kean, 2004; Pehrsson, 2005; Heath et al., 2005; Morgan & Roberts, 2010; Rozalski, et al., 2010). This approach to reading assumes that when one is reading a story one can actually identify with the character’s experiences and then feel better, realising that other people go through similar experiences in life (Morgan & Roberts, 2010). In this way, one may learn the coping strategies that the character in the book has used and apply them in his own life (Morgan & Roberts, 2010). In other words, through the stories in the books, children’s emotions and feelings are articulated without them having said a word (Rozalski et al., 2010). Iaquinta and Hipsky (2006, p.209) encapsulate this process as follows:

“When a child is listening to a story he identifies with the character or situation in the story, a process called identification. Then, he releases an emotional tension (catharsis) which occurs when a reader or listener revisits feelings that previously were repressed. Thereafter, when the child understands the feelings and situation in a way, he is then motivated to make positive behavioural changes.”
The bibliotherapy approach has been used in studies of children who have experienced sexual abuse. For example, in a study by Reitcther (1998) children who were sexually abused were able to talk openly about their adversity especially on topics involving private parts which may not be easy to discuss directly with children.

In a study conducted by Weih (2005), she reported that students who wrote their narratives following a storytelling session wrote those narratives according to the structure of the stories they listened to. She noted that the messages that were explicit in the stories were the ones that were articulated by the students’ narratives. Her conclusion was that the stories had influenced how students thought about their lives.

Related findings were also reported by McKenna, Hevey and Martin, (2010). In their study, participants who were users of the bibliotherapy approach were interviewed regarding how they felt about bibliotherapy. The participants varied in their responses as some reported a “sense of empowerment, removal of barrier, generation of insight into condition and how their personality attributes such as single mindedness and self sufficiency emerged as a result” (p. 502-503). From the same study, other participants were concerned about being labelled by the librarians when they went to take out books related to a specific mental health issue.

Literature points to a lack of enough evidence to suggest that the process alone helps the children to view their lives differently (Pratner, Johnstun, Dyches & Johnstun, 2006). This view is based on the notion that a child grows in an environment that is influential to his behaviour. From an ecosystemic perspective, this means that when teachers and therapists use bibliotherapy they should be aware of the transactional processes that take place in the different systems in which the child grows up.
Another concern raised in literature by therapists was the use of bibliotherapy in schools by the teachers since they are not trained to deal with emotional problems. Some scholars have argued that when writers write stories, they do not write for therapists but are addressing the social issues that our societies are faced with (Maich & Kean, 2004). Moreover, the use of stories is not for clinical purposes, but for developmental purposes, since the teachers are the immediate people that deal with the children on a daily basis and with whom the children share their concerns (Maich & Kean, 2004; Du Toit, 2010).

Reading a story to a child, followed by discussion, can help teachers identify what the children are going through and what coping skills they can learn from the characters in the story. In this regard, Pratner et al. (2006, p.3) stated that “although teachers are not qualified to conduct psychotherapy with students, they are qualified to discuss students feelings about being in school and consider classroom problems the students might be experiencing”. These counter arguments point to the realities of our schools. In contexts where there is no social worker or psychologist in schools, what are teachers expected to do? In South Africa, for instance, teachers have a pastoral role to play; therefore they ought to support the children who are vulnerable. Of course, situations that are beyond the teachers’ scope should be referred to a professional (Heath et al., 2005).

Stories are not used for therapeutic purposes only, but as a pedagogical approach in schools. In the next section, I will review literature on how they are used for such purposes.

2.3.2 Stories in schools

Stories have been used in schools generally for literacy development (Miller & Pennycuff, 2008; Kelin, 2007). In South Africa, the National Curriculum Statement (Department
of Education, 1997) encourages the use of stories for literacy purposes from the Foundation Phase to the Further Education and Training Phase (Department of Education, 1997). Stories can be used to model how learners should write their own stories. In a study that was conducted by Weih (2005), she reported that students who wrote their narratives following a storytelling session wrote those narratives according to the structure of the stories they listened to. She noted that the messages that were explicit in the stories were the ones that were articulated in the students’ narratives. Her conclusion was that stories influenced how the students thought about their lives and provided an opportunity to develop writing skills.

Stories are regarded as a means to improve writing skills. A study conducted by Mello (cited in Miller & Pennycuff, 2008, p.38), using pre and post interviews with eight students regarding the use of storytelling in class revealed that the literacy of participants was enhanced in fluency, vocabulary acquisition, writing and recall. Koki (1998), alludes to the fact that students who hear and respond to stories are enabled to write their own stories because of the value of oral language in cognitive development. Moreover, stories can be told as a pre writing activity. Miller and Pennycuff (2008) note this strategy as providing a space for children to develop language that they could use in their writing tasks.

According to Lockett (2011), reading aloud and telling stories to students for a minimum of 15 minutes can improve students’ reading and listening comprehension. He reported that students in Japan who were learning English as a foreign language improved their comprehension and listening skills in English because they felt that the context of the stories and how they were told helped them to improve their English. An additional finding was that stories helped them learn new vocabulary and new expressions. As learners read, they make sense of and learn meanings from the story (Miller & Pennycuff, 2008). Eder (cited in Miller &
Pennycuff, 2008, p.38) recommends the use of oral traditional stories for enabling children to make meaning of texts since these stories can be remembered long after they have been told because of their engaging structure. Folktales, for example, are stories that are interspersed with songs and the language used is characterised by repetition (Kehinde, 2010), hence I believe that they could be easily remembered by students.

Stories have been used for enjoyment. When parents or teachers read stories to the children, strong literacy foundations are built (Makin & Whitehead, 2004). In that way, children can be able to retell the stories. Tobin and Snyman (2008, p.133) state that “stories can be remembered longer than any other abstract ideas and therefore a highly effective way of capturing tacit knowledge”.

The telling of traditional texts in classrooms enables the students to examine the values that are embedded in these stories (Mitchell, 1998). By engaging with these stories, they can think critically about issues that affect them personally or those taking place around them, while at the same time developing their language skills, vocabulary and language patterns, as they read, listen and compose stories (Koki, 1998).

Literature indicates that teachers use bibliotherapy in their classrooms, unaware that they are helping their learners to deal with their issues and challenges (Pellitteri, 2000). It is recommended that teachers use children’s literature in order to help their learners deal with their challenges in life (Iaquinta & Hipsky, 2006). Teachers are advised to select stories carefully so that children can identify with the characters who may face similar problems as themselves (Heath et al., 2005). As noted earlier, listening to a story can elicit feelings that will help the children understand their own problems and learn from how the characters have solved them. By
engaging in dramatisation to discussing the characters and the events in the story, students are learning the coping strategies as reflected in the characters of the story and begin to think of ways to cope and solve the problems of life (Cook, Earles- Vollrath & Ganz, 2006).

According to Kelin (2007, p.64-76), the purpose of storytelling is as follows:

- To impart valuable lessons about life, culture and interpersonal relationships in engaging and imaginative ways.
- To reflect the character of the listener by recognising reflections of themselves and their culture.
- To provide didactic models for young people to learn the ways of doing and being in their families, villages, communities and society.
- To provide a repertoire for understanding

Although stories like folktales are regarded by most young people as full of references to traditions and practices that are no longer recognizable, it seems as if they are still valuable. Nowadays these stories are found in the form of picture books and animated stories (Kelin, 2007). That implies that storytelling is a valuable learning tool. The stories that I used in this study were folktales. In the next section I describe what folktales are, and how they have been used in literature.

2.4 WHAT ARE FOLKTALES?

Folktales are described in literature as stories that have been passed from generation to generation in a verbatim form as a result no one can claim ownership or authorship of them (Kelin, 2007; Zin & Nasir, 2007; Sougou, 2008; Tobin & Snyman, 2008; Kehinde, 2010). In African tradition in particular, folktales form part of oral literature that was intended to entertain,
to record history and to teach values and cultural morals (Sougou, 2008; Kehinde, 2010; James, 2010). Clearly, what distinguishes these stories from others is that they are generally stories about the world of imagination, about animals and humans with supernatural powers and abilities like fairies (Zin & Nasir, 2007; Parkinson, 2009). Kehinde (2010, p.3) describes a folktale as follows:

In terms of their structure, a folktale has an introductory statement, a body that is interspersed with songs, a moral or etiological conclusion, the narrator audience interaction, use of language that is characterized by repetition, and the role of songs to punctuate a section of the story and in some cases advance the plot.

Folktales are embedded with indigenous knowledge systems such as values, customs, beliefs and practices of indigenous communities (Loubser, 2005; Persens, 2005). Infact, Nel (2006, p. 99) asserts that indigenous knowledge systems are also “the rationality of these cultural practices and rites that affects social cohesion, creativity and artistry of dance and music and technologies”. In this study, I am using the term folktales cautiously because I am aware that it is an international phenomenon. My focus is on African folktales that are embedded with knowledge that is indigenous to Africa.

I chose these stories because there is evidence in literature that folktales could boost resilience: i) through the provision of moral lessons; ii) through the promotion of emotional healing and new ways of thinking; and iii) through metaphors of positive adjustment (Joseph, 1994; African Cultural Centre, 2011). In fact, Joseph (1994, p.135) refers to stories as a “natural way to teach resilient values and attitudes”. In folktales, a tortoise which is a typical character in these stories is usually presented as a crafty, greedy and unfaithful character who ultimately suffers from his mischief, however, from this character, children can be taught the importance of
such virtues as patience and sincerity which they can apply in their lives (Abatan, 2011). Ndofirepi and Ndofirepi (2012) make a similar case arguing that folktales provide a space of experience where people can learn about their values and belief systems. This space is facilitated by listening to folktales which have the “power to influence or affect change of attitude, builds character, new concepts and ideas of the target audience” (Abatan, 2011, p. 126).

This implies that through the process of storytelling, both the teller and the listeners create an imaginative world which contributes to children’s view of their own lives (Lamwaka, 2004; Abatan, 2011). This imaginative world is enhanced by the typical characters in the folktales such as small animals battling against large ones, or ordinary people fighting against characters with super-natural power or superior physical strength (Kehinde, 2010). The animals, birds and mythological creatures often take on the human characteristics of greed, jealousy, honesty, loneliness etc. which in turn instil good behaviour in children (Malimabe-Ramagoshi, Maree, Alexander & Molepo, 2008).

Stories by their nature have a way of impacting on one’s thoughts and emotions. For instance, in any story, characters are more likely to make decisions about certain moral issues they are facing at a particular point in time, which may lead the children to think in terms of what they could have done in such contexts to effect positive attitudes in their lives (Zin & Nasir, 2007:312). Through the story-telling process, children will develop a “disposition to listen, which in turn can help them face their fears and frustrations and acquire essential survival skills” (Ndofirepi & Ndofirepi, 2012, p. 23). Stories also teach basic universal virtues, such as love, honesty, courage, hospitality goodwill and Ubuntu. The philosophy of Ubuntu is described as “a social process which guides how people think, choose, act and speak” (Ndofirepi & Ndofirepi, 2012, p.16). This term is embedded, derived and best summarized in the aphorism “umuntu
ngumuntu ngabantu” which literally translated means that a person is a person through other persons (Ndofirepi & Ndofirepi, 2012).

Joseph (1994) reports that moral values, such as honesty and self-control, and the resilience traits of responsibility and positive orientation are similar. Stories are therefore natural ways of expressing the values and traits that children can have. This implies that caregivers and teachers who want to support the resilient coping of children should be able to tap into those messages that the story is carrying. As children listen to a story and identify with the characters, they can learn new ways of thinking about and coping with their problems, becoming more hopeful and therefore better able to adjust to adversity (Iaquinta & Hipsky, 2006; Morgan & Roberts, 2010).

Hence in this study I explored ways in which that could be done. Folktales are also regarded as resonant stories that can make meaning to a child since they “offer powerful messages that nurture their resilient personality” (Joseph, 1994, p.140). In the first cycle of this study I explored the resilience potential of stories through the ‘draw and write’ technique (Guillemin, 2004) in order to ascertain the resilience potential of folktales. In cycle two of this study, I explored through the use of visual arts based methods as explained in Chapter Three, how the folktales related to the children’s lives, how strong or not strong they made them feel and what they liked about the characters in these stories.

The children in this study are part of a culture that embraces traditional stories. Folktales are also stories that are embedded with the values and lessons of this culture. Therefore, by exploring how they could enhance resilience I was also interested in finding out which protective factors the children could identify in these stories. Was it possible for them to learn skills that
they could utilise in their own lives, family characteristics they admired, identify resources in the environment of the characters they could identify with or specific cultural values that contributed to their strength?. Situating the stories in the resilience framework helped me to gain answers to the aforementioned questions. In seeking for those answers I employed an action research design which enabled me to plan an intervention, which was the storytelling.

2.4.1 Story telling

Story-telling is a method that has been used in many cultures (Koki, 1998, Parkinson, 2009). For example, earlier cultures which had no written language used oral storytelling to pass messages about their cultures, values, morals, social events, language experience and knowledge (Koki, 1998).

Traditionally, African people are known to be superb storytellers. Oral African storytelling is a communal participatory experience during which all family members gather to listen to a story, usually in the evening, at bedtime or at twilight, never in day time, as this is traditionally considered a taboo (Kehinde, 2010; Abatan, 2011). These stories which in most cases are stories of courage, heroism, and triumph over adversity are told by adults to the young ones since they are viewed as traditional indigenous education that educates children about humanness (Ndofirepi & Ndofirepi, 2012).

In Nigeria, folktales are told for therapeutic, emotional, didactic and socializing functions in the society (Kehinde, 2010). Moreover, the Nigerian folktale performer is regarded as a person who expresses the longings, failings and successes of his people. Notably, in Senegal as well, folktales are valued as means of passing significant lessons about life and their culture (Sougou, 2008). Interestingly, as much as the folktales carry important messages for different cultures
some of the messages that listeners can learn have negative connotations. This is evident from (Malimabe-Ramagoshi et al., 2008) research on Setswana folktales. They argue that child abuse, for instance, is visible in these stories, and people sometimes use the folktales to justify their abuse of children. As such, it is suggested that when telling folktales to children, the storyteller should be mindful of the message that the story may convey (Kelin, 2007; Tobin & Snyman, 2008).

Nowadays, folktales are often reinvented in animated form. For instance, animated movies like Cinderella, Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs and The Beauty and the Beast are more popular among children than the traditional folktales and have been adapted to suit the current language and names of characters (Kiesel, 2002; Reese, 2007). Kiesel (2002) notes that although many scholars have theorised on the benefits of folktales to children in terms of the meanings they convey, few have asked the children themselves what they think of these folktales.

In this study, folktales were the type of stories that I used. In the first cycle, I told the participants folktales in a teacher-centred way while in the second cycle I used these stories in a participative way with the participants as explained in Chapter Three.

### 2.4.2 Stories used in my study

In this study, the methodology of using folktales was adapted from bibliotherapy literature on the use and value of reading stories to children who are at risk. As indicated earlier, teachers in schools are faced with children who need their support; moreover, teachers are expected to care and support these children. Since bibliotherapy is a proven approach in therapy and schools to help children deal with their emotions, I believed that a similar approach using
folktales with resilience promoting themes could be appropriate. Folktales are stories found in children’s ecology which can be read or told to them by their caregivers or teachers. Moreover, these traditional stories are not rare to find, but are currently being used in children’s literature, although in adapted form in picture books and animated stories. The stories that were used in this study with resilience enhancing themes are summarised in Table 2 below and attached in Appendix G.

Table 4:
Examples of stories used in this study (Wood, Theron & Mayaba, 2012)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resilience-promoting theme</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
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| Self as enabling          | Ten stories presented protagonists and/or themes that communicated a message that personal qualities provided strength and ability. These personal strengths included warm-heartedness, the ability to follow instructions, and curiosity. The stories encouraged confidence in personal ability to solve problems. Many of the stories, emphasised the importance of confidence in own ability. This excerpt from Story 22 illustrates this:  

*In one of the villages in the Eastern Cape, one couple had only one child. This was a girl child. She was very dark in complexion, with big red eyes. She had long protruding teeth. Her neck was like a long pole that had been inserted between those wide shoulders. She was so unusually tall for a girl. Her arms formed brackets, and she had big muscular legs. She had flat buttocks. One would think that she was an unusual creature or that she was disabled. .... She was teased by others in her area because of her ugliness. Even her nickname ‘Instant poison’ was also from people in the area, because they said she was like poison She used to say, “Even if you are beautiful, your beauty does nothing for me, I can do anything I want to do myself, there’s nothing that I can’t do because I am ugly. I am far better than most of you”. Her belief in her own ability led to her being able to save her community and the story ends with: “Her parents were very happy for her. Their child was the first black woman to lead an army and come back triumphant.”

The stories also encouraged clear thinking and problem-solving as enabling. For example, in Story 11 Ngcede, a little spotted warbler, triumphed over a powerful eagle because he used his intellect to compensate for his physical puniness and in so doing outwitted the great eagle. In Story 17, an ant triumphs over a majestic lion, despite its
### Resilience-promoting theme | Explanation
--- | ---
**| physical vulnerability, by using its wit.
Likewise, these stories emphasized the importance of agency. Although there were themes of enabling communities and supportive family or friends, these stories illustrated how the child protagonists made good use of the supports offered to them, and/or how they negotiated for support.

#### Community as enabling
| Six of the stories illustrated that communities could be relied on to help beat the odds. In four of these stories, help came from elders in the community: elders provided shelter, information and/or food that enabled the protagonist in each story to adapt to difficult circumstances and to cope with these. In one (Story 16) there was pertinent reference to neighbours who were enabling:

*Ntsingiselo was a 12 year old boy who lived in one of the villages in the Bathenjini area across the Nciba river. He was staying with his grandmother Mamvulane. His parents died when he was three years old, they died of pneumoconiosis (a miner’s lung disease). His grandmother was struggling to make ends meet and there was no-one who was prepared to offer them help. There were, however, a few neighbours who gave them a few things to help them. In those days there were no old age grants.*

#### Family as enabling
| Three of the stories presented protagonists and/or themes that communicated a message that family members could be relied on for support. These stories referred to ancestral family members or extended family members: orphaned children coped because of remaining family such as a father figure (Stories 9 & 18), an ancestral mother-figure (Story 9) or a granny (Story 16). All six stories suggest the importance of bonding, and that even in extremely troubled home environment, a good relationship with a family member is enabling.

#### Friends as enabling
| Eight of the stories presented protagonists and/or themes that communicated a message that relational bonds, such as friendship would buffer risk. These bonds facilitated high expectations, encouragement to participate in meaningful activities, counsel or advice, and having an identity as a survivor as opposed to a victim.

For example, in Story 2, the main character, Mankepe, was saved by the children in the village. Because there was a connection between her and the other children in the village, they went out of their way to rescue her when she was in grave danger.

#### Cultural practices and beliefs as enabling
| Eleven of the stories presented protagonists and/or themes in terms of cultural frames that are deeply invested with spirituality/religion, magic, and music. These stories also emphasized the importance of collectivism.
Resilience-promoting theme | Explanation
--- | ---
 | and generosity as resilience-promoting resources.

For example, in Story 12, Sikhalomi had to call for divine intervention when the boys were chased by the cannibals:

*This time the boys came to a swiftly flowing river that barred their way, and thinking that this was surely the end they turned in despair to Sikhalomi and saying, Save us, save us, little chief! Seeing their plight he called out, Water, water, water, please open up before us, for the cannibals are close behind. This time Khanjapa the python, guardian of the river, rose from the depths and, striking the water with its enormous tail, divided it, leaving a pathway to the other side. The boys lost no time in getting across, and they threw themselves onto the grass to recover their breath as the water closed again behind them. The cannibals, however, were so near when all this happened, that they had Sikhalomi’s call for help, and saw the water let them through.*

As in other similar stories, this excerpt illustrates story content that uses cultural beliefs and practices to encourage hope when all seems lost, and to encourage spiritual dependence as a pathway to enablement.

*In Story 18, the children were taught by their father that working together would benefit them more than working individually:*

*He asked them to take some sticks from the ones that were left and give them to him. He then made them into a bundle. He gave the bundle to the first so that he could try and break it, but he couldn’t, he then gave it to each one of them, but they all could not break the bundle. After he had passed the bundle to all of them, he then told them that if they could stick together like that bundle of sticks, nothing not even their enemies, could break them and nothing could overpower them.*

### 2.5 SUMMARY

In this chapter, I provided an overview of the literature on resilience by highlighting how this theory has evolved and the major critical issues that one needs to be aware of when using this theory. In my discussion I provided empirical evidence on how it has been used in research. Thereafter, I reviewed literature on the use of stories in therapy and in schools. This was significant since I was exploring how folktales (cultural stories) could be used to enhance the resilience of OVC in schools. I based my methodological and theoretical perspectives on the use
of stories from bibliotherapy and storytelling approaches in general. I also provided a summary of the stories that I used in this study.

In the next chapter, I will describe my philosophical stance and my methodological choices and explain how they informed this study. I will then elaborate on my research design and how I generated data in this study. Thereafter, I will elaborate on the measurements that I took to ensure trustworthiness and explain the ethical issues that I considered relevant and significant to this study.
3.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this study was to explore and describe whether and how folktales could be used to enhance resilience in children orphaned and rendered vulnerable by HIV and AIDS. My research questions were: How can folktales enhance the resilience of children orphaned and rendered vulnerable by HIV and AIDS? Secondly, how can folktales be used by teachers to reach both pastoral and academic goals? In the second chapter, I reviewed the theoretical framework of resilience by examining its development over time and the studies that have used this framework, including South African resilience studies. Thereafter, I explored literature on how stories have been used in schools and therapy. Thereafter, I reviewed literature on folktales and their resilience enhancing potential.

In this third chapter, I will describe my philosophical stance and methodological choices and explain how they informed this study. I will then elaborate on my research design and how I generated data throughout the study. Thereafter, I will elaborate on the measures that I took to ensure trustworthiness and explain the ethical issues that I considered relevant and significant to this study. Finally, I will provide a summary of this chapter.

3.2 RESEARCH PARADIGMS

Literature highlights that when conducting a study one must have a paradigm as a lens to guide it (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Babbie & Mouton, 2001; Willis, 2007; Denzin & Lincoln, 2008; Creswell, 2009; Mertens, 2009; Denscombe, 2010). In other words, behind each study are
the assumptions that researchers make about reality (ontological assumptions), how knowledge is created (epistemological assumptions), and the values and ethics that guide research (axiological assumptions) all of which influence the choice of methodology (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Literature indicates that there are four main competing paradigms that inform research in social science namely, positivism, constructivism, pragmatism and critical paradigms (Babbie & Mouton, 2001; Creswell, 2009; Mertens, 2009), although variations of these themes have emerged in the form of post-positivism (Krauss, 2005; Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006) and pragmatism (Creswell, 2003).

There are debates on whether it is possible to use more than one paradigm to see and interpret reality, something which Mertens (2009, p.38) refers to as “compatibility in paradigms”. Researchers are, however, warned that if they intend to use different lenses, they must ensure that the assumptions of the paradigm are appropriate for the study and do not cause methodological problems (Creswell, 2007). It follows, therefore, that the choice of paradigms determines the choice of research design and methodology used in gathering and analysing research data (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Henning, Van Rensburg & Smith, 2004; Mertens, 2009). In the next section, I will explain the paradigms that informed this study.

3.2.1 Paradigmatic choices in this study

I am a teacher educator who interacts with practising teachers on a daily basis. It became apparent to me that teachers were not coping with dealing with the many challenges that faced OVC in their schools. By engaging in this study my goal was to explore how a cultural resource, such as folktales, could enhance the resilience of OVC and be used by teachers to support these children in a way that would contribute towards their positive development in life. As an action
A researcher whose focus is on resilience research, a transformative paradigm (Babbie & Mouton, 2001; Mertens, 2009), seemed appropriate to guide this study.

A transformative paradigm assumes that there are multiple realities out there (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Mertens, 2009). Such realities are “constructed and shaped by the social, economical, political or cultural contexts and values” (Mertens, 2009, p.53). In order to know these realities, what people say in a particular context is important, therefore, there must be an interactive relationship between the researcher and the participants in the research process (Mertens, 2005).

A transformative paradigm recognises the value of indigenous knowledge (Mertens, 2009), which has been neglected in research for a long time (Chilisa, 2012). Methodologically, this paradigm encourages the use of various methods, including the different perspectives of the participants (Mertens, 2009). The transformative axiological assumptions “promote the principles of respect, beneficence and justice” (Mertens, 2009, p. 49) in research. In other words, participants should be treated with the utmost respect and not be harmed. In the next section, I explain how my epistemological and methodological paradigms influenced my interest in this study.

Epistemological and ontological paradigms

I framed my study from a transformative paradigm which supports the recognition of indigenous knowledge in the construction of new knowledge (Mertens, 2009). I chose this lens since it fitted well with my action research ideals. As an action researcher, I wanted to bring about change (Babbie & Mouton, 2001; p.34; Koshy, 2005) by exploring, different ways in which folktales could be used to promote resilience in children who are orphaned and rendered
vulnerable by HIV and AIDS. In that way, teachers could have a tool to encourage their resilience. Therefore, I undertook an exploratory journey (Koshy, 2005) during which I had to learn, gain knowledge reflect and plan based on my learning (Zuber-Skerrit, 2011).

In this study, the participants were children who are “traditionally viewed as objects of research instead of being participants” (Neill, 2005, p.46). However, I approached this study believing that children could construct their own social reality; therefore, in both cycles of this study I created a space for them to speak up, through the research methods that I used. I wanted to gain knowledge that could be used to practically contribute to their positive coping, which could bring a change in their lives (Babbie & Mouton, 2001, p.34).

Since I aimed to encourage the resilience of the participating OVC in a culturally respectful manner (Ross, 2008; Chilisa, 2012), the transformative paradigm seemed appropriate since it recognises the value of indigenous knowledge (Mertens, 2005). Folktales, by their nature, are embedded with indigenous knowledge such as values, morals and messages which have been passed from generation to generation (Kehinde, 2010; Ndofirepi & Ndofirepi, 2010). Acknowledging them as valuable in knowledge construction supported my transformative ideals. One of the methods that I used in generating data was to gather children in a circle, which is an indigenous method of telling stories (Kehinde, 2010). I facilitated the research process in the mother tongue of the participants (isiXhosa), which is also my language to recognise the value of indigenous languages in research, which are often ignored (Chilisa, 2012). Literature highlights that “if the research is to empower children it must be conducted in the language with which children are most familiar” (Clacherty & Donald, 2007, p.149). The use of indigenous language also helped to address the power issues between me and the participants which transformative researchers are always conscious of (Mertens, 2005; Willis, 2007). I acknowledge that before I
embarked on this study, I was aware of power relations between the participants and myself, hence I chose to introduce myself as a student who worked at the university. During the course of the study, there was evidence that children could relate to me as an elder sister rather than an outsider. Besides, since my mother tongue is isiXhosa, the language of the participants, I believe that I addressed some of the power relations that might have existed.

As an action researcher, I was facilitating the process of generating data with children. I cannot claim that they were co-researchers in both cycles of the study. However, I believe that the participative methods that I used such as drawings, drama and collage as explained in section 3.4, provided them a space to speak up. In that way I was able to “listen to their voices” (Mertens, 2009, p.59). Throughout the research process and in my report writing, I refer to the participants in this study as ‘children’, interchangeably with the term OVC. The term ‘children’ denotes anyone under the age of 18 years (UN Convention on the Rights of Children in Morrow & Richards, 1996, p: 90), and the participants in this study were children between the ages of 9-14 years. I respected the articulations of the children throughout the research process, since they helped me to learn and gain knowledge about how folktales could promote resilience and how they could be used by teachers to reach both their pastoral and academic goals.

Methodological paradigm

As noted earlier, I aimed to explore whether and how folktales could enhance resilience in OVC. In my exploratory journey, the design of the first cycle leaned more on the pragmatic methodological approach. (Creswell, 2009) since I was focusing on determining the value of folktales in encouraging resilience. Pragmatism focuses on establishing the information that the researcher needs without engaging in philosophical debates (Creswell, 2009). However, this did not cause any methodological problems, because even though the participants were merely
listening to the stories, I provided a space for them to contribute to knowledge about the resilience potential of folktales through their drawings and explanations. As such, Owano and James (cited in Mertens, 2005, p.54) refer to this methodological philosophical approach as an opportunity to “better assess the appropriate next steps to be taken”. In other words, through this approach I was able to learn, reflect and plan again based on my learning.

Based on my learning in Cycle One, the next step in my exploratory journey was to actively engage the participants in the research through activities such as creating a collage as explained in section 3.4 of this Chapter.

Methodologically, this study followed an action research design. I chose action research because I wanted to contribute to a practical problem by first, exploring whether and how folktales could promote resilience and secondly, how they could be used by teachers to reach their pastoral and academic goals. In the process of exploration, I used both visual arts based methods (Mitchell, Theron, Stuart, Smith & Campbell, 2011) such as drawings, collages and drama and text based qualitative methods (Creswell, 2007) such as focus group interviews. These methods offered the potential for my learning and offered ways to open up discussions on sensitive issues that participants might feel uncomfortable to articulate (Mitchell et al., 2011).

My choice of these methods was also encouraged by their reported alignment with African ethics (Theron, Stuart & Mitchell, 2011) and their non-reliance on linguistic skills (Mitchell, 2008). Hence, in Cycle One of this research, I asked the participants to draw and explain (in written or oral form) a picture that would show me what their lives were like. In Cycle Two, I gave the children opportunities to engage with the stories.
In this study, I recognised the views of the participants since I regarded their articulations of images as the first layer of analysis (De Lange et al., 2012), which guided my interpretation on whether folktales had a resilience enhancing potential. I was sensitive to and aware of the fact that the participants in this study were children who had been orphaned and rendered vulnerable by HIV and AIDS, therefore, I investigated prior the study, how my University Community Psychological Clinic operates so that I could refer those children who showed signs of distress during the study. I stated in my assent form that measures for referral were in place should they feel any form of distress as a result of this study. One of my objectives was to investigate how teachers could use these stories to reach both their pastoral and academic outcomes. Therefore, an action research design facilitated this process.

3.3 RESEARCH DESIGN

A research design is a plan that maps out the direction and approach in which the research problem will be investigated (Babbie & Mouton, 2002). This suggests that a person must first take into account the purpose of the research; secondly, the theoretical paradigms informing the research; thirdly, the context within which the research is carried out; and, finally, the research techniques employed to collect and analyse data (Mouton, 2001). In this study I followed an action research methodology. In the next section, I will give an overview of what action research is and why I believe it was appropriate for this study.

3.3.1 Action research

Action research is a term that has been presented, understood and used in a variety of ways across disciplines throughout literature. For example, within the action research genre, some researchers have adopted action learning, which is defined as a process in terms of which participants learn from their experiences and critically reflect and take action on those
experiences (Zuber-Skerrit, 2011). Other varieties include participatory action research (PAR) (Fals-borda, 2001; Creswell, 2005) where participants are involved in actively examining together current action in order to improve or change it. Values based action research (McNiff & Whitehead, 2006) inquiry is used by practitioner-researchers to improve their practice and to generate theory.

Zuber-Skerrit (2011) integrates participatory action learning with action research (PALAR), the only real difference between the concepts being that action research is action learning that has been validated and disseminated in the public domain. PALAR involves a way of thinking that is informed by one’s values and paradigms in order to improve practice (Zuber Skerrit, 2011). There are other terms, such as problem based learning (Schmidt, Rotgans & Yew, 2011) and appreciative enquiry (Cooperrider, Whitney, Stavros & Jacqueline, 2008) which share similar assumptions, principles and values with action research. These varieties suggest that one can approach this genre from either an outsider or insider perspective.

In this study, action research was deemed a suitable design since it is grounded in transformative ideals (Zuber-Skerrit, 2011). In other words, action research embraces research as a means of social change (Schratz & Walker, 1995) and improving practice (Koshy, 2005). Action research is defined as “a cyclical process of action and reflection on and in action which integrates theory and practice, research and development” (Zuber-Skerrit, 2011, p.6).

Literature indicates that the point of departure in action research is a concern or problem (Wood, Morar & Mostert, 2008). The major problem that I identified in literature was that teachers were not coping with the increasing number of children orphaned and rendered vulnerable by HIV and AIDS, who are in schools, since they felt they had not been trained well
for their pastoral role. I then identified from literature that cultural resources do enhance the strengths of the individuals and their communities (Ebersöhn & Eloff, 2002). I therefore explored how folktales, as a cultural resource could be used to enhance resilience in OVC. I asked the following research questions: How can folktales enhance the resilience of children who are orphaned and rendered vulnerable by HIV and AIDS? Secondly, how can folktales be used by teachers to reach both pastoral and academic goals?

Action research is cyclical (Koshy, 2005). In the first cycle, I asked the children to tell me about their lives both before and after the storytelling intervention. The purpose was simply to ascertain the resilience potential of folktales and how they could be used by teachers to reach both their pastoral and academic goals. Based on what I learnt in the first cycle, I made some changes as will be explained in Section 4.5 of the study. I could do that because the action research design allows the researcher to reflect on the first cycle in order to revise it until he achieves the outcomes that prompted the study in the first place (Koshy, 2005; Zuber-Skerrit, 2011).

Action research is participative and collaborative in nature (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000; Koshy, 2010). In the second cycle of the study, I engaged the participants in research methods that created a space for them to air their views on how folktales related to their lives and made them feel. In that way, my reflection and interpretation of what the children were saying had the potential of improving their teacher’s practice which in turn would improve their lives. As Wood, Morar and Mostert (2008) noted, participants in action research are regarded as competent and valued contributors to the inquiry. By involving the participants, the researcher is recognising that they have power to change and improve their own situation (Mertens, 2009).
In action research, research findings emerge as action develops, but these are not conclusive or absolute (Koshy, 2010). In this study, although I aimed to explore the resilience enhancing potential of folktales and investigate if they could be used by teachers for their pastoral and academic goals, I realised that there were other findings that emerged, as explained in Chapter Four, which gave me a broader sense of the context in which this study took place. In that sense, I was able to create knowledge, whilst I was on my exploratory journey (Koshy, 2010).

In this study I used an integrative action research design, which drew on elements of action learning and participatory action research. This approach was reflected in the process in which I employed a story-telling intervention and then reflected on the data generated to understand how the use of folktales could enhance resilience. I also reflected on my own learning at each stage of the research to ascertain how stories could best be used in an educational way to attain both resilience outcomes and educational outcomes. The following diagram (Figure 3) depicts my integrative action research cycles:
3.3.2 Qualitative approach

The action research design that I used in this study followed a qualitative approach. Qualitative research approaches share similar features (Babbie & Mouton, 2001; Patton, 2002; Henning et al., 2004; Creswell, 2009). Firstly, qualitative researchers investigate events, situations, experiences or concepts through conversations, and, in their natural settings
(Creswell, 2009). Secondly, they ascertain how and why humans interact with one another in order to understand and explain the world (Henning et al., 2004).

In this study, a qualitative approach seemed appropriate, especially when working with children, for a number of reasons. Firstly, quantitative studies could not by themselves “provide all the information and insight required to appreciate children’s experiences” (Darbyshire, McDougall & Schiller, 2005, p.420). Secondly, the Children’s Right agenda mentioned in the United Nations Convention on the rights of the child (cited in Darbyshire, McDougall & Schiller, 2005, p.418) advocates the involvement of children in research, as they, just like adults have the right to be consulted and heard and influence the research that is conducted with them. Thirdly, I was seeking a nuanced understanding of children’s response to the stories which I did not think could be achieved through quantitative methods.

**Characteristics of qualitative research**

In qualitative research, the focus is on developing a fuller understanding of the phenomena under study. Literature indicates that qualitative research has its own unique characteristics as discussed below.

**Interpretive nature**

Creswell (2003) regards qualitative research as generally interpretive. The assumption is that a qualitative researcher is concerned with meaning and seeks to understand people’s definition of a situation (Henning et al., 2004). In other words, as a researcher one becomes part of the situation by raising questions about how people define their situations and how they interpret the world around them (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000). The intention of the researcher is to explain the world, making sense of it by first understanding it (Creswell, 2009).
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The interpretive researcher regards the context of the research as important (Henning et al., 2004). McFarlane (2000) asserts that people create their own perceptions of their world and then act upon those perceptions. It is therefore one of the tasks of the researcher to interpret these perceptions and make meaning of them.

In the second cycle of this study, children were fully involved in activities such as recalling of the stories. They reflected on what the meaning of the stories was and how it made them feel. They also dramatised aspects that they identified as important and made visual representations of their interpretations. I then made meaning of the data based on current theory on resilience, stories and folktales.

**Contextual nature**

Qualitative research is conducted in the participants’ real settings or environments so as to enable the researcher to see their reality as it is (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Creswell, 2009). In this way, participants’ reality of their own world is shared with the researcher (Babbie, 2007). The data gathered is also naturally occurring and not forced or manipulated in experimental settings (Marshall & Rossman, 2006; Hammersley, 2007).

In this study folktales, which were used as a form of intervention in Cycle One, were collected from the community in which participants resided. Then, as part of the data generation process, these stories were told to the children at the children’s home where they lived while in Cycle Two, they used the stories interactively in the school in which they were studying. In other words, stories as a resource were found in their own environment and were told to them in a setting in which they felt most comfortable. This also allowed me to understand the specific
challenges and strengths of their home and school context, since I had to spend time in the community and school settings.

**Descriptive nature**

Qualitative research aims to provide a rich description of the phenomena from the participants’ point of view, and in the specific context (Marshall & Rossman, 2006; Creswell, 2009). This means that the experiences of participants are described in their own words, hence the responses of the participants need to be richly described (Creswell, 2003) and substantiated by theory and practical evidence (Henning et al., 2004).

In this study, *verbatim* extracts from the data were used, providing a rich description of the participants’ own words. The visual data provided in the form of drawings and pictures were highly descriptive in themselves and also interpreted through participants’ own explanations. In other words, through this data, I was able to understand how the children made meaning of the resilience potential of folktales.

**Inductive approach**

The inductive approach of qualitative research implies that data are collected and then inductively analysed (Babbie & Mouton, 2002; Creswell, 2009). This means that themes and categories that emerge from data are analysed in their raw nature without any pre-conceived ideas (Creswell, 2009). In this study, I only used theory to analyse and guide my research and I had no pre-conceived ideas about how the OVC experienced their own lives. However, I tried to bracket my ideas about the lives and experiences of OVC (Creswell, 1994). I then critically interpreted the data and discussed it by controlling against literature.
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**Exploratory nature**

Qualitative research aims to generate meaning from situations about which relatively little is known (Denscombe, 2003; Creswell, 2009). The researcher discovers more themes as more opportunities of exploring data that has emerged (Babbie & Mouton, 2001; Creswell, 2009). The aim of this study was to explore and describe whether and how folktales could be used to enhance resilience. To the best of my knowledge, folktales have not been previously used in research for this purpose, in particular with OVC; therefore, the study was exploratory in nature.

**Interactive process**

Qualitative research is also viewed as an interactive process, because of the involvement of the researcher and the participants in the research process (Creswell, 2009). The researcher is responsible for generating and analysing data, but without engaging the participants in the process, it becomes difficult to understand the data through their eyes. At the same time, the researcher needs to be aware of his/her paradigm to try and prevent their views from influencing the interpretation and the research process (Marshall & Rossman, 2006; Creswell, 2009). My reflection of the research process enabled me to engage with my transformative paradigm and prevented me from biased data engagement.

In the first phase of this study, I merely told stories to the participants without them engaging with the stories (see Chapter Four) in order to find out whether or not folktales enhance resilience. Based on my learning from this cycle, I then adapted the interventions to ensure that children interacted with the stories through different activities as is discussed in section 3.3 of the study. I also kept a journal of my experiences and thoughts on the research process, which
enabled me to critically reflect on how my own thinking and actions were potentially influencing the research.

*Myself as an instrument of data generation*

According to qualitative research principles, I as a researcher am an important research instrument (Patton, 2002; Creswell, 2009). As a research instrument, I had to be sensitised to my own prejudices, so as not to be biased during data generation and analysis (Patton, 2002). When I embarked on this study my first thoughts were that the participants would not be willing to open up about their own lives, but since I was aware of my role as a researcher, I decided to lay those fears aside. In other words, I had to lay aside pre-conceived ideas about the phenomenon under study, a process called bracketing (Creswell, 2009).

I had to embody and communicate to the participants the values of trust, non-bias and respect when interacting with them (Creswell, 2003). Hence, during the research process, I allowed the participants to make meaning of the data by explaining what their drawings meant to them. In addition, I put my assumptions about what their lives were like aside and tried not to influence them in any way.

### 3.3.3 First cycle of the action research design

My action research design was a cyclical iterative process of planning, deciding on an intervention, implementing it and then critically reflecting on the data generated (Zuber-Skerrit, 2011) to inform my learning about how folktales could be used to enhance resilience in a way that would also help to attain educational outcomes. In the first cycle, based on my literature study, I identified my research problem from literature and formulated the research questions which are outlined in section 1.5 of the study. I decided on a story telling intervention because I
wanted to ascertain the resilience potential of folktales and to investigate how teachers could use them to achieve their pastoral and academic outcomes. Before I began this research, I was aware that children could not be separated from their context, that is, children grow in social worlds in which they interact with others. Their understanding of the world is influenced by their families and school (Dunn, 2005). I therefore deliberately excluded the opinions of the caregivers, volunteers, peers or teachers who might have contributed to children’s resilience since the purpose of my study was to explore and describe whether and how folktales could promote the development of resilience in orphans and children rendered vulnerable by HIV and AIDS. However, for reflective purposes, I noted in my field notes, the informal conversations that I held with them.

*Gaining entry into the research site*

In order for me to gain entry into the research, I depended on people who were engaged in community activities and were familiar with homes where I could do the study. I therefore approached someone that I will call Zeda, a retired teacher and an active community member. I knew her beforehand; therefore it was easy for me to approach her. I explained the purpose and plan of my study to her. She agreed to be my research assistant (Christensen & James, 2000) and also suggested other people who could be recruited to assist her in identifying participants for this study and collecting stories. However, she managed only to get help from other community members to identify orphanages and children’s homes in the community (but not to collect stories). Since I was familiar with the stories, Zeda and I approached mature community members, explained the purpose of the study and then asked them to tell us folktales they could recollect that they heard as children or had been telling to their children which they believed had made them feel strong or enabled.
Since these folktales were not in written form, I asked permission to record them as they were told by the community members. Since I was also familiar with the stories, I transcribed them verbatim and then sent them for language editing and translation into English. Using the services of a qualified translator, these stories were then translated back into isiXhosa to ensure that the English translation was reliable. I consulted with a group of psychologists, social workers and educators in order to determine the resilience potential of the stories. I did not want to tell children stories that would harm them as research by Malimabe-Ramagoshi et al., (2008) revealed that some of the folktales promote negative messages.

The panel of experts then recommended 24 stories (See example of a story in Appendix G) which I used in this study. In terms of the research participants and the setting, Zeda was able to refer me to two caregivers who took care of OVC, one in a children’s home and the other one in the community. In the next paragraph I will explain the setting in which I conducted the first cycle of this study.

**Research setting**

The research took place in children’s home and a community setting. I chose to work with both the OVC who were living in the children’s home and those who lived with foster parents, since I was aware that not all OVC lived in residential care. Since Zeda knew the caregivers in these settings, she negotiated field entry into both these settings. On a particular day, Zeda informed me that she would introduce me to the caregivers and the participants to establish initial rapport. I first visited the children’s home; meeting the caregiver and the participants to explain the purpose of my study; how I would conduct the study ethically; and the amount of time I would spend with the participants should they assent to my request. After the caregiver gave her consent, she gave me permission to talk to the children. When they agreed to
take part in the study, the caregiver suggested that a suitable time for telling stories would be Sunday afternoons.

Based on observation and my informal chats with the caregiver, I became aware that this children’s home had been established by the caregiver and her husband, who had identified a need in the community. When they first started the home, they did not have any financial support, but used their own pensions and relied on other community members. However, at some stage the Department of Social Development and Welfare began to support them through foster grants. Companies in the area also sponsored the home with food, clothing, blankets and school fees. Faith-based organisations visited the home every now and then.

According to the caregiver, some of the children in her care had been abandoned by their parents and placed there by the social workers, others had been left by unknown people at the gate of their house, and they would find them there in the morning, while some children’s parents had died and their relatives felt they could not care for them. The children in this home totalled 65 in number, ranging from 0-20 years. Those who were of school going age attended local schools. They were transported by the caregiver to their various schools. In the home, I noticed that the older ones assisted with ironing, washing, cooking, cleaning and other chores. Since our story-telling sessions were held in one of the bedrooms in the home, I noticed that the children slept on bunker beds, about 10 in a room. Boys lived in a separate house from the girls. There were also Wendy houses at the back, which were used as extra rooms and study rooms. The yard was well secured and the gate was always locked. There were also volunteers who came to assist with cooking, playing with the children or helping them with their homework.
I met the children who lived with their foster parents at the home of another caregiver whom Zeda introduced to me. This particular caregiver was teaching the children in her community a traditional dance. During our informal chats, she told me that her main concern was the OVC, but since she could not turn away other children in her community she decided to teach all of them. She was also a volunteer in the school which most of the OVC attended. She helped with dishing out food during break time, and apparently that is how she learnt about these children and their situation. These children either lived with their grandparents or with aunts or uncles. Their relatives trusted this lady, as most of them would divulge their situation with the kids to her. In that way, she knew about their homes, where they came from, and what had happened to their parents.

She therefore acted as a liaison person between the children and me (and their foster parents). Altogether, 25 children formed part of the story telling group. While I was telling the stories to all the children, the caregiver assisted with identifying who were actually the participants in my study. This was very helpful in terms of analysing the data. In this particular setting, the caregiver suggested that I tell the stories on Saturday afternoons, before the dance sessions, in that way; she felt that children would be better able to attend the story telling sessions. We used to meet in her lounge. Her home was situated in a township characterised by high unemployment, poverty, crime and illiteracy. In the next section I will explain my criteria for the selection of the research participants.

**Research participants**

Sampling refers to the process used to select a portion of the population for study purposes (Maree, 2007). A sample, therefore, is a small number of people from whom data is
collected. A sample is studied in order to understand the broader population from which it was drawn, because, for example, there may not be sufficient time to study a large population.

As indicated above, the research participants in this study were OVC who lived either in a children’s home or with foster parents. I purposefully selected this sample in order to understand a population of OVC (De Vos, 2005; Creswell, 2009), however, my intentions were not to generalise my findings. In qualitative research, one can use a sample to potentially generate more accurate information than what may be obtained through studying the entire population (De Vos, 2005; Creswell, 2009). I had planned to select 30 participants who were in the same developmental stage, that is, between 9 and 11 years of age. My focus was not the number of participants but, for convenience purposes, I decided to select 30 participants, because I believed that the purposive sampling (Cohen & Manion & Morrison, 2000; Denzin & Lincoln, 2008) that I chose could inform further studies on the resilience potential of folktales. I was also aware that, attrition (Creswell, 2003) is one of the realities of research; therefore having a larger number of participants served my purpose. Since the children who were OVC and between the ages of 9-11 years were fewer than the intended number, I decided to increase the age of participants to 14 years. The selection of the research participants was based on the following:

- The research participants were isiXhosa speaking
- The participants were children orphaned and rendered vulnerable (OVC) between the ages of 9 -14
- The sample consisted of both males and females
- The participants either lived in orphanages or with foster parents
Story telling as an intervention in Cycle 1

The first intervention was just to tell stories since I was exploring if this was enough to confirm the resilience enhancing potential of folktales and whether they could be used in schools as a daily intervention which could be easily incorporated into daily activities. During the storytelling process, I did not ask the participants questions regarding the stories or let them engage in any form of activities using the stories. Although not forming relations with the participants was not an easy process, as will be explained in section 4.6, I had to, since I wanted to ascertain the potential of the folktales in enhancing resilience. My goal was not to make the participants receivers of the intervention since this would conflict with my epistemology as explained in section 3.2.1. However, since I was also learning how best to use the folktales, I used the storytelling intervention to ascertain if merely telling the stories would enhance their resilience.

Folktales, the stories told in this cycle, are described as “belonging to a body of verbal expressive culture including legends, oral history, proverbs, jokes and popular beliefs current among a particular population, comprising the oral tradition of that culture, subculture or group” (Kehinde, 2010:2). My choice of using stories was based on research that established that stories gave children insight into their experiences and enables them to base their thinking about the experiences on those stories (Engel, 2005; Heath et al., 2005; Morgan & Roberts, 2010; Rozalski, et al., 2010). Generally, children begin listening to stories as told by their parents some time before they can even tell stories on their own, hence storytelling has been regarded as a social activity (Kehinde, 2010). I was mindful of the fact that other stories, like fiction, could more or less have the same effect as the folktales, but I chose folktales, because I believed that they were a cheap resource that was accessible to both the caregivers and the teachers, since they
could be collected from the community. The example of folktales that were used in this study is attached in Appendix G.

*How folktales were used in Cycle One of study*

In Cycle One of the study, I would arrive at the children’s home or in the township where I met the children who lived with foster parents, gathered the children around in a circle in the room, told a story, such as the example above and left. I told stories to the participants in their mother tongue, isiXhosa, over 24 weekly story-telling sessions. Each story-telling session took about 5 to 10 minutes, depending on the length of the story. I told the stories without any interaction in relation to the story itself. In other words, I explained to the children prior to the story telling sessions that they would not be allowed to ask questions or give input to the story.

### 3.3.4 Second cycle of action research design

*Gaining entry and research setting*

Based on my learning from the first cycle in this study, which will be explained in Section 4.5, in the second cycle of the study, the site of the research was a school. My choice of this school was based on convenience sampling (Creswell, 2007), since I had worked with the school on another research project. Through my interaction with the teachers and the principal, I became aware that one of the challenges they were experiencing in most schools in the area was the prevalence of children who have been orphaned and rendered vulnerable by HIV and AIDS. In this school, children were involved in many programmes that aimed to provide support to all learners, such as life skills programmes that focused on health and sexuality education. Some of these support programmes were specifically aimed at the OVC.
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Having gained permission from the University, and the school, the principal referred me to a teacher who served in the OVC Support Committee at this school. This teacher facilitated communication between the children’s caregivers and the children. Eventually, she organised and selected participants to be involved in this study. I then explained to the participants the purpose of my study and how and why I would like them to be involved in this study. Details of this process are attached in Appendix A. Although my research process was aimed at the children engaging with the stories through different visual arts based methods I was aware that literature warns researchers against assuming that children in schools regard themselves as co-researchers. Burke (2008, p.27) puts it this way:

“The frame of reference that the researcher brings; that children are experts and knowledge producers does not sit comfortably alongside their own expectations of themselves as school children”.

However, in this study, although I facilitated the research process, learning as I was going, and the children actively engaged in this study hence their articulations of images are regarded as the first layer of analysis (Mitchell et al., 2011; De Lange, et al., 2012). In this particular school, all children were involved in a reading programme called ‘drop all and read’. A certain amount of time in the morning on particular days was set aside and dedicated to reading story books. The teachers were not involved in this process, as the school was encouraging a culture of reading for enjoyment amongst the learners. It was during this time that I was allowed to tell stories to this group of children.

My experience of working at this school revealed how flexible schools can be, since during the process of engaging with the stories, I needed more time and the school was able to facilitate that process by rescheduling times when children could focus on this study without disturbing their lessons and transport arrangements. This speaks to the importance of clarifying
the research process and how it would be beneficial to the participants and the school. As a result, I constantly communicated with the teacher who acted as a gatekeeper in terms of what we were doing and how the children were responding to the process. Although she was not directly involved in the research process, she communicated my messages to the participants, for instance, if I could not come on a set date. I would also explain to her the research rights of children who chose to no longer participate in the study, as she was sometimes concerned about the attrition rate of participants in the study. According to her, the participants who were in her class were showing “signs of improvement in terms of confidence since they were involved in this research process”, hence she was not happy with some of them being inconsistent in attendance (personal communication, 2011)

_Research participants_

The participants, just like those in Cycle One, were children between the ages of 9-14 years, who were isiXhosa-speakers and were identified by the school as OVC. My focus was not on the number of participants, since in qualitative research one can be flexible in terms of participants (Creswell, 2007). The teacher who acted as a gatekeeper in this research selected about 60 participants for this study, between the ages of 9-14 years. These children attended the first part of the research, the story-telling sessions, which I scheduled to take place once a week for about 10-15 minutes, depending on the length of the story.

However, by the end of the 15^{th} session, I noted inconsistencies in terms of attendance and I respected their right to withdraw. During the time of the research process, there was a general teachers’ strike in the country and the schools had to close. When the teachers returned after the strike, I realised that some of the children had withdrawn from the study. Because of the strike, the research process had to carry over to the following year. By this time, most of the
children who were initially involved in the study had gone to other high schools, since their school was a primary school while others had decided to withdraw. I completed the study with 15 children who were still at this school the following year. Based on the mega theories by Piaget, Vygostky and Bronfenbrenner (cited in Donald et al., 2010, p.55), I was aware that children in these ages could accomplish certain tasks and had certain competencies, like listening to a story, talking about the story, and writing and drawing about certain tasks.

3.4 DATA GENERATION METHODS IN STUDY

In this study, I used both the visual arts based methods (drawings, collage and drama) (Mitchell, De Lange, Moletsane, Stuart & Buthelezi, 2005; White, Bashin, Carpena-Mendez & Laoire, 2010) and conventional qualitative methods, such as focus group interviews (Creswell, 2007). Literature indicates that multiple methods work best with children as they cater for different ways in which children can express themselves (Darbyshire et al., 2005). Moreover, multiple methods have been used in research with children (Veale, 2005). In both cycles of the study, I used these methods firstly, to explore the resilient potential of folktales and secondly, to investigate how teachers could use folktales to reach both their pastoral and academic goals.

3.4.1 Visual arts based methodologies

Literature indicates that visual methodologies have historically been used in disciplines such as anthropology, sociology, cultural studies, photographic studies and media studies (Pink, 2007). In the past two decades, these methodologies have also been recognised and used in other fields, such as education (Fischman, 2001). The literature that I drew from in this study was based on the theoretical perspectives of visual culture (Rose, 2001; Pink, 2007). The literature on visual culture emphasises the importance of researchers in understanding the theoretical underpinnings of visual research methodologies and how these methods help to answer research
questions. This literature also provides the basis for how visual texts can be read and analysed (Mitchell et al., 2011).

There is recognition that a visual image can be understood and analysed through different approaches. For example, according to Rose (2001, p.5), an image becomes culturally meaningful when one understands and analyses it in terms of “how it is made, what it looks like and how it is seen”. The relationship between cultural meanings and the visual image is also noted by Pink (2007, p.117), who adds that visual images “can be constructed based on the methodology and theories that one uses in research”. Another debate highlighted in visual literature concerns how visuals should be analysed. Some debates argue for the significance of the image (Rose, 2001) and the relationship between the image and the written or verbal knowledge (Pink, 2007), whereas others advocate for the shared analysis of the image between the producer and the researcher (Mitchell et al., 2011).

Another perspective to be noted regarding visual methodologies is the consideration of time and space in which they are produced (Rose, 2001). This implies that if the same person were to be asked to produce the same visual at a different time and place, it is likely that he would feel different and therefore produce a different image than the previous one. As such, Rose (2001) suggests a critical approach to the reading of the images, which also considers the contextual knowledge of the image that is being produced.

**Visual methods**

In literature, the terms image based research, arts informed research, participatory visual research are used to refer to a group of researchers who use arts and visual methods in their research (Mitchell et al., 2011). These terms have been used interchangeably throughout
research. In this study, I chose to use the term visual-arts-based methods for ease of reference and to highlight that the participants produced visual evidence. My analysis of the data focused not only on the images or art produced but also on the words that participants used to describe their images (Veale, 2005; Mitchell et al., 2011).

My decision to use visual arts-based methods is based on literature that regards them as suitable and appropriate when working with children (Morgan, Gibbs, Maxwell & Britten, 2002; Greene & Hogan, 2005; Veale, 2005; Thomson, 2008; Mitchell, et al., 2011). The central discussion on the use of these methods with children is that they enable them to have a say in the production of knowledge in research. For example, Veale (2005) used drawings with children in Rwanda in order to find out how they felt after their exposure to war. Leitch, McKee, Barr, Peake, Black and White (cited in Leitch, 2008, p.43) have used a collage to explore young people’s views on the conflicts that took place in their country. A lot of other studies have been documented, amongst others, in books edited by Christensen and James (2000); Thomson (2008); and Theron, Mitchell, Smith and Stuart. (2011).

In recognising the importance of children in research, they are viewed as active participants in matters that concern their lives (Clacherty & Donald, 2007); therefore, the methods employed are described in literature as enabling “the voiceless a chance to tell their own stories” (Finley, 2008, p.97). Thomson (2008) feels that using visual methods give children and opportunity to tell their own stories the way they have experienced them. In this study, I used visual arts-based methods such as drawings (first and second cycle), collage and drama (second cycle) and focus group interviews (second cycle) and focus group drawings (cycle two) to complement what was not said through the images. The details on how I used these methods will be provided in the next sections.
3.4.2 Drawings as a data generation method

There is evidence in literature that drawings as a research method have been used in a number of studies (McGregor, Currie & Wetton, 1998; Guillemin, 2004; Özden, 2009; Mitchell, et al., 2011; De Lange, et al., 2012; Wood, Theron & Mayaba, 2012). These studies highlight the different approaches to and purposes of using drawings with adults, young people and children. The theoretical perspectives and how drawings have been used throughout research are beyond the scope of this study. In this section, I review literature that highlights the approaches of using drawings that are relevant to my study, as will be explained in the next sections.

Historically, drawings have been used in the field of psychology with children as an assessment tool to measure their cognitive or emotional development (Backett-Milburn & McKie, 1999; Veale, 2005). The argument against the use of drawings alone without an accompanying explanation, points to their inadequacy in revealing children’s well being since children can sometimes replicate what they see in their surroundings (Thomas & Silk, 1990) instead of revealing their inner thoughts (Backett-Milburn & McKie, 1999). However, the field of psychology is reported to counter argue by stating that, using drawings alone, is not based on investigating the views and meanings children make of their own world, but on the assumption that drawings could be an indicator of an individual’s well being.

Current literature seems to be using drawings alongside the drawer’s articulations of the image (McGregor et al., 1998; Guillemin, 2004; Özden, 2009; Kellet, 2010; Mitchell et al., 2011; Lavoie & Benson, 2011; Wood et al., 2012). This technique is commonly known as the “draw and write” approach (McGregor et al., 1998). The format of this technique is explained by Mair and Kierans (2007, p.122) as follows: First, participants respond to a researcher’s enquiry with a drawing. Second, participants are then asked to elaborate on their completed drawing through
written answers or oral answers to further describe and clarify the content of the picture. Then provide a commentary around which the researcher can build their analysis.

Studies have highlighted the different approaches to using drawings to answer a research question. For example, in a study amongst adults by Lavoie and Benson (2011), a drawing voice approach was used to explore how the community members viewed the role of local languages and culture in schools. Findings in this study revealed that talking about the drawings helped to generate enough data, as the participants engaged in a discussion that was stimulated by their drawings.

In educational research studies, drawings along with their descriptions were used among teachers to investigate whether an intervention programme on teachers affected by HIV and AIDS had made a difference (Theron, 2008). Through the write and talk or draw approach teachers in that programme were able to explore their feelings about the virus. Özden (2009) used drawings with discussions to examine primary student teachers’ ideas of atoms and molecules. Other studies used drawings to assess how adults assessed and perceived themselves (Smith, Meehan, Enfield & Castori, 2005).

In my study, I used drawings with the participating children, based on literature that claims that when working with children, drawings can help them to tap into how they understand their own worlds and experiences (McGregor, et al., 1998; Guillemin, 2004; Veale, 2005; Coates & Coates, 2006; White, et al., 2010; Mitchell, et al., 2011). The theoretical basis of using drawings with children can be traced to world-views that advocate the empowerment of young people and children in research (Christensen & James, 2000; Fals-Borda, 2001; Moletsane, Mitchell, Smith & Chisholm, 2008). This was evident in most studies with children as they used
the children’s interpretation of their drawings as the first layer of analysis (De Lange et al., 2012). In that way, the distant relations between the researcher and participants are addressed and participants have a say in the knowledge that is produced about their lives (Malindi & Theron, 2010; Bober 2011). In a study conducted by McGregor et al., (1998), drawings were used to elicit children’s views about health in schools. Findings suggested that through a draw and write technique, children were able to voice their opinions on the qualities schools needed to develop in order to promote health.

Research shows that learners who learn in a second language and therefore have not developed their academic skills in their mother tongue tend to experience difficulties in learning (Taylor & Vinjevold, 1999). Some studies document that drawings address language barriers, as they serve as a guide or scaffold for learners’ writing and thinking (Özden, 2009). This view is relevant to the majority of learners in South African classrooms, such as the participants in this study, who by virtue of learning through a language that is not their mother tongue may have limited language abilities (Taylor & Vinjevold, 1999).

Other studies on the use of drawings with children revealed how those could be used as a method to understand children’s perception of literacy (Kendrick & McKay, 2004); a method of evaluation and communication with bereaved children (Makunga & Shange, 2009); as a means of assessing what students know about HIV and Aids (Mutonyi & Kendrick, 2011); and to examine how rural children picture life (De Lange et al., 2012). All these studies suggest that drawings could be used in research as a window through which children’s views can be heard.

There are differing views on the value of the analysis of drawings in research. Some argue against the content analysis of the image as that data does not provide a full picture of what
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the image and the accompanying explanation seek to explain (Backett-Milburn & McKie, 1999). The context in which these drawings are produced is also important. For example, researchers are warned that children tend to produce what they think is acceptable in a particular context, rather than reflecting on the discourses that affect them (Backett-Milburn & McKie, 1999).

Parallel to the analysis issues regarding the use of drawings with children are the ethical issues that need to be considered. Morrow and Richards (1996), draw researchers’ attention to the power relations between the participants and the researchers. One of the issues researchers must be aware of is that generally speaking, children feel that they are obliged to engage in research and may not be bold enough to drop out of the study in fear of being reprimanded by the adults who have signed consent on his behalf. The second issue is that researchers should make sure that children’s names do not reflect on their drawings when they are disseminating results. Thirdly, researchers are warned to be sensitive to children and not ask them to draw and reflect on issues that may cause distress to them. When using the draw and write technique in my study I was aware of these caveats and their implications for research with children.

*How I used drawings in Cycle One of the study*

In Cycle One of this study, I generated data through pre and post story-telling intervention drawings and explanations as illustrated in Figure 3.2. I have already alluded to the purpose of using the storytelling intervention in earlier sections. I believe that the children’s drawings and articulations provided knowledge that I interpreted through each child’s socio ecological context (Stuart, 2004) in relation to the literature on resilience and the use of stories in general and folktales.
Figure 3.2: Cycle One of the action research process

In the process of using drawings I applied the recommendations as suggested by Mitchell et al., (2011, p.28-30):

- Before I engaged in the implementation of the study, I informed the children on the consent and assent forms that they would be expected to draw. During the writing sessions, I reminded them again of what I expected them to do.

- Next, I asked them to draw their own representations of their lives before and after the storytelling sessions (in order to gain insight into their resilience) in response to a prompt which read as follows: *draw a picture about your life as it is now. Then explain in the space provided or tell me in about 4 or 5 lines (in the language of your choice) what this picture means. Remember, how well you draw is not important.* Although this explanation was written in their drawing papers in English, I also explained to them verbally in isiXhosa.
I asked them to not copy others’ drawings as I wanted to understand their individual lives and strengths. I added that the importance of writing on their own was that I valued their opinions and I believed that their voices counted.

I handed them pencils and erasers although most of them had brought their own writing tools, including pens and crayons.

I asked them to write in their mother tongue or English, the language of learning and teaching in their school.

Since I was working with children, I allowed them to hand in their drawings when they had finished without pressurising them on the basis of time constraints. Those who preferred not to write their explanations were asked to verbalise their meanings. I decided to either write what they were saying or audio recorded their verbalisations.

After that process, I reflected on the process of using drawings with the participants and what I learnt in that process as reflected in Section 4.6.

Thereafter, I analysed the drawings alongside their explanations as the process is explained in Section 3.5.

How I used drawings in Cycle Two of the study

Since an action research design is an emerging design that allows one to change questions, ideas, interventions as one learns and reflects as one is doing research (Koshy, 2010), my use of visual methods was informed by my learning in Cycle One, as explained in Section 4.6. In Cycle Two, children engaged with the stories since I wanted to find out how a participative approach could enhance the resilience potential of children and be used by teachers as part of pedagogical activities. Since I was using a different cohort of participants in a school setting in this cycle, I first told them stories as per cycle one over a period of twenty four weeks and then went back and used the stories in a more participative way. In order to facilitate the process, children had to recall the stories (Veale, 2005) they wished to engage with.
In this cycle, drawings were used as a tool of generating data on how the participants viewed the stories. My objective was to explore the resilience enhancing potential of folktales and to investigate ways in which teachers could use folktales to reach both their pastoral and academic outcomes. As explained earlier, I replicated the process of telling stories to the participants in this cycle as in Cycle One. However, after the story-telling sessions, I facilitated a process whereby children had to engage with the stories through different activities including the use of drawings.

I also used drawings in Cycle Two of the study to complement the focus group interviews that I had with the children. The purpose of using focus group drawings was to find out what it was that children said that they could not articulate in the interviews, as will be discussed in Chapter Five of study. I drew insights from a study that complemented the focus group with visual data (Darbyshire et al., 2005) and how the visual data depicted what the interviews could not.

### 3.4.3 How I used stories in Cycle Two of the study

For each activity I held two sessions as will be explained below, then reflected on this participative approach and made conclusions on how folktales could be used to contribute to resilient research. This process was significant for future practice, training and research as will be explained later in the study. In the following section I will give an account of how I used stories in an engaging way through visual arts based approaches. Figure 3.2 illustrates the research process in this cycle of my study:
Figure 3.3: Second cycle of action research process

**Draw and write/talk**

As indicated earlier, children had to recall stories (from my initial telling of them) they would like to engage with. This introductory process meant that they had to engage in a story game (Veale, 2005) in terms of which they had to retell stories to one another in groups. Having done that, I asked them to write down the stories they had chosen in their groups and then grouped them according to the stories they chose, the ones who chose similar stories were grouped together. I then required them to interact with stories in several different ways.
Through this activity I wanted the children to draw and explain or talk whether or not the stories they had chosen made them feel strong. As indicated in the first cycle, I found drawings to be an appropriate tool to be used with children, as they are appealing and fun to do. After this story game, I gave participants the following prompt: *As individuals, draw how this story makes you feel strong or not and then write sentences or tell me in the language of your choice to explain your drawing. Remember, how well you draw is not important.*

**Purpose:** The purpose of this activity was that I wanted the children to explore whether or not folktales made them feel strong.

**Resilience:** Through the drawings and explanations, I wanted to ascertain whether stories had the potential to enhance resilience. I inferred that the resilience potential of the stories would be interpreted through the children’s drawings and explanations.

**Educational intent:** This activity also had an educational intent, as I wanted to demonstrate that children could practise writing creatively and that those whose writing abilities were still developing could be afforded the opportunity to use drawings and then explain their drawings by telling the teachers instead of writing their explanations. Also those who could write could further be probed to write more when they have drawn pictures to illustrate their point. In other words, drawings could be used in the classroom as writing or talking framework for learners in order to develop their literacy skills in writing or orally which are all pedagogical outcomes.

Children’s drawings and explanations could reveal whether teachers could use the stories to support their coping responses if they find messages that make them feel strong or help them see the needs of the children. That would mean that drawings could serve as a tool that teachers
could use to explore children’s feelings about certain issues that concern their lives and encourage their positive coping responses. In that way, they would be able to reach both their pastoral and academic goals.

Creating a collage

To further explore how folktales could increase children’s resilience, I believed that pictures from magazines or newspapers could be utilised as visual texts. Literature reports that forming a collage does not necessarily require one to be an artist (Williams, 2002; Leitch, 2008); hence I thought it would fit well with children. I chose magazines and newspapers since I viewed them as representational of how people view and feel about life (Stuart, 2007). As a former teacher, I was aware that pictures are amongst a broad range of visual texts that are used in classrooms and that people interpret the world based on what they see in magazines and other visuals (Swain, 2010). In order for the children to communicate how they felt about the folktales, I believed that pictures would stimulate their thinking.

A collage as a visual method has been used throughout research, for a number of purposes. For example, Leitch, McKee, Barr, Peake, Black and White (cited in Leitch, 2008) have used a collage and accompanying narratives to explore young people’s views about the political situation in Northern Ireland. In this study, collage was used as a data generation method, but was also used as a stimulus to provide a space for the participants to talk about the question at hand. Williams (2002) used a collage among a group of health professionals in order to explore their perception of what pain relief meant to them. Chikoko and Khanare (2012) also used a collage to identify school management teams’ responses to the needs of OVC in a rural school context.
In classrooms, texts such as magazines and newspapers are used in different ways and for a variety of purposes. For instance, pictures from magazines and newspapers are used in many ways: to explore children’s attitudes on certain issues; and as prompts to teach students how to read certain words and comprehend and recall certain information (Canning-Wilson, 1999; Edmiston, 2007).

As a former teacher myself, I remember using pictures as a way of helping the learners recall what they have learnt in the story. For instance, in my classroom, learners would sequence the story by forming a collage that represented what the story was all about. For writing purposes, I would ask the learners to write letters to their favourite characters in the story as a way of expressing how they felt about the challenges the character was facing in the story.

In this study children, engaged in creating a collage by using pictures from magazines and newspapers. Participants had to choose stories from the ones they could recall during the story games, as indicated in 3.4.1. I then grouped them according to the stories they had selected. Although each group represented a certain story, they created their collage as individuals. The process of how this activity was done is explained in Chapter Five.

My prompt was: *Find pictures from a magazine or a newspaper that depict your feelings about your story of choice. Cut these pictures and paste them on a paper to create a collage. Below the pictures/collage write or tell me in your language of choice how these pictures/collage relates to the story and how the story makes you feel and relates to your life.* I translated the prompt into IsiXhosa so that the children could access the prompt in their mother tongue as well.

*Purpose:* The purpose of using a collage was to explore whether or not it could be used by teachers as a tool to gain insight into children’s lives and whether they could use these stories
through the collage to promote the resilience of OVC in their classrooms, as part of their pastoral role. I wanted the children to use the collage as a stimulus for their thinking around stories in order to find out how they related the folktales to what they saw in the visual world around them and relate it to their lives.

**Resilience:** In terms of resilience, I wanted to explore how a collage could be used as a tool to support children’s positive coping responses. Hence I asked them to tell me how the stories related to their lives and made them feel.

**Educational intent:** This activity had an educational intent and not just a research one as the participants were building communication skills by talking in groups and sharing information with one another (Mercer, 1995), which is one of the academic goals of teachers. It also provided an opportunity to develop visual learning (Landsberg, Kruger & Nel, 2005).

**Drama to elicit discussion**

Research on language and language arts documents drama as a literacy strategy. For example, Podlozny (2000) regards drama as a teaching strategy that strengthens students’ literacy skills such as speaking, reading and writing skills, oral development and vocabulary enrichment. Obviously, before they can create their plays, they need to have engaged with the text to create characters, listen to one another, identify the plot, and decide on how they wanted to represent the play. Mei Kao et al., (2011) concur with Podlozny (2000) adding that children can be motivated to learn when they engage in drama.

The motivation to learn was evident in a study where learners had language barriers (Edmiston, 2007). In a study conducted by Rothwell (2011), the participants who were additional language learners were able to participate in class better when they were involved in drama.
Rothwell, argues that the integration of drama in additional language classrooms would enable learners to converse in an authentic way and also develop their language fluency as they would not be limited by the constraints of grammatical structures. Using drama engages learners as they become active participants in their own learning (O’Day, 2001) as the teachers need to only be there to guide them. Drama has been used in participatory research (Govender & Reddy, 2011) as a means of exploring possibilities and to measure the impact of certain social issues such as HIV and AIDS with children and the community. In this study drama was used as a tool for children to talk about how they experienced diagnosis and other related challenges. After their drama, they were asked to draw and write what their scenes represented.

In this study, children engaged with stories through drama (Podlozny; 2000; Mei Kao et al., 2011, Rothwell, 2011). Before children were engaged in a drama, I asked them choose another story that they would like to work with. I then grouped those who chose similar stories and asked them to complete a worksheet that served as a framework for the creation of their play, to develop teamwork skills and creativity (Weih, 2005) (Appendix H). In this framework, they had to write the title of the story, the characters in the story, the setting, and the plot and how the story ended. I aimed to use this framework as a space through which they could plan their drama. After their drama presentations, I asked them the following questions: Which characters did you use in your drama and why? How do these characters make you feel? Afterwards, they drew pictures of the characters they created and wrote explanations as to how those characters made them feel.

Purpose: In this process I did not focus on the visual data, but on the discussions that led the children to produce such drama. I focused on the characters they were going to choose for their plays. I asked these questions, based on the notion that when a person is listening to a story,
he or she normally regards the content of the story as not related to him/herself but the characters in the story (Arad, 2004; Kelin, 2007), hence it becomes less threatening to talk about the problems that affect him/her.

Resilience: Since folktales generally exemplify, amongst other things heroism, bravery, courage and other moral lessons, I wanted to find out if children related the characters to their own lives which would give me insight into the resilience enhancing potential of folktales and how teachers could use them to reach their pastoral goals.

Educational Intent: Stories have characters, so drama could offer teachers a tool to initiate a discussion around those characters and what children see as the positive messages that are portrayed by such characters and why they would like to be associated with such characters. A discussion would enable the children to develop their literacy skills since they would need to talk, think, discuss and argue. By interpreting what children are saying, teachers could develop actions to support the emotional needs of these children.

3.4.4 Focus group interviews

Much research with children has used focus group interviews, since they are viewed as means of exploring what children think, perceive and feel about the issue that is being studied (Green & Hart; 1998; Heary & Hennesy, 2002; Morgan et al., 2002; Darbyshire et al., 2005). For instance, Green and Hart (1998) used focus groups with children between 7 and 11 years of age to find out what they understood about accidents and the prevention thereof. Their aim was to use the findings to develop an educational programme that could be used in schools as a guide for children to avoid accidents. Morgan et al., (2002) used focus group interviews with children between the ages of 7-11 years to understand their views and experiences of living with asthma,
while Darbyshire et al., (2005) used focus groups with children between 4 and 12 years of age to articulate their perspectives on physical activity.

I am aware that in literature, the term focus group interviews is used interchangeably with focus group discussions, since the aim of a focus group is not to have individuals seated in a group, but participants who can engage in a discussion within a group (Morgan et al., 2002). I also noted the debate on whether the interactive group aspect of focus groups should be overlooked when working with children (Carey & Smith, 1994; Hyden & Bulow, 2003). Literature also warns against using focus group data to generalise findings across the population (Heary & Hennesy, 2002) of the participants. This view is based on the observation made by Lewis (cited in Heary & Hennesy, 2002, p.48) that in focus group interviews, children are more likely to provide responses that have been provided by an earlier speaker, or may not to respond when they feel discomfort about a certain question. Literature indicates that focus group interviews help the researcher to understand the issue at hand from the perspective of the participants (Morgan, 1997; Heary & Hennesy, 2002).

In my study, I conducted two focus group interviews with twelve children between the ages of 9-14 years. Focus group interviews were a data generation method used in this study. I used them also to provide a space for the participants to reflect on the process of storytelling and engaging with stories in the second cycle of research. I chose to do the interviews last, since at that time I was convinced that after a year of interacting with the children, they were used to my presence in their lives. I noticed that they had shifted from calling me ‘Miss’, which is the usual term of address for a teacher, to calling me ‘Sisi’ which is a title that is associated with being an older sister or a sign of respect for an older sister. However, I was aware that the participants still regarded me as an authority figure, since I was older than them and I was the one who was
facilitating the process of engaging with stories. However, in order to balance the power relations, I listened to their views, interacted with them on personal basis, asked about their progress in class and appreciated their interest in the study.

I purposefully selected children to form two groups, each group consisting of six children, selected from each of the drama groups. In my selection I was guided by literature which reports on how focus group interviews can be conducted with children (Morgan, 1997; Heary & Hennesy, 2002). I made sure that the group members were roughly of similar age. By this time I knew who were classmates and who friends were so I decided to vary my selection. Overall, I had selected eight girls and four boys, which were the only boys in the group. On the day of the interview, ten participants who attended the session: six girls and four boys. On this particular day, no-one knew who was going to be in which focus group. I decided to divide the children into two groups of five, but one of the girls requested to be in the other group. Since I wanted the children to own the process and feel that I recognised and respected their views, I allowed this participant to join her group of choice. Moreover, since action research is an emerging design, which enables a researcher to reflect in each stage of the research process (Koshy, 2005), I decided to honour the choice of the participant. Ultimately, I had two focus groups made up of 4 participants and 6 participants each as reflected in Appendix E.

Activities before conducting focus group interviews with children are recommended (Hill, Laybour & Borland, 1996; Hannersy & Heary, 2005; Einarsdottir, Dockett & Perry, 2009). Before the interviews, I asked the children to listen to a previous recording of their retelling of the stories. I wanted to create a relaxed environment so that they would not feel intimidated by the activity. At this stage of the research process, I was confident that the children would cooperate fully during the interviews.
Literature warns against the social context in which one conducts interviews, as it influences how children respond (Scott, 2000). I was aware of the fact that as much as most children were used to sitting in their group settings in class, they were also more familiar with the initiation, response, feedback (IRF) method of answering questions whereby the teacher would initiate a question, gets a response and a teacher gives feedback (Mercer, 1995; Wescott & Littleton, 2005). Therefore, I aimed to probe, clarify my questions and check if the children understood the questions and could respond to them.

Literature on conducting focus group interviews suggests the use of focus group drawings to complement the interviews (Darbyshire et al., 2005). In that way, one could find out what the children could not articulate in their focus group interviews. Based on that view I also planned to use focus group drawings.

In the focus group discussion, the major question for discussion was how the children felt about the process of data generation employed in Cycle Two. I asked them the following question: What do you want to tell me about what you experienced during the story telling sessions, story game, drawings and explanations, pictures you selected from magazines and the drama? I asked questions based on each of these activities separately. I stimulated the discussions by taking them through each stage of data generation, because I wanted to find out what their overall impression was since they participated in the data generation and whether there was any educative value of participating in this study. When I conducted the focus group interviews, I had already conducted the first layer of analysis of their drawings (Guillemin, 2004), which focused on their explanations of the drawings, and I identified some common themes, so the questions that I asked them in this focus group interview also served to verify
whether my interpretations were aligned to these. After each section, I provided a summary to check whether it addressed the issues on which they were reflecting upon.

3.4.5 Field notes

Throughout the research process (Cycles One and Two), I kept a journal for writing field notes (Creswell, 2009; McMillan & Schumacher, 2010; Niewenhuis, 2010), as a way of capturing my observations. The purpose of doing observations was to capture any moment that seemed to be interesting during this process, in case that might be useful in data generation and analysis. According to Creswell, (2009, p.79), field notes serve a crucial role in qualitative methods, as they “allow the researcher to reflect on moments that may seem to be insignificant in the data collection process”. I chose to write descriptive field notes (Mulhall, 2003), as I believed that they would assist in my data generation and analysis. I did my reflections and dated them after each contact with the participants. In addition to what I observed from their behaviour, I mostly recorded my feelings and perceptions of the process. However, for the purposes of this study, the children’s perceptions were fore-grounded and my perceptions as reflected in the journal were used to provide valuable information that I regarded as relevant for the study.

3.5 DATA ANALYSIS

In qualitative research, the process of data analysis focuses on understanding, clarifying and explicating data (De Vos, 2005; Braun & Clarke, 2006; Creswell, 2009). Creswell, (2009) states that the analyses and description of data should take place simultaneously with data generation. Furthermore, in the process of data analysis, text must be reduced in order to generate themes and categories (Creswell, 2009). In other words, data analysis can be an inductive process in which patterns and themes emerge from the data collected rather than using the data to prove a pre-determined theory or hypothesis (Creswell, 1994; De Vos, 2005;
Creswell, 2009). When it is a deductive process, it means data is analysed from the researcher’s theoretical interests (Braune & Clarke, 2006).

The data that I generated in this study consisted of visual data (drawings, and collages,), transcriptions of children’s discussions based on their drama and focus group transcripts. I also had field notes as data to provide information relevant to the study. In my analysis of the visual data I drew from different theoretical perspectives, as highlighted by Rose (2001) and Mitchell et al., (2011). In her book Rose (2001) highlights different ways in which data can be analysed, such as through compositional interpretation, content analysis, semiology and discourse analysis. Although Rose critiques each of these approaches, she highlights that the common denominator in analysing visual data is for one to identify what is being shown by the image, and can be interpreted in relation to the research question and the objectives of the study.

There are debates on the analysis of visual data in terms of whether one should only focus on the image itself, or the image and the cultural significance of that image, or the meanings of an image, or the language that people use to interpret the image (Rose, 2001; Pink, 2007). Another form of data analysis is what Mitchell et al., (2011) refer to as shared analysis. In this form, the description of the image by the participants is regarded as the first layer of analysis and the researcher’s interpretation of the image in relation to his research question is regarded as the second layer of analysis. Thematic analysis on the other hand is a “method for identifying, analyzing and reporting themes within data” (Braune & Clarke, 2006, p. 6).

In this study I chose not to use content analysis, because I was not interested in the quantitative interpretation of the data. However, there are elements of content analysis that I drew from, such as “reading the text without pre-conceived knowledge, familiarising myself with
the text, forming categories, and identifying key themes from the data” (Rose, 2001, p.55). The critique around the use of this data analysis approach is that it does not allow for reflexivity and that it assumes that different viewers will see the same image the same.

Semiology as an approach to data analysis did not assist me in analysing data, since it focuses on the “image itself as the site of meaning” (Rose, 2001, p.69). Since in this study I wanted to foreground the voices of the participants, my interpretation of the images counted as a reflective activity and not as data. This suggests that semiology as a data analysis tool is valuable if the study does not seek to find out how the participants view the issues that are being researched.

Data analysis in this study

In this study, I adopted a thematic analysis of data (Braune & Clarke, 2006). As indicated earlier, in this study I utilised a triangulation approach (Patton, 2002; Creswell, 2009) whereby I used more than one method to generate data (drawings, collage, discussions, interviews), as a means of strengthening my study’s credibility and validity. In the first cycle of the study, my data was comprised of pre and post intervention drawings whereas in the second cycle I used drawings and collage (with accompanying explanations); discussion (following a drama activity) and interview transcripts. Since I had different data sets, I analysed them separately and then identified common categories and codes that emerged throughout data. In the first cycle, my themes were based on the comparison of pre and post intervention data whereas in the second cycle I identified themes that spoke to data that I generated in this cycle. During the research process I wrote field notes which I used to confirm my findings and strengthen their credibility.
In my analysis of images and their explanations, I was guided by the shared analysis approach (Mitchell et al., 2011 p 25; De Lange et al., 2012). This approach entails that the analysis of an image should be based on what the participants provide as explanations for their images. This means when I read the drawings and collage I regarded their accompanying explanations as the first layer of analysis (Mitchell et al., 2011; De Lange et al., 2012). With regard to the focus group interview and discussion transcripts (following a drama activity), I followed suggestions by Denscombe (2003), De Vos (2005) and Creswell (2009) and listened to the interviews and discussions, and then transcribed them verbatim.

I translated all data that were written in isiXhosa to English. I used the services of a critical reader trained in English and isiXhosa to verify my translations. I then read and familiarized myself with the data. The data that I generated in the first cycle were drawings and their accompanying explanations. Since I aimed to compare my pre and post-intervention drawings, during the first cycle, I first grouped the pre-intervention drawings and explanations according to their semantic content (Braun & Clarke, 2006) and compared them to their corresponding post drawings and explanations. Secondly, I read the data through the social ecological theoretical lens of resilience (Ungar, 2011) since I wanted to determine whether my data would shed light on the context in which participants in this study lived which may either enhance or hinder their resilience. I was particularly interested to see if there was any change in terms of how they described their lives after the story telling intervention. I then coded my data and themed my codes (See appendix I) and in the process I was guided by my knowledge of the resilience theory.

Just like in the first cycle, in my analysis of images that I generated in the second cycle I was mostly concerned about the explanations that accompanied them (Mitchell et al., 2011; De
Lange et al., 2012). I also familiarised myself with the data by reading it over and over again. I then identified similar categories and codes that emerged across these various data sets and then themed them (Denscombe, 2003; Braune & Clarke, 2006; Creswell, 2009). Similarly to the first cycle I was guided by my knowledge of the resilience framework. It is important to note that when I read the focus group drawings, I wanted to find out what it was that they mentioned in their drawings that was not mentioned in their interviews.

In both cycles, in my presentation and discussion of the themes, I used *verbatim quotes* (Creswell 2009) from the participants’ explanations and my field notes to ensure the trustworthiness of the data. I interpreted this data in relation to the resilience theoretical framework and literature on the use of stories, paying particular focus to how this data answered my research questions. I also presented my data using what Marshall and Rossman (2006, p. 157) refer to as “telling the story”. Patton (2002, p.480) defines the interpretation of data as “a means of attaching significance to what was found, making sense of the findings, offering explanations, drawing conclusions, extrapolating lessons, making inferences, considering meanings and imposing order”. I then wrote an argument which explained how folktales can enhance the resilience of OVC and how teachers could use them to reach both their pastoral and academic goals. In the next section, I explain the process that I used provide

### 3.6 LITERATURE CONTROL

In this study, I used literature to position the study and support my rationale. I also confirmed the findings with literature and used literature control inductively (Creswell, 1994). I identified similarities and differences between the themes and subthemes and existing literature in order to evaluate the significance and meaning of the findings.
3.7 MEASURES TO ENSURE TRUSTWORTHINESS

Trustworthiness refers to the fit between the emergent data, the participants’ experiences, and the observed phenomena (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). As this study uses qualitative methods, I employed Lincoln and Guba’s (cited in Mertens, 2005, p.256) components of trustworthiness, and Mills’s (2007) criteria for the validity of an action research study. The four components of trustworthiness that parallel the criteria for truthfulness in qualitative research are credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability. In this study, I employed these criteria in the following ways:

I verified the credibility of the findings through triangulation (Patton, 2002) since I used more than one data collection method. I analysed data from different data sets to see if the same patterns kept on emerging. I also verified my data by going back to the children to confirm my findings. In other words I used member checks on the accuracy of my data (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). The credibility of the study was established through the participative methods that were employed, as the participants contributed to knowledge on the resilience enhancing potential of folktales.

Transferability means that one’s findings will be useful to others in similar situations, with similar research questions or questions in practice (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). In this study, transferability was made possible through a detailed description of the research process and methods. According to Creswell (2009), the researcher is not concerned with proof that the findings are transferrable, but with providing sufficient descriptive data to make such claims. In my description, I made reference to resilience as my theoretical framework to show how it guided my analysis of data. In addition, I described my findings in a way that would clearly answer my research questions.
To ensure confirmability, I checked whether the findings of the study could be confirmed by another. I then used my reflective journal (that I constantly kept) and confirmed the data in the journal with the results of the primary data.

To ensure dependability, I provided an account of the two cycles of action research that I used in this study. I provided reasons why I changed the settings. The stories that I used during the study will be disseminated to the contexts in which the participants came from. The first cycle of this study required that I simple tell the story to the participants whilst maintaining a polite distance, in this way the dependability factor in terms of establishing relations with the participants was challenged hence in the second cycle the participants engaged with the folktales in order to gain insight on whether or not folktales had a resilience enhancing potential.

I also followed Mill’s (2007, p. 449) four questions on the validity of an action research study. He calls researchers to respond to the following questions:

- Have the multiple perspectives of the individuals in the study been accurately represented? In this study, participants engaged in creative methods of data generation such as drawings as means of allowing the participants to give voice to what their drawings intended to convey (Theron, 2008).

- Did the action emerging from the study lead to successful resolution of the problem? The findings of the study may help to provide teachers with ways in which they could support the resilience of the OVC in a way that would also reaches education outcomes.

- Was the study conducted in dependable and competent manner? The measures to ensure trustworthiness are explained in Section 3.6 of this chapter.

- Were the results of a study a catalyst for action? Yes, one of the objectives of my study was to investigate ways in which teachers could use folktales and integrate
them into the curriculum. Findings suggested insights in which teachers could use for this purpose. As part of my dissemination strategy, I would be able to train teachers (and caregivers) on how they could use the stories in their own contexts.

3.8 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

In this study I employed a number of ethical principles as outlined in Morrow and Richards (1996) and further expounded in Swartz (2011). Firstly, the purpose of my study was to explore and describe whether and how folktales could enhance resilience. My research questions were as follows: How can folktales promote resilience in OVC? How can teachers use folktales to reach both their pastoral and academic goals? In order to obtain knowledge that would answer my questions, I relied solely on the data generated with the participants. The purpose and the research questions were in the interest of the children in that if folktales could be used to enhance resilience, it would mean, that teachers (and caregivers) could have a resource to encourage children’s positive coping responses.

Prior permission to conduct this research was granted by the Education, Research, Technology and Innovation Committee (ERTIC) of the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, through the “Read me to Resilience” project, after an application was made for approval by the Research Ethics Committee according to the Committee’s standard protocol was made. Before then, I had to get permission from the caregivers and the participants. In order to gain consent, I approached the gatekeepers at the children’s home, the community and the school. I first explained the purpose of my study, the research process, what the participants would be doing and how this study would be beneficial to the participants (see Appendix A).

At the children’s home, the caregiver gave the consent as she acted as the parent of the participants since they had been placed under her care by the Department of Social Development
and Welfare. The gatekeeper of the children who lived with foster parents felt that she would speak to their foster parents on my behalf as she had a personal relationship with them. She then called me to confirm that they had given her permission to consent on their behalf. As explained in Section 3.4.2, the gatekeeper supported the children in her community by teaching them a cultural dance, therefore, the community members trusted her. In schools, although I asked the gatekeeper to send the consent form to the children’s parents, she felt that she would consent in loco parentis. However, she mentioned that the school would talk to the foster parents of these children before I could gain their consent.

As much as the gatekeepers had given their consent, I was aware of the importance of the children’s assent to the research. Hence, before I embarked on the research process, I had to talk to them about my research purpose and how it would benefit them. I explained to the children that I would tell them stories over 24 weeks, one story, a week, at a time that they and the caregivers felt was appropriate. I added that they would be expected to draw and explain/tell me about their lives before and after the story telling sessions. Although, they shared their concerns of not being experts at drawings, I assured them that I was not concerned with how well they could draw and that I would use pseudonyms throughout the research to ensure their privacy and anonymity. I assured them that I did not mean to shame them by attaching names to their drawings and that I respected their views as they would be telling me about themselves. I also explained that people who would learn about the results of this study would be themselves, the teachers and caregivers, and also the broader research community since I was going to present my findings in conferences and articles.

I explained to them that they had the right to withdraw from the study at anytime. I was aware of literature that cautions about this clause in ethics. Critique around the ethics of doing
research with children cautions that most of the time children feel obliged to be involved in research especially in a school setting since they believe that it is compulsory (Backett-Milburn & McKie, 1999). Hence I emphasized to the children that as much as I would love to hear their opinions on the matter that I was investigating, they had the right to withdraw at anytime and that they should not be apprehensive about such decision.

Since the participants in my study were children, but notably children that were orphaned and rendered vulnerable by HIV and AIDS, I was aware that asking them to talk about their lives might bring out unpleasant memories. The data generation process also employed the use of focus group interviews, so I was aware that research warns against asking children questions that could cause them distress (Darbyshire, et al., 2005), hence, I assured them that if by any means, they felt emotionally affected by the research process, I had made arrangements for them to receive help and counselling. However, throughout the research process, there were no cases where children expressed that they had been emotionally affected, despite the fact that I constantly reminded them of this clause. In addition, the gatekeepers also did not indicate any of those concerns during our informal chats.

I conducted this study using the first language of the participants, isiXhosa, which is also my mother tongue. I explained the process of the study to both the gatekeepers and the children in isiXhosa. I allowed the children to write or talk in the language of their choice, since English was also used as a language of learning and teaching in their schools. The data that I presented in this study was in the language in which it was written. For the purpose of a wider audience, I translated the children’s articulations into English and used the services of my colleagues who are fluent in both English and isiXhosa to verify my translations.
As part of the data generation methods, the children had to create collages by cutting pictures from magazines and newspapers. On consulting my colleagues, who had used this method before, I became aware that magazines were a public entity and that I had to be careful in using these pictures since my data would be disseminated in public domains. Although I admit that using pictures of prominent people did not sit well with me, however, since the children were the ones who chose the pictures to which they related the folktales, I argue I was not in control of which picture should or should not be used. This calls for research on the ethics of the use of a collage as a research method.

My aim in this study was to make sure that throughout the research process, I honoured ethical considerations. However, I was also aware that “ethical dilemmas could arise at any stage of the research process (Morrow & Richards, 1996, p.95; Swartz, 2011, p.48). Methodologically, I believe that choosing both the visual arts based and conventional methods was an “ethical strategy” (Swartz, 2011, p.50), since I aimed to engage the participants in activities that would be enjoyable to them. The focus group interviews confirmed that these activities were indeed enjoyable and in my field notes I also noted that the children seemed interested in the drawings, collages and drama.

In the first cycle of my action research design, I aimed to ascertain if merely telling the stories, would promote resilience and whether folktales could be used by teachers to reach both their pastoral and academic goals. I therefore deliberately planned to keep a polite distance from the participants, since relationships and attachments could promote resilience (Kumpfer, 1999). However, in Chapter Four, the struggle between the ethics of research and the pragmatic methodological approach that I employed in this cycle will be outlined. This was ethically
challenging to me as a researcher, and based on my learning in this cycle, I built relationships with the participants, in the second cycle.

Power relations between the participants and the researchers are an ethical strategy (Swart, 2011). In this study, I made sure that I respected the views of the participants as reflected in their articulations of drawings or collages. Hence, I regarded these articulations as the first layer of data analysis (Mitchell et al., 2011). Throughout the study, I refer to the participants as children interchangeably with the term OVC, as a way of showing that my focus was not on labeling them but on respecting who they were as human beings. The term ‘children’ denotes anyone who is under the age of 18 years (UN Convention on the Rights of Children in Morrow & Richards, 1996, p.90). Based on my learning in the first cycle of the study, I made sure that I was available should any of the participants feel that they needed someone to talk to, however, none of them did. I noted in my field notes that the children initially referred to me as ‘miss’. However, as time went on, they called me “Sisi” (older sister). To me this meant that they felt comfortable around me and that I was not portraying myself as a threat to them. The fact that we could relate in the same language made it easier for them to ask for clarification at any aspect of the data generation methods.

I therefore believe that in this study I addressed the ethical issues of working with children.

3.9 SUMMARY OF CHAPTER

In this chapter, I described my methodological choices and paradigm and explained how they informed this study. I then elaborated on my research design and how I generated data throughout the study. Thereafter, I elaborated on the measures that I took to ensure the
trustworthiness of the study. I then explained the ethical issues that I considered relevant and significant to this study. In the next chapter I will present and discuss the findings of Cycle One and reflect on my learning from this cycle of my action research study.
CHAPTER FOUR
FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION: CYCLE ONE

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In Chapter Three, I described my paradigm and methodological choices and explained how they informed this study. I then elaborated on my research design and how I generated data throughout the study. Subsequently, I elaborated on the measures that I took to ensure the trustworthiness of the study. Thereafter, I explained the ethical issues that I considered relevant and significant to this study.

In this chapter I will first present my research findings regarding the first cycle via a brief overview of the first cycle of research. Secondly, I will discuss themes that emerged from the raw data and support my interpretation of the data by verbatim quotations from the written and oral responses of the participants and visual images from the drawings, and incorporate extracts from my field notes. Then, I will control these findings against literature on resilience and the use of stories, in order to support my research findings. Finally, I will discuss my learning and reflections from the first cycle of the research study.

4.2 OVERVIEW OF CYCLE ONE OF THE ACTION RESEARCH PROCESS

The aim of this study was to explore and describe whether, and how, folktales could be used to enhance resilience in children who have been orphaned and rendered vulnerable by HIV and AIDS (OVC). In order to achieve this aim, I conducted two cycles of an action research process, as outlined in Chapter Three. In this study, based on the literature, I identified my
research problem, as explained in Chapter One, and formulated the research questions as follows:

- **How can folktales encourage the resilience of children orphaned and rendered vulnerable by HIV and AIDS?**

- **How can folktales be used by teachers to reach both pastoral and academic goals?**

I then planned for intervention, as described in Section 3.3.3 of Chapter Three. In the first cycle, I employed the use of storytelling in order to find out if mere telling of the stories would confirm the resilience potential of folktales so that they could be used in schools as a time and resource effective intervention on a daily basis. To evaluate the effectiveness of the stories, I employed a pre/post-time series design (Leedy & Omrod, 2005). As indicated in Chapter Three, I asked the children to respond to the following prompt:

\[\text{Draw a picture about your life as it is now. Then explain in the space provided or tell me in about 4 or 5 lines (in the language of your choice) what this picture means. Remember, how well you draw is not important.}\]

As explained in the methodology chapter (Section 3.5), I compared pre and post intervention of all the drawings and their written or oral explanations and interpreted the data by controlling it against literature on the resilience and the use of stories. Since action research is an emerging design, that enables a researcher to reflect in each stage of the research process (Koshy, 2005), I asked the children to tell me their favourite stories, by writing them on pieces of paper as individuals, without discussing their preferences with others. The stories that were common from all participants were the following: *Ntulube, The boy and the goat, Sinoxolo* and *Bhuzane, the bee.*
4.3 PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF DATA

Literature alludes to the difficulties and challenges of describing change using arts based methods (Stuart & Smith, 2011; Wood, Ntaote & Theron, 2012). In this study drawings and accompanying explanations were a window through which I could gain insight into the resilience enhancing potential of folktales. The data that I will present in this chapter is based on the pre- and post- intervention drawings and accompanying explanations that I generated during this cycle of research. I analysed pre- and post- intervention data (drawings and explanations) looking for signs of resilience or lack of it after the story telling intervention.

I found that post intervention; there was an indication of a more positive sense of self in the children’s drawings and explanations, as well as more emphasis on their relations with their peers. I will present the children’s explanations as they are, without any editing and in the language that the children chose to use. I translated the explanations given in IsiXhosa into English. I am aware of the danger of losing meaning in translation (Denzin, Lincoln & Smith, 2008), therefore, I used the services of a critical reader who is trained in isiXhosa to verify my translations. As indicated in Chapter Three, all the participants from the foster home and two from the children’s- home, withdrew from the study as it will be explained in section 4.5 of this chapter. The data that I provide in this chapter will be from the children who completed the study.

4.3.1 What has changed since telling the stories?

Theme 1: An indication of a more positive sense of self

The children’s drawings and accompanying explanations suggest a more positive sense of self after the story-telling intervention (Wood, et al., 2012). Literature shows that there are many constructs of a sense of self, such as self-concept, self-esteem, self-efficacy and identity
(Schaffer, 2010). These constructs seem to be linked to each other, making it difficult to discuss them separately. I believe they all contribute towards a positive sense of self, and therefore chose this term to name the theme. In this section I present evidence that indicates that following the storytelling intervention, there was evidence of positive change in terms of how children described themselves and their lives in comparison to their pre intervention drawings and explanation.

The data indicated that after the story telling intervention, the children’s drawings and accompanying explanations revealed a more positive self-esteem. Self-esteem is described as “the evaluation which an individual makes of himself and indicates the extent to which the individual believes himself to be capable of achieving goals”. (Schaffer, 2010, p. 311). The following examples illustrate this point:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre intervention data</th>
<th>Post intervention data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ndidlala netshomi yami. Sidlala ibhola. (I am playing with my friend. We are playing soccer)</td>
<td>Bendidlala ibhola. Bendincumile ndidlala ibhola. Ndidlala irestlingi. Ndithanda irestlingi. Ndiwine ikhaphu. (I was playing soccer. I was smiling playing soccer. I play wrestling. I love wrestling. I won a cup)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 4.1: Example of a more positive self esteem

In both the pre- and the post- intervention data, participant 1 drew himself in the soccer field playing a soccer ball with a friend. His accompanying explanation confirms the action in the images. However, in the post- intervention data, he drew himself lifting up his hands, a smile on his face, and in his explanation, he added another sport activity, wrestling which he apparently loves. He mentioned that he won a cup.

Participant 8 in Figure 4.2 drew herself in both the pre- and post- intervention drawings. However, in the post- intervention drawing she added a ball and a sun. In terms of her explanation, her drawing was meant to say she was laughing as she liked to laugh a lot. In her post- intervention explanation, she introduced her name, what she liked to do and her academic competencies.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre intervention data</th>
<th>Post intervention data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><img src="image1" alt="Pre intervention drawing" /></td>
<td><img src="image2" alt="Post intervention drawing" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bendihleka mna. Ndiyathanda ukuhleka</td>
<td>My name is N. In my picture I was playing ball. In the house where I live I like doing some hand things. I like reading lovely books and I like playing school in the house and I got seven awards 3 EMS, 2 maths, 2 Xhosa.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was laughing. I like to laugh a lot.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Figure 4.2: Example of a more positive self esteem

The examples I provided above, indicate that these children were developing well. In both images, participant 1 drew himself playing soccer. Literature mentions that activities such as play, music and dance contribute to the healthy development of a child, as these activities promote positive self-esteem in children (Cluver & Gardner, 2007). Moreover, children who display feelings of humour, satisfaction and happiness, as did participant, 8, are regarded as psychosocially well developed (De Witt & Lessing, 2010).

Self-esteem is also shaped by the people around an individual (Skodval & Andreoulli, 2011). Generally, the data generated in this cycle of the study, indicate that the children had good social capital (Swartz, 1997) at the home as they were exposed to a number of resilience enhancing factors such as a good relationship with their caregivers (Van Rensburg & Barnard, 2005); positive relationships with their peers (Boyden & Mann, 2005; Theron & Malindi, 2010); and playing sport (Luthar & Zelazo, 2003). In my field notes, I noted that they had access to material resources, such as TV and radio; had support from community members, who assisted them with their homework and attended social events such as birthday parties, hosted by the community members. Faith based organisations also provided spiritual encouragement to these children. In other words, their self-esteem was shaped by a number of other variables over which I had no control.

However, resilience is not a fixed characteristic of an individual that cannot be developed (Roosa, 2000). The participants revealed what they were capable of doing, only after the storytelling intervention. Hence, I argue that the folktales had an influence on their self-esteem, as they described what they were capable of doing (playing more sport codes, reading books,
doing handy things and playing pretend school) and achieving (winning a cup and getting awards for academic competence) after listening to the stories. This detailed information was not revealed and evident in their pre-intervention data.

The psychological impact of stories cannot be underestimated (Lamwaka, 2004). Literature recognises that stories enable children to make sense of their world as they link the plot of the story into their own lives (Pehrsson, 2005; Rozalski et al., 2010; Brooks & Sorin, 2011). Stories also have a way of influencing children’s thoughts: children tend to put themselves in the position of the characters which influences their attitudes and perspective (Zin & Nasir, 2007).

The stories that were chosen by the children as their favourites were those that showed the characters using their inner strengths to cope in their adverse circumstances. The story of Ntulube, for instance, is of a boy who was very close to his cow. When the cannibals stole this cow, they soon realised that, without the boy, the cow would not cooperate. The boy demonstrated throughout the story his own capabilities, such as singing and giving instructions to the cow, which the cannibals did not possess. In the end, the boy managed to save the cow, based on his musical skill. In other words, the risk to which this boy was exposed, that of losing his cow and source of food, was buffered by his high self-esteem and belief in his capacity to entice the cow to obey him. Resilience can “heighten self-esteem” (Benetti & Kambouropoulos, 2006, p.351). Therefore the resilience enhancing potential of stories might have influenced a more positive sense of self in the participants. Individuals who have a healthy self-esteem are regarded as resilient (Theron, 2004; Van Rensburg & Barnard, 2005). This sense of self-esteem facilitates the child to experience hope, agency and a feeling of self-control which are also strong indicators of resilience (Masten & Wright, 2010).
The data that I generated in this cycle also suggest evidence of a more positive self-concept in the participants after the story intervention (Wood et al., 2012). Self-concept is a multidimensional construct which also includes self-esteem, self-image and self-efficacy (Baumester, 1999). Self-concept is defined as the person’s conception of himself (Bong & Skaalvik, 2003; Schaffer, 2010). The following examples illustrate how the participants described their lives before and after the story intervention, which led me to interpret their articulations to mean that folktales had a positive influence on their self-concept.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre intervention data</th>
<th>Post intervention data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ndizoba le picture ngoba ndandikhumbula utata wam ngoba wandishiya kodwa uThixo wayenam empilweni yam wandinika abazali. (I am drawing this picture because I was missing my father because he passed on but God was with me in my life and gave me parents)</td>
<td>I feel so happy. I look beautiful. I enjoy staying here. My hair looks beautiful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

139
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre intervention data</th>
<th>Post intervention data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>My heart is sore and bleeding inside. I will not let it bleed inside. I want it to be alright, that’s why I was crying. My heart was not alright. Participant 18</strong></td>
<td><strong>My picture is the same thing that I like myself. Myself is the body of my only. No one else make something to me.</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre intervention data</th>
<th>Post intervention data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>The picture that I drew is two houses and a girl who is breakfully and she cried so hard.</strong></td>
<td><strong>That was me. I was angry because SB was always grasp my full meat on Sundays and I asked who steal my food and no one respond me. I asked S told me SB and I fight with SB and that day he make me very angry.</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Participant 6**
Figure 4.3: Example of a more positive self-concept

In the pre intervention data, participant 12 drew herself crying as indicated by the tears in her eyes. In her accompanying explanation she mentioned that at the time of drawing this picture she was thinking about her father who had passed on. At the same time, she stated that as much as her father had passed on she believed that God was there for her, as He gave her parents (caregivers) and she was now at school and did not think about her father anymore. In her post intervention data, she described herself as beautiful, happy, enjoying herself and having beautiful hair.

The pre intervention data suggests that it might be possible that when these children were placed in the children’s home they were still traumatised by their experiences of losing their parents, especially as some of them had to care for their sick parents (Chitiyo et al., 2008; UNAIDS, 2010) or they felt rejected by their extended families who sent them to the children’s home (Foster, 2000; Freeman & Nkomo, 2006). Their sadness revealed their emotional state at the time of writing about their lives; however, they seemed to be able to regulate their emotions, an indication of a state of awareness that is related to a positive sense of self, which is an indicator of resilience (Masten & Wright, 2010).

Participant 12 acknowledged the positive role that God played in her life when she lost her father. She believes that God provided her with parents. The reference to the belief in God as enabling the participants to cope with their sad feelings is highlighted in literature as a resilience-enhancing factor (Dass-Brailsford, 2005; Malindi & Theron, 2010; Gunnestad & Thwala, 2011). Gunnestad and Thwala (2011) conducted a study in South Africa to examine how faith or religion influenced the ability to cope in difficult circumstances. This study was conducted with
children who were orphans. Findings revealed that prayer and church attendance were their coping strategies. Moreover, faith, hope, values and bible stories of people who experienced difficulties, were additional coping strategies.

The shift from feeling sad to having a positive concept of oneself was also reflected in the data provided by participant 18. She described herself in the pre intervention data as bleeding inside, yet not wanting to feel like that but to be alright. In the post-intervention data, she said ‘I like myself’, in other words, she had a positive view of herself which was not evident in her pre intervention data. She was also confident that no one would do something to her, as her body belonged to herself. In terms of the post intervention data the participants portrayed a different view about themselves. Participant 12 describes her self-image as beautiful and having beautiful hair. A positive self-concept indicates resilient coping in children (Ungar et al., 2007). Participant 8 indicated an increased sense of self-awareness as she stated that ‘myself is the body of my only. No one else make something to me’. Self-awareness helps children to feel in control of their lives, which is indicative of resilience (Masten & Wright, 2010).

In the post-intervention data, participant 6 identified the person in the drawing as himself ‘That was me’ whereas in the pre intervention data he described the person who was crying as not him but ‘a girl who is breakfully and she cried so hard’. In the post intervention drawing he was able to embrace his anger and become more assertive. Although fighting is not an “appropriate social response”, (Wood et al., 2012, p.231), his reaction suggests that he felt he did not have to represent other people in his drawing but wanted to show that he could confront his own reality and thus take some control over his life. This suggests agency and a development of self- awareness, which helps children to feel more positive about themselves, all of which are indicators of resilience (Masten & Wright, 2010).
One explanation for this change could be found in the content of the story titled *The boy and the goat*, which was chosen by the participants as their favourite. In this story, the boy was treated badly by his stepmother. However, he persevered, and one day his dead mother provided him with food by giving him instructions on how he could use his favourite goat to produce food. His mother instructed him not to share this information with anyone. The boy now had all the food that he needed for breakfast, lunch and supper. The stepmother noticed that the boy was getting fatter and could not figure out how that happened as she was only giving him the leftovers that were fed to the pigs and dogs. This boy was able to endure adverse circumstances because he had access to another protective resource. The story itself has a cultural element to it because the boy’s mother was dead and yet could communicate with him for help, a concept that is central to African ancestral beliefs. Participant 12 also indicated that while her father had passed on, God had provided for her.

The cultural aspect further increases the resilience potential of stories. For example, in a study conducted by Dass-Brailsford (2005), adolescents who believed in ancestral worship felt they were protected and were therefore not lonely in life, hence they were able to adapt to adversity. In the story, the boy could cope as a result of his communication with his mother. Literature on bibliotherapy indicates that after children have identified with the characters in the story, they tend to “recognise and experience the character’s feelings, think about how the character solved his problem and then begin to apply what happened in the character’s lives into their own” (Heath et al., 2005, p.567).

Data generated in this cycle also revealed an indication of an increase in personal identity which developed after the storytelling intervention.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre intervention data</th>
<th>Post intervention data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Uyancuma. Uyadlala.</strong></td>
<td><strong>My name is A. I live at S CCC. I love myself because people love me too. I am a person who likes to make jokes and like to sing. I love my family because they take care of me when I need something.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>She is smiling. She is playing.</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Participant 21</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>I draw me and my friends. We are playing skipping rope and we are showing happiness.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Mna ndingu N.N. Ndhlala eS. Ngamanye amaxesha kubamnandi ebomini bam ngamanye kuba kubi. Ndiyathanda ukudlala nabantwana basekhaya. Andithandi ukukhathazeka ngoba xa ndikhathazekile andifuni ukuthetha namntu. Ndiyathanda ukuhlala ndicinge xa ndimdala ndinqwenela</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Participant 16**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre intervention data</th>
<th>Post intervention data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ukuba yintoni. Esikolweni ndenza umdaniso. (My name is N.N. I stay at S. Sometimes I am happy in my life other times not. I like to play with my siblings at the children’s home. I don’t like to be troubled because when I do I don’t want to talk to anyone. I like to think about my future when I am old. At school I dance.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thina sihleli kamnandi sisitya, siyadlala ibhola, siyancokola, sidlala inethall siyajava sicule. Siyabaliselana izitori sinabile. Siphathana kakhule asibethani. Asiphathananga kakubi siyahlekelana. (We are happy, eating, playing ball, chatting, playing netball, dancing, singing. We tell each other stories while relaxing. We treat one another well, not hitting one another. We are treating one another well. We laugh with one another.)

Igama lam ndinguN. Ifani yam ndinguN. Ndihlala eK. Besidlala ibhola bekumnandi, sisitya isonka esimhlophe. (My name is N. My surname is N. I stay at K. We were playing ball, enjoying ourselves. We were eating white bread.)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre intervention data</th>
<th>Post intervention data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Participant 20</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I like the fact that I play with other friends (Verbal explanation)</td>
<td>Ndiyankcenkceshela iflawazi zikamama wethu. Sidlala ngebhola. (I am watering our mom’s flower garden. We are playing with a ball).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 4.4: Example of a more positive identity**

Participant 21 drew a picture of herself covered in raindrops. In her verbal explanation she told me that she was smiling and playing on a rainy day. Participant 16 drew images she explained as ‘I draw me and my friends. We are playing skipping rope and we are showing happiness’. Participant 20 talked about how she and other children at the home would spend their day: dance, chat, tell stories, play netball. Participant 2 describes her drawing as follows: ‘I like the fact that I play with other friends’.

In the post-intervention data, participant 21, introduced herself not as playing in the rain this time, but stated her name, surname and where she stayed. She also talked about her hobbies ‘I am a person who likes to make jokes and like to sing’ and about what she loves about herself
and why and why she loves her family ‘I love myself because people love me too...... I love my family because they take care of me when I need something.’

Participant 16 drew herself with friends in the pre—intervention data; however, in the post- intervention drawing and explanation, she introduced her name and where she lived. She also provided information that showed that she was aware of her emotions; ‘Sometimes I am happy in my life other times not’... I don’t like to be troubled because when I do I don’t want to talk to anyone’, liked her friends ‘I like to play with my siblings at the children’s home’; is future orientated ‘I like to think about my future when I am old; and has a skill ‘at school I dance’.

Participant 20, introduced her name and where she stayed. Just like participant 16, she mentioned what she did with her friends ‘We were playing ball, enjoying ourselves. We were eating white bread’. Participant 2 explained her drawing as ‘I am watering our mom’s flower garden. We are playing with a ball.’

The pre-intervention data confirms earlier findings that I previously alluded to namely that children in this cycle indicated signs of resilience, such as happiness (Kumpfer, 1999); play (Cluver & Gardner, 2007); and spending time with friends (Theron & Malindi, 2010). Literature regards friends as a protective factor, as they are able to give comfort and support one another when the parents are not there (Boyden & Mann, 2005; Theron & Malindi, 2010). In these friendships young people find a space to be themselves as they are able to share ideas and thoughts about issues that affect them (Masten & Powell, 2003). In a study by Dass-Brailsford (2005) on how a particular group of black youth was able to overcome their adversity, the findings revealed that the support that came from their friends enabled them to thrive.
During my visits to the children’s home, I also noted that, most of the time the participants were playing with one another inside the home grounds. The boys would be playing soccer while the girls engaged in a variety of traditional games, such as ‘unophuce/’uphuca’ (a game in which one either draws a circle or digs a hole in the ground and place about ten stones therein. One then has to remove the stones inside the circle or hole one by one, by throwing a bigger stone in the air whilst taking out the others. The trick is that one has to remove more stones and leave one at a time, whilst also catching the bigger stone.); ‘ugqaphu’ (playing a game with a skipping rope) and ‘undize’ (hide and seek). The older ones would be playing card games. As a young child growing up in rural areas, I remember well how liberating and good it felt to play these games.

However, the examples provided above indicate that after the story telling intervention, participants described their lives differently from the pre-intervention data. This was an indication that a more positive identity had emerged. Skodval and Andreouli (2011, p.616) define identity “as a socio-psychological process of positioning oneself in relation to others”. Participants (21, 16, 20, and 2) talk about themselves in relation to their friends and other people, in the post intervention data. In other words, while they mentioned their friends in the pre-intervention data, they identified themselves as individuals in the post intervention data, within a circle of other people, such as friends. Duveen (as cited in Skodval & Andreouli, 2011, p.616), refers to this as “the process of locating the self within the collective world”.

The children recognised that, although they were individuals, they did not exist outside of their ecology. Participant 21 viewed herself through the responses that she received from other people when she said: ‘I love myself because people love me too’. Therefore, the identity that emerged in the post-intervention data is “integral to one’s sense of self” (Skodval et al., 2011,
p.617). The fact that they recognised their individualism within a circle of friends suggests that they were not lacking agency. A sense of agency is related to a positive sense of self, and therefore is an indication of resilience (Buckner, Mezzacappa & Beardslee, 2003; Masten & Wright, 2010). A general sense of “personal worth coupled with a coherent sense of identity” appears to be critical for the youth’s mental health (Salami, 2010, p.102).

In relation to the stories, there were many instances where the characters portrayed their strengths in relation to what their ecologies could provide. The story of Sinoxolo, for instance, is about a girl who was raised with monkeys and became friends with them. They played together in the forest, eating the same food such as fruit and leaves. However, Sinoxolo realised that she was different from her friends, the monkeys. When she asked the monkeys about this, they ignored her questions but continued to play with her. One day Sinoxolo was reunited with her mother and went to stay in the village.

However, as much as she was one of the village people, playing with the children there, her unique abilities emerged, when she proved her athletic ability. She did not let her past ruin how she felt about herself in the new community. As a result, she won the athletics competition and subsequently married the prince. This suggests that Sinoxolo, with her sense of individualism in the form of her athletic talent, was able to cope with living in a very different community than what she was used to. As a princess, she was now going to be able to take on a bigger responsibility, that of caring for the villagers and being a leader. I believe that the data shows that listening to a story like this helped the children to identify with the characters, a process called identification (Heath et.al, 2005).
Theme 2: More positive relations with peers
The following examples indicate how the participants revealed more positive relations with peers in the post intervention data.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre intervention data</th>
<th>Post intervention data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ndiyabathanda abazali bam kakhulu. Enkosi tata wam kakhulu. <em>(I love my parents. Thank you my father very much)</em></td>
<td>Bendihamba neetshomi zam sisiya esikolweni siydllala ibhola nerabhi kumnandi sonwabile. <em>(I was with my friends going to school to play soccer and rugby. It was nice and we were happy)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leya yindlu yasekhaya eS. Ndihlala ndonwabile ndihleka. <em>(That is my home at S. I am always happy and laughing)</em></td>
<td>I am always happy because my friends and my sister give me a wonderful day so that way I am smiling and always stay</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Participant 9

happy all the time.

When people hit me at school I get cross and if she/he is older than me after school I go tell my parents and tomorrow my parents come to the school and shout him and I often feel better

Participant 22

I feel happy when my friends play with me because I like playing with my friends and friends of mine not disappoint me and we all best friends. We like playing together and when someone of us have something we all share it together.

Figure 4.5: Example of more positive relations with peers

In the examples above, participants (10, 9 & 22) in the pre-intervention data talked about their relationships with the caregivers and their connection with the family unit. For instance, participant 10 drew a picture of two houses, which he described as follows ‘I love my parents very well. Thank you my father so much’. I noted in my diary that the participants in this study called their caregivers ‘mom and ‘dad’. These children were transported to their different schools by their ‘father’. The pre-intervention data revealed that this participant loved his caregiver, which is an indication of a close relationship with one member of a family, an indicator of resilience (Van Rensburg & Barnard, 2005; Ungar et al.; 2007). These authors report that resilience is enhanced when an individual feels connected to other members of the family.
Participant 9 referred to the children’s home as her home, and that she was happy there. A home denotes a place of belonging. This suggests that this child identified herself as part of a family unit. Studies focusing on children have revealed the importance of the family system in fostering resilience (Werner & Smith, 1992; Walsh, 2006, Ungar, 2010). Participant 22 explained his drawing to me as follows: ‘when people hit me at school I get cross and if she/he is older than me after school I go tell my parents and tomorrow my parents come to the school and shout him and I often feel better’. It appears that he could rely on his caregivers as sources of support and protection and this confirms literature that regards the presence of an adult person as contributing to a sense of positive adjustment (Werner & Smith, 1992; Salami, 2010).

Although the pre intervention data reveals that the caregivers acted as protective resources to the children, it appears that the stories influenced their way of thinking, as they shifted in the post-intervention data to mention friendship with peers. Participant 10 shifted from expressing his love for his father to expressing how happy he was when going to school to play sport with his friends: ‘I was with my friends going to school to play soccer and rugby. It was nice and we were happy’. The same shift was evident in participant 10 as she no longer made reference to her home in the post intervention data but rather to how she felt when she was with friends and peers: ‘I am always happy because my friends and my sister give me a wonderful day so that way I am smiling and always stay happy all the time’. Participant 22 also described the kind of relationship he had with his friends: I feel happy when my friends play with me because I like playing with my friends and friends of mine not disappoint me and we all best friends. We like playing together and when someone of us have something we all share it together’.

The post intervention data supports research findings that peer relationships are key resilience promoting resources as they provide children with a source of social support outside of
Chapter four: Findings and Discussion – Cycle one

their families (Boyden & Mann, 2005; Theron & Malindi, 2010). Young people who have good relations with friends are considered to be more resilient (Masten & Powell, 2003; Malindi & Theron, 2010) than those who do not. A good relationship with peers is regarded as a resilient enabling factor as it not only contributes to the development of an individual in terms of competency skills, but can also provide emotional support in times of adversity (Masten & Coatsworth, 1998).

The consistent description of how important friends were to the participants indicates that the stories might have had an influence on these children. Eight of the stories that were told to the participants had themes that “communicated a message that a relational bonds such as friendship, buffered risk” (Wood et al., 2012, p.228). The story of Bhuzane, the bee, in particular, was chosen by the participants as one of their favourite stories. This story shows the significance of friends’ in life. In this story, the bees were facing adversity as their hive was burnt down by fire which destroyed everything in the forest. Fortunately, they were not caught up in the fire and were able to flee. When they were still living in the forest, they realised that there was a man, who loved them, yet they did not bother themselves about him. One day, one of the bees, Bhuzane, came back to visit the man and the man who was very happy to see him. He gave the bee accommodation and sang for it, whilst the bee in turn produced honey for the man so that they could both survive. The story shows that the man and the bee relied on each other for support and survival and that, what kept them strong was the bond of friendship that developed between them. This story communicates a message of friendship, which resilience literature refers to as a buffer to risk (Boyden & Mann, 2005; Theron & Malindi, 2010).

The message of friendship in this story might have carried significant meaning and helped the children to make sense of their own world (Weih, 2005; Boyd, 2006). Lamwaka
(2004, p.3), regards storytelling as a tool that provides young people with “models that remind them they are not alone in the world”. Literature on bibliotherapy also reports that a story can elicit feelings that motivate individuals to make decisions about their lives (Heath, et al.; 2005; Iaquinta & Hipsky, 2006; Rozalski et al., 2010). I believe that the stories had an influence on their increased reference to friends after the storytelling intervention.

This suggests that the impact of the stories might have helped the children to make meaning of their own lives in relation to the characters that made them feel strong. As alluded to earlier, storytelling carries seeds of healing (Lamwaka, 2004; Pehrsson, 2005), as children relate personally with the characters in a book (Iaquinta & Hipsky, 2006), which allows for the release of emotional tension associated with their lives (Heath et al., 2005). Thereafter they “enter the stage of insight by thinking about what happened in the story and then apply it to their own lives” (Heath et al., 2005, p.567).

4.4 MAKING SENSE OF CYCLE ONE DATA

In this study I employed an action research design in order to explore whether and how folktales could enhance the resilience of OVC. In my exploratory journey I started by simply telling stories to the child participants. In order to ascertain the resilience potential of folktales, I asked them to draw and tell me about their lives both before and after the story telling sessions. The pre- intervention data revealed that children had access to individual, family and peer protective resources which literature refers to as resilience-enhancing factors. For instance, it was evident that they were happy (participants 8, 9, & 20); had good relations with caregivers (participants 10 & 22); played sport (participants 1,11,16,20, & 22); had hope in God (participant 12) had relations and played with their friends (participants 1, 2, 3, 11, 16, & 20). These findings were not surprising, as literature on resilience reports that children can adapt positively when
faced with adversity (Resnick, 2000; Roosa, 2000). So, my analysis of this data focused on finding out if telling the stories had made a difference, in terms of how the children described their lives after the storytelling intervention. I found that there was an indication of a more positive sense of self and more positive relations with peers which were recognisable in the post-intervention data. I understood that, although resilience is likely to be present wherever there is adversity, it could still be enhanced (Roosa, 2000; Cameron, Ungar & Libenberg, 2007; Wood et al., 2012) and the data suggested that my intervention might have contributed to the heightened resilience I ascertained from my interpretation of the data.

Literature on the use of stories in therapy and schools reveal their power to influence listeners to apply the content of the story in their own lives (Heath, et al., 2005; Pehrsson, 2005; Iaquinta & Hipsky, 2006; Cook, Earles-Vollrath & Ganz, 2006; Rozalski, et al., 2010). Stories have also been used as a tool for helping patients to understand their problems (Arad, 2004; Fritz, 2006; Brink, 2008). Therefore, participants’ articulations of their post-intervention drawings indicated instances where they changed from representing themselves as other people to embracing their own identity by expressing their emotions (e.g. participant 6); from recognising their caregivers to be a source of support to appreciating the significant relations they have with their friends (e.g. participants 9 & 22), from merely mentioning that they played with their friends to identifying their capabilities within the circle of their friends (e.g. participants 2, 16, & 21). I clustered these changes into two themes, a more positive sense of self and improved relations with peers.

These changes support literature on bibliotherapy that attests to the power of stories to enhance coping. There is also evidence in literature that “the way stories are told have an impact on coping skills” (Heath et al., 2005, p.570). I grew up listening to these stories and was
therefore familiar with them. My teaching qualifications are in languages and I previously taught literature, therefore I believe that I was able to bring to life the characters in the story due to the various telling techniques that I used such as eye contact, responsive facial expressions, varying my tone of voice and the fact that I was telling the stories in my- and their- mother tongue. These techniques are reported in literature as playing a significant role in influencing the decisions that listeners make after listening to the stories (ibid). In fact, from my informal chats with the caregiver, I noted in my diary that:

The caregiver told me that participants tended to imitate my storytelling sessions when they were alone before they went to bed. One of the children would pretend to be me and told stories to the others. I also observed that when I arrived at their home, some of the children would be singing songs that were part of the stories (20/07/2009).

Literature on folktales also regard them as “a natural way of teaching resilient-enhancing values and attitudes” (Joseph, 1994, p135) as children learn virtues such as patience and interdependence which they can apply in their lives (Abatan, 2011). The imaginative world that is enhanced by the characters in the story, such as animals, who often take on human characteristics instils good behaviour in children and boosts their resilience by promoting new ways of thinking (African Cultural Centre, 2011). In this cycle, I therefore believe that listening to the folktales contributed to the development of a more positive sense of self and more positive peer relations in the participants.

4.5 INSIGHTS INTO BENEFITS OF USING STORYTELLING TO REACH BOTH PASTORAL AND ACADEMIC GOALS OF TEACHERS

As indicated in section 2.8.3, the methodology of telling folktales to the participants was adopted from bibliotherapy literature on the use of reading stories to children in order to help them cope with their difficulties in life. The problem I addressed in this study is that there is a
high prevalence of OVC in schools and teachers are not coping with their pastoral role, since they feel they have not been trained to help such children cope with the many challenges they face. Literature states clearly that bibliotherapy is divided into the developmental and therapeutic fields of practice (Rozalski et al., 2010, p.33).

The developmental aspect of using bibliotherapy can be used by teachers since they are the immediate people that deal with the children on a daily basis (Maich& Kean, 2004; Du Toit, 2010). In this regard, Pratner et al., 2006, p.3) state that “although teachers are not qualified to provide psychotherapy to students, they are qualified to discuss students’ feelings about being in school and consider classroom problems the students might be experiencing”. This means, that for teachers to successfully effect support to children using this approach, they need to select stories that would assist learners to cope with the challenges they are facing in life (Heath et al., 2005) and I am arguing that folktales are highly suited for this purpose. Problems that are beyond the teacher’s scope should be referred to a therapist (Heath et al., 2005).

In this study, one of my objectives was to investigate ways in which teachers could use the folktales to reach both their pastoral and academic goals. For pastoral purposes, teachers need to be aware that some children are still grieving and not at a stage where they can confront their realities, hence folktales can be used to encourage them to express their emotions. The use of the draw and write/talk approach seems to enable them to do so as the research findings revealed that those children who indicated a sense of sadness described themselves as feeling much more in control and positive about themselves after the story intervention sessions.

Data suggests that folktales can be used to encourage the development of a more positive self-esteem, more positive sense of self and more positive self-identity. These strengths can be
enhanced in the classroom by encouraging children to explore and articulate their individual strengths in relation to the characters in the folktales.

Folktales can be used also to encourage interpersonal skills and the forming of friendships, so that children can come to understand that they do not exist in isolation from the bigger world. Individuals have a role to play in their classrooms and in life, however, they should understand that their sense of identity can be enhanced when other people recognise and acknowledge their role in life, as evidenced in the stories.

From an academic point of view, what I observed from the data is that the children wrote more sentences in their post-intervention explanations than in the pre-intervention data. This supports literature on the use of stories in schools (Kelin, 2007; Tobin & Snyman, 2008) which reports that when students write, they apply literacy skills. In this study, although the children listened to the stories, it did help them later to express themselves in writing and orally. This suggests that by telling stories, learners’ writing (and oral) skills can be developed. I also noted that some children had opted to write in English whereas others wrote in isiXhosa. This suggests that when telling stories, both the first and the first additional languages of the learners can be enhanced for literacy development.

Telling the stories and asking the children to draw and write about them, also helps the teacher to learn details about the adversities the children face, that they otherwise would not have been aware of. This suggests that the draw and write technique could be useful for teachers in understanding their learners needs and areas that needed to be supported both pastoral needs and academic needs.
In the next section, I will reflect on the process of data generation in this cycle and the learning that I gained which has led me to the second cycle of this study.

4.6 LEARNING AND REFLECTION

Action research is an emerging design as it allows the researcher to reflect all the time as he/she is learning during the research process. In the first cycle of the study I wanted to find out if just telling the stories was enough to enhance resilience and so confirm the resilience potential of folktales. I also wanted to find out if the stories could be used in schools as an intervention that could be easily incorporated into daily activities.

During the research process, I learnt a lot about doing research with children and vulnerable groups and was also confronted with practical challenges, as discussed in the next section.

4.6.1 Reflection on personal learning and practical challenges in the field

The challenge of working with children in foster care

In section 3.3.3 of the study, I explained that some of the participants in this cycle stayed with their foster parents. I also explained how I gained entry into their setting and how the process of storytelling took place in this particular setting. In section 4.1, I mentioned that the data that I presented in this chapter did not include these children since they withdrew during the process of research.

The children in this study gave me permission, via assent letters, to conduct research with them. In my assent form, I indicated that they had the right to withdraw at anytime. However, when some of the children exercised their right to withdraw, I learnt the practical meaning of this right and what it meant in research. I soon realised after the sixth story telling session that the
children in this group, had responsibilities to attend to, which caused their attendance at the
sessions to be erratic. Although, I was aware of the context of these children from both literature
and personal experience, I did not want to make any assumptions, and therefore enquired from
the caregiver about their inconsistencies in attending the sessions.

The caregiver told me that since I was telling the children stories on Saturdays,
sometimes, when their foster parents went to attend a funeral or had other personal business to
attend to, these children had to substitute for them at the market. Apparently, their foster parents
were selling fruit and vegetables in the market in order to buy food and other necessities for the
household. This was the reason the children were sometimes absent from the sessions.

Since I believed that through this study teachers (and caregivers) could have a tool to
encourage the resilience of these children, I decided to think of ways in which I could make sure
that these children attended the sessions. I suggested to the caregiver that I would first call her to
enquire if the children were going to attend. This experience taught me how important it was for
me as the researcher to communicate openly with the gatekeeper, since she was the person closer
to the participants. Interestingly, there were times where the gatekeeper would assure me that the
children would be present, but when I arrived at the house, I would get apologies to explain that
due to unforeseen circumstances, which their aunts or uncles, had to attend to, the participants
had to take care of their younger siblings and therefore could not attend the sessions.

At about ten weeks into the story telling sessions, the gatekeeper alerted me that the
foster parents were concerned that their children were not being offered any food during or after
the sessions. I was aware of the ethical dilemmas around this issue in literature; however, I
consoled myself by noting that the same literature warns researchers that ethical dilemma “may
arise at any stage of research, not just at the point of contact with participants” (Morrow & Richards, 1996, p.95). I asked myself whether I should focus on the way in which this cycle was designed or deal with the reality that I was confronted with at that particular point. I consulted more literature and came across what Swartz (2011, p.48-49) calls “dealing with unpredictable ethical moments in research” and how research is a process of “reciprocation” which implied “material benefit to those participating in research”. I then decided to bring the participants basic food such as buttered bread with polony, although I had not budgeted for this. Since I realised that I might not have participants otherwise, I thought this was one of the “ethics of reciprocation”. I admit that I was not comfortable with this decision as I felt that I was buying them to continue with the study and feared that this action would confound my post data.

About two sessions after this experience, the challenge of erratic attendance resumed. Eventually, the participants withdrew from the study. I noted in my diary that:

_For the past three weeks the children did not turn up for story telling sessions. I asked the gatekeeper to investigate and she reported that three of the children have relocated to rural areas. When their mother died, her sister took care of them but then due to financial constraints and the boys’ bad behavior she decided to send them to her family in the rural areas. They dropped out of school and would probably attend school at their new home._ (26/03/10) (Wood et al., 2012).

During my informal chats with the caregiver, prior to the withdrawal of the participants, she mentioned that some of the foster parents were complaining about the behaviour of their children. The eight children who were part of this study came from three different families, so when the four children from one family withdrew, the caregiver advised that I should not continue with the storytelling sessions since she foresaw that the remaining four children would soon withdraw. During the post-intervention period, some of the children at the children’s home
also withdrew from the study. The caregiver at the home told me the following which I noted in my diary:

_There were new policies from the Department of Social Development and Welfare, which mandated that the caregivers should trace whether the children in these homes had relatives somewhere. Those who were found to have one, even if it was a grandmother, should be reunited with them. Only those whose relatives cannot be traced should remain at the home. At this stage, the caregiver was not clear as to what prompted this new policy. Therefore some of the children had to leave the children’s home._ (01/07/2010)

Through this experience, I learnt the importance of understanding the context when doing research. I also learnt that one needs to understand and accommodates the realities of the people living in communities. As a researcher I became curious to learn more about ethics in research and how current studies addressed the contextual realities of working with vulnerable groups.

_Tension between research design and my personal paradigm_

As alluded to earlier on, in this cycle I told stories to a group of children in order to ascertain if these stories could enhance resilience and how they could be used by teachers to reach both their pastoral and academic purposes. Since I wanted to ascertain the resilience potential of folktales, I decided to keep a polite distance from the participants since relational bonds are known to influence the development of resilience (Masten & Wright, 2010). The pragmatist methodological approach that I used to generate evidence that stories alone could boost children’s resilience conflicted with my transformative paradigm. The pre- and post-evaluation design did not allow the children to engage with the stories in a learner-centred way, which would provide an opportunity for the children to participate in research. Nor did it allow me to form relationships with them, which is a requirement of a conducive learning environment (Mercer, 1995). However, I consoled myself that, firstly, using the draw and write/talk method
during the data generation period provided an opportunity for the participants to air their views and make meaning of their lives. Secondly, if findings from this cycle would reveal that the telling of stories does promote resilience, then I was helping the children.

Telling the stories without forming relations with children was emotionally taxing also for me. The children wanted to interact with me, yet I had to keep my distance. I had to disclose limited personal information to the children. One day I had to tell them that I would be absent the following week. On my return, the children were so keen to know how my trip went, but due to the nature of the design I could only briefly tell them that I had fun. Immediately, I asked them to prepare themselves to listen to the story. On that day, I noted in my diary that:

*I found this very challenging to me as a researcher because meeting people particularly children every week and not forming a bond with them is very unnatural to me. Sometimes, when I am at home, I think about them, I always wonder how they feel, whether they are happy in the children’s home, how they cope each and everyday knowing that they have lost their parents, how it feels to share a room with 8 other children etc. I wonder what the children think of me. I wonder if they think I did not like them. (15/10/09)* (Wood et al., 2012)

During my telling of the stories I was able to observe the children’s context in the children’s home which confirmed my view that their context enhanced their resilience to a certain extent. I also learnt about the contextual realities of conducting research with children who live with foster parents. Since I needed a more stable setting, and my real interest was to provide guidelines on using the stories in a school setting, I changed the site in the second cycle of this study to that of a school. I also realised that there was potential for a more learner centred way of using stories, hence in the second cycle I wanted to find out how a more participatory approach could be used. I also learnt that using indigenous language allowed the participants to reflect more deeply on issues; and so I was determined to allow them to use whatever language
they felt comfortable with. Finally, I learnt that listening to stories still had a place in children’s lives, but I realised that the curriculum demands more participation, which could further enhance resilience as well as develop pedagogical skills. Using an action research design afforded me the opportunity to implement an intervention based on the problem that I identified from literature, reflect on my experiences, learn from those experiences and so plan my next intervention, which is described in the following chapter.

4.7. SUMMARY OF CHAPTER

The first cycle of the action research process revealed how children described their lives before and after the story telling intervention. The findings revealed that some factors had contributed to the children’s resilience even before the story telling sessions. The nature of this first cycle meant that I could not control all possible influences that might have led the children to describe their lives differently in the post-intervention data. However, the post-intervention data indicated a more positive sense of self and more positive relations with peers which I believe developed as a result of listening to the stories. Literature on the use of stories in therapy and schools has attested to the potential of stories to influence children’s thoughts and behaviour. The themes that emerged from my data also confirmed this. The insights that emerged from the findings led me to suggest that teachers should note the benefits of telling stories in the classroom. What I learnt from this first cycle of my research led me to repeat this study in a school setting using stories in a more learner centred way.

In the next chapter I will present findings of cycle two of the data generation process. I will first present an overview of the second cycle of research, followed by presentation of findings, discussed and controlled against relevant literature. I will also incorporate extracts from my field notes and make inferences about the data. Thereafter I will suggest ways in which
teachers could use folktales in an interactive way and then reflect on my learning from this cycle of the action research study and its significance for enhancing resilience in children who have been orphaned and rendered vulnerable.
5.1 INTRODUCTION

In Chapter Four I presented my research findings of the first cycle by discussing the themes that emerged from the raw data. I supported my interpretation of the data by verbatim quotations from the written and oral responses of the participants and visual images in the form of drawings and controlled these findings against relevant literature. I also incorporated extracts from my field notes to support my findings. I then discussed my learning and reflections from the first cycle of the research study since this learning informed my decisions in Cycle Two.

In this chapter I will present the findings of cycle two of data generation. I will first present an overview of the second cycle of research, followed by presentations of findings, discussed and controlled against literature on resilience and the use of stories. Thereafter, based on the themes, I will make suggestions on how teachers could use the folktales in an interactive way. Finally, I will reflect on my learning from this cycle of the action research study.

5.2 OVERVIEW OF SECOND CYCLE OF STUDY

In the first cycle of the study, I merely told stories to children in a children’s home setting and to those who lived with foster parents in a teacher-centred way. In Section 4.6 of Chapter Four, I reflected on what I learnt during the process of the study in this cycle. In the first cycle, I realised that the methodology that I used to evaluate the story-telling intervention was challenging to my transformative beliefs, so I had to find out how I could use a more
participatory approach. As a result, I changed the site of research to a school setting, because I needed a more stable base.

In this second cycle, I used the stories in a more learner-centred way. I wanted the participants to participate in building their resilience through educative interaction with folktales in order to see how these could be used in a classroom or care setting, to develop resilience. Through their drawings and explanations, collages, drama and focus group interviews, I wanted their “voices to be heard” (Thompson, 2008, p.3), in terms of how they experienced the activities centred on the folktales. The notion of the right of young people to speak is enshrined in the United Nations (UN) Convention of Children’s Rights (cited in Christensen and James, 2000, p.49). I wanted the children to experience the data generating process as an empowering experience. I believe that these activities were suitable for such purpose. Moreover, I hope that, through this study, teachers will be able to facilitate the use of drawings, collage, drama and focus group interviews, even if they have limited resources in their schools. In the next section, I will present and discuss the data that I generated in this second cycle of my study.

5.3 PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF DATA

The data that I present in this chapter is based on the stories that children chose as their favourites. From the 24 stories that I told them during the research process, they chose to engage with the following stories: Inkwenkwe nebhekhe (The boy and the goat); UBhuzane, inyosi (Bhuzane, the bee); UNtulube (Ntulube); UMalingatshoni (Instant Poison); UAvi negubu lakhe (Avi and his drum); UMfazi Okhohlakeleyo (The cruel wife); UMankepe invumi (Mankepe, the singer), UMasilo no Masilonyane (Masilo and Masilonyane) and Umthi wesilivere (The silver tree). A synopsis of each of these stories is attached in Appendix F. I explained how these stories
were selected in section 3.4.1. In my presentation of data I will highlight the resilience enhancing aspects that I could identify from the children’s articulations.

In this cycle, children had to tell me through their drawings, collages, drama and focus group interviews how the stories made them feel, how they related to their lives, which were their favourite characters and why, and how they experienced the whole data generation process. In the next section I will present the themes that emerged from the data. I will support these themes with examples from the children’s articulations and images. In section 3.5, I explained how I analysed the data. The accompanying explanations given by the participants will be presented in the language in which the participants wrote, without any editing, to show the authenticity of the data and to recognise the language of the participants in research. I will then put the translations into English in brackets, if the children chose to write in isiXhosa. In my presentation of data, I will highlight in bold the words and phrases that the participants use that are indicative of resilience for ease of reference. The examples that I use in this chapter represent discernible themes that emerged from the data. In section 3.3.4. I indicated the number of children who were involved in the learner centred engagement with the stories. The following table (Table 5) illustrates the summary of the themes that emerged from the data.
Table 5:  
*Summary of themes in cycle two*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Stories</th>
<th>Methods used with respective stories</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hope and persevere for your destiny</td>
<td><em>Sinoxolo</em></td>
<td>Collage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Instant Poison</em></td>
<td>Drawing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>The boy and the goat</em></td>
<td>Drawing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>The cruel wife</em></td>
<td>Drama discussions, interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helping others is virtue</td>
<td><em>Bhuzane, the bee</em></td>
<td>Drawing, interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Mankepe, the singer</em></td>
<td>Collage</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>The Silver tree</em></td>
<td>Collage</td>
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<tr>
<td>A family as strength</td>
<td><em>The Silver Tree</em></td>
<td>Collage</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>The cruel wife</em></td>
<td>Drama discussions</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Masilo and Masilonyane</em></td>
<td>Drama discussions</td>
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5.3.1 **Theme 1: Hope and persevere for your destiny**

The children’s images and accompanying explanations suggest that in the following folktales: *Sinoxolo, Instant Poison, the Boy and the Goat and The cruel wife*, they were able to identify the resources (internal and external) that had enabled the characters in these stories to hope and persevere in their adversities. Hope and perseverance were terms repeatedly mentioned by the participants in their articulations, as the examples presented below will illustrate. Since I wanted the participants to participate in building their resilience through their interaction with the stories, their accompanying explanations of the story suggested a number of resilience enhancing factors that the children could identify although, of course, they were not aware of the
concept of resilience. Moreover, their focus group drawings revealed how they process of engaging with the stories impacted on them. For example, participant 1 drew a picture of a girl with a label written ‘happy with hope’.

![Participant 1's drawing](image)

**Figure 5.1: Example of a drawing by participant 1**

In her explanation this participant said “I am feeling happy because Sakhumzi did not give up whether her stepmother abuse him and the meaning of this drawing is that Sakhumzi didn’t give up. The story makes me feel happy because it end up Sakhumzi got happy and the stepmother got angry. I choose Sakhumzi because he never left home. Even when her stepmother didn’t give him food he had that hope. I chose Sakhumzi because he is strong and even when her father didn’t say something he holds up and that teaches me that you have to be strong even when you feel bad you are to be strong”.
In the next example, participant 2 drew a picture labelled “sun means happy”. The accompanying explanation stated “The story makes me feel happy even when Poison was ugly she didn’t give up, she stood up for herself and tell the other people that she can do more better than them. That makes me realise that even if you are ugly there is something you can do. I love this story because Instant poison was the first black woman that joined the army”.

![Image of participant 2's drawing]

Figure 5.2: Example of a drawing by participant 2

Not only the drawings but the collage as well, highlighted how the stories made the participant feel.
Figure 5.3: Example of a collage by participant 3

The explanation that accompanied the collage stated: ‘I learnt never to lose hope no matter how things are. One has to be brave, positive, trusting, confident and hopeful. His collage shows a person putting on earphones, a child and a woman and this collage is labelled with terms such as “hope”, “braveness”, “positive”, “confident” and “Sinoxolo”.

In the examples provided above, participants 1 and 2 felt that the story of the boy and the goat, made them feel happy because of the protective resources they could identify from the characters. Participant 3 mentioned the lesson that he learnt from the story of Sinoxolo. It appears that the children recognised and related to the individual characteristics that the characters possessed which enabled them to cope in the midst of their adversity. In the story of the boy and the goat, Saki, the main character, was in a difficult situation of being ill-treated by his stepmother, whilst his father was doing nothing about the situation. This implies that Saki
was alone in this situation, yet participant 1 stated that Saki “did not give up”, “had hope”, “held up” and that made him “strong” which in turn made the participant “strong” and “happy”. Participant 2 stated that the story of Instant poison made her feel happy, because the protagonist “didn’t give up”, “stood up for herself”, “told the others that she can do better than them” and she loved the story because the protagonist “was the first black woman to join the army”.

Hope was also identified through the discussion by the participants who dramatised the story of ‘The cruel wife’. In this story, the cruel wife treated the other wife badly, to the extent that she stole her child and gave him to the animals to kill. However, the animals made sure that the child was safe and hid him from the cruel wife. One of the participants could relate to this story, as she felt that “Baninzi abantu abaphila la mpilo but ndinqwenela bangaze balilahle ithemba” (There are many people who live that life but I wish they should always never stop hoping). Focus group interviews also reflected the message of hope as one of the participants felt that “As we were told stories there were others who were like us in class, who decided not to join the story telling sessions. I used to tell them, you know there is hope, maybe next year, you too could join the group. I encouraged them not to feel bad when others talk about moms and dads. I told them that there are other people who care and love you. There are people who can treat you as their own children. Do not lose hope maybe you will be successful or good things will happen in your life”.

Moreover, participant 4 in Figure 5.4, through her drawing, suggested that the story of the boy and the goat indicated that there was a solution to the needs that people have. She felt that, at the end, Saki’s need was met, as “Saki got food”. This suggests that, through hope, the boy’s destiny was a positive one. The following example illustrates this point:
Figure 5.4: Example of a drawing by participant 4

Participant 4 said “Eli bali lindeza ndizive ndonwabile ngoba ekugqibeleni inkwenkwe isiphelo sebali siphele inkwenkwe sele inako ukutya. Lona umzobo ndiwuzobileyo undenza ndizive ndonwabile kwaye uthetha ukonwaba kwam” (This story makes me feel happy, because at the end of the story the boy had food. This drawing makes me feel happy and it represents my state of happiness).

The resilience enabling potential of folktales was also illustrated by participant 5, who was able to reflect on his life as a result of this story. He was able to empathise with the character as he recognised the pathways to Saki’s resilience. Participant 5 said “My father has another wife and he has a child. When it is the end of the month she says I can’t go to town but when my mother was alive I was going every time to town hence I feel sad for Saki”. The ability to empathise is a resilience enhancing factor (Kumpfer, 1999).
Figure 5.5: Example of a drawing by participant 5

These stories seem to have evoked a positive emotion, of happiness, in the children as participants 1 and 2 indicated. Participant 2 also alluded to the fact that she loved this story because “Instant poison was the first black woman to join the army”. For participant 3, the story of Sinoxolo encouraged her to be strong “teaches me to be strong even when you feel bad you are strong”. For participant 4, the story of the boy and the goat had a happy ending as Saki “had food”. Participant 5 was able to relate to the story hence he could empathise with the boy. The children’s articulations indicate the folktales have a resilience enhancing potential. Happiness (Schaffer, 2010), hope (Gunnestad & Thwala, 2011), perseverance (Kumpfer, 1999), confidence (Van Rensburg & Barnard, 2005), assertiveness (Theron, 2004, Ungar, 2008), bravery (Boyden & Mann, 2005) and ethnic pride (Utsey, Bolden, Lanier & Williams III, 2007) are all indicators of resilience. It appears that the characters in the story possessed some of the characteristics of resilient people. Hence, the participants felt happy, could empathise and were strengthened by
these stories. Literature indicates that individual strengths are very necessary to enable children access other pathways to resilience, for example community resources (Van Rensburg & Barnard, 2005). The fact that one of the children could empathise with the story seems to confirm literature on bibliotherapy which highlights that when people engage with a story either through reading or listening they tend to see themselves in the characters and think about their own lives (Heath et al., 2005; Morgan & Roberts, 2010).

5.3.2 Theme 2: Helping others is virtue

The data suggest that the children noted in the stories, that the characters helped one another, and that to them was a good characteristic of a human being. The folktales that seem to support this theme, according to the children’s images and accompanying explanations are: Bhuzane, the bee and Mankepe, the singer. What is highlighted in these two stories is the act of helping other people who are facing adversity. For example, the bee whose hive was burnt down by fire was accommodated by a certain man, who apparently loved bees. In the story of Mankepe, her friends in the village, who loved to listen to her singing, rescued her from the cannibal who had kidnapped her. The examples provided in this section illustrate that folktales contribute to promoting the resilience enhancing factor of caring for others and feeling part of a community of caring. The participants, who chose these two stories seem to be saying that helping others is virtue. However, this theme is illustrated in various ways.

Participant 5 drew a picture with different images: flowers, a girl, and a symbol of a heart. When I asked her about her drawing she said that it reflected a place of love where people can help one another. Her accompanying explanation was ‘Thina singabantu kufuneka sinceda ncedane kuba singabanye zikhona izinto ezehlela abantu kodwa inye into kufuneka sincedane kuba unguumntu awayazi ukuba lamntu uzakukunceda ngalonto ungenayo wena.’ (As people we
need to help one another, because there are times when people go through situations, but there is one thing we must help one another, because as a person you do not know if that other person is going to help you with what you don’t have).

Figure 5.6: Example of a drawing by participant 6

Participant 6 emphasised that people ought to help each other as nobody knew when they would need help themselves. This view was further expanded by participant 7, who regarded the act of help as a blessing to the one who gave it. She added that ‘trust’ was important in the act of help. In her image, participant 7 drew a picture of a girl who had a bubble saying ‘I am very happy’. She held an object labelled ‘kite’ and there was an image of a bee flying next to the girl. Her explanation was: ‘Ndilithandle elibali kuba lindifundisile indlela yokunceda omnye umntu umntu osengxakini enzima kuba isandla esiphayo sisikelelelekele. Umntu endimthandleyo ebalini yindoda ebithanda iinyosi iziculela iingoma ezimnandi. Kumnandi ukuthemba umntu umzekelo utitshala wakho. Kweli bali ndifunde ukuba ukunceda umntu ayiyonto ibulala umntu ehlabathini’. (I like this story, because it has taught a way of helping another person who is in a very difficult situation, because a hand that gives is a blessed hand. The person that I liked in this story is the man who loved the bees, he sang nicely for them. It is nice to trust another
person, such as your teacher. In this story, I learnt that helping another person is not something that will kill a person in this world).

Figure 5.7: Example of a drawing by participant 7

For participant 7, the act of help denotes co-operation which she referred to as ‘working together’. Her accompanying explanation suggests that when one is facing adversity, one should ‘not lose hope’ as help is on the way. In fact, participant 6, felt that helping others is a natural thing to do as it ‘is not something that will kill a person in this world’.

Participant 8 drew a picture of a hand, which she verbally articulated as reflecting a happy feeling when people can help one another, working together and holding hands towards a certain goal. Her written explanation was ‘I feel happy and I love the story. The story makes me feel happy because the bee did not lose hope even when their house burnt. I was happy that the
boy found the bee they live happy and that teaches me that you must not lose hope because that not end of the day just like bee.”

Figure 5.8: Example of a drawing by participant 8

The same theme of help was reflected in the following collages in relation to the story of Mankepe.
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Figure: 5.9: Example of a collage by participant 9

The participant’s accompanying explanation reads as follows: ‘I learn friendship it is important because the village when Mankepe disappear they go to veld so they broke the door and found Mankepe sleeping’.

I recognised the person in the collage of participant 3 as a well known singer in South Africa and I assumed that since the main character in this story Mankepe, was a singer, the participant was making a visual representation of the singer. In fact, the caption under this image says ‘Mankepe, the singer’. The picture chosen reflected this real singer in a state of sadness and anxiety which could be linked to Mankepe, as she was kidnapped by a cannibal. Another picture in the collage showed a group of people sitting together. I suppose, that this related to Mankepe’s friends, who were able to rescue her from the cannibal. The literature states that cohesive neighbourhoods and supportive peers do contribute to resilience (Boyden & Mann, 2005).
Moreover, peer relationships are a key resilience promoting resource especially for children as they provide them with a rich source of social support outside their families (Malindi & Theron, 2010).

Figure 5.10: Example of a collage by participant 10

“Eli bali lindifundisa ukuba hlala uhlakaniphile kakhulu. Ndifunde ukuba xa ungumntu funeka ujonge zonke izinto zakho zihambe ngendlela. Eli bali lifundisa umntu hlala uhlakaniphile. Ababantu bakulengqin babonisa ukuba bامثاندنا kangakanani uMnkephe. Baye bakwazi ukukhusela uMankepe bafezekisa isithembiso sabo” (This story teaches me that I should stay alert and careful. I learnt that when you are a person you should make sure that your things are taken care of. This story teaches me that a person must stay alert and careful. These people in this community showed how much they loved Mankepe. They were able to rescue her and fulfilled their promise”. Within the resilience framework, a sense of community is regarded
as enabling due to the strengths afforded by the relationships (Boyden & Mann, 2005; Theron, 2009). Another characteristic of a community was mentioned by participant 11 as illustrated in the following collage.

![Collage](image)

**Figure: 5.11: Example of a collage by participant 11**

In this collage, I see a couple hugging each other, a woman holding an animal, a picture of a tree and an image of four smiling children wearing school uniform. There is also a label titled ‘Our Community’ which is attached at the top of the image of the children. Her explanation reads as follows “Mna into endiypfundileyo *kukukhathalela* izilwanyana zika *Thixo* ngoba yena uya kobona *akusikelele*. Ndiyathanda into yanamhlane *yokukhathalela* ezinye izinto ezibalulekileyo njengezilwanyana, abantu kwakunye nentyatyambo” (I have learnt that caring for God’s animals will lead one to being rewarded. I like what is happening today, people caring for important things such as animals, people and plants/flowers). In her explanation she did not
refer to how the story related to her collage. She explained her collage as suggesting the notion of ‘care’ as she talked about what she learnt in this story was that caring for God’s animals lead to a reward. She further said that she ‘likes that people care for important things such as animals, people and plants’.

For participant 9, it appears that if one had strong relationships with one’s peers, those peers would help one when facing difficulties. Participant 9 highlighted the love that the community members (in the form of friends) showed Mankepe when she was kidnapped by the cannibal. The story also taught her a lesson, that of being alert and careful. Helping other people seemed to be a virtue as it is associated with ‘love’, ‘happiness’, ‘hope’, ‘care’ and ‘trust’. The explanations and verbal articulations of participants’ (6, 7, 8, 9, 10&11) seem to encapsulate this view very well. The theme of help was confirmed during the focus group interviews. For instance, one participant in the focus group interviews said that ‘I learnt some lessons, for instance in the story Bhuzane, the bee, I learnt about caring’. Caring is a resilience trajectory (Werner & Smith, 1992).

The theme of help confirms the notion of Ubuntu, which is an African philosophy (Ndofirepi & Ndofirepi, 2012) and a resilience enhancing factor (Theron, 2009; Theron & Theron, 2010). There is a cultural saying ‘Umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu’ (a person is a person through other people). The underlying principles of Ubuntu are humanness, interconnectedness and partnership (African Cultural Centre, 2011). The examples provided, highlight that the stories are embedded with indigenous cultural values, which are rooted in spirituality and an epistemology of relations (Kincheloe & Steinberg, 2008), with which the children were already familiar in any case.
“.....with its rich source of oral and other literature, indigenous artworks....places emphasis on a view of a human being that presupposes interpersonal relationships as expressed in umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu (a person is a person through other persons)” (Kincheloe & Steinberg, 2008, p. 532).

These two stories, *Bhuza*, *ne, the bee* and *Mankepe, the singer*, seemed to suggest that children’s capacity to adapt after a difficult life could be enhanced by the love and trust that friends and other people within a community could show to one another. In fact, if people were available to help one another, resilience could be enhanced. The children’s articulations seemed to support the transactional ecological view of resilience (Masten, Cutuli, Herbers & Reed, 2009). It appears that in these two stories, the characters were enabled to cope in their adversity through the resources they accessed in their communities which were their friends. As alluded to earlier, Mankepe was saved by her friends and the bee was saved by the man who eventually became his friend.

5.3.3 **Theme 3: A family as strength**

The following stories: *The silver tree* and *Masilo and Masilonyana* enabled the children to voice out their views about a family. Participant 12 did not make a collage as such, but cut out a single picture of a couple with a baby in relation to the story of the silver tree.
Figure: 5.12: Example of a collage by participant 12

Her accompanying explanation stated “As I was reading the story called Umthi weSilivere I felt that we all need a family, the people who will know us better and understand us. People who will support us and show love to us. I kind felt that you don’t have to give up on life. There is always hope in life, all you have to do is to keep on fighting and trying and you will get what you always hope for, like the couple in the story they were happy but not that happy because they had no children but they didn’t give up until one day they were given a wish even though they were poor they wished for children they could have wished for money but money doesn’t buy happiness. You can have a lot of money but you won’t be happy. We all need a family in our lives, the people who will take care of you and love you.”

In relation to her life, the story made her feel that they needed a family with the following characteristics: love, empathy, support and care. The participant used the pronoun ‘we’ which
could refer to them as children or as OVC since the participants in this study were OVC. The story made her feel that there was no time to ‘give up’, but when you ‘fight and try’ you will get what ‘you hope for’. To me, this means that she understood the message to be that one should never give up until one realized one’s dream of having a family that one hopes for. Literature suggests a number of characteristics within the family that appear to facilitate the development of resilience. For example, Salami (2010) mentions that the characteristics of a family such as care, protection, love or support helps individuals to be adaptive in the face of adversity.

The theme of a family was also highlighted during the discussions. The group that enacted the story of Masilo and Masilonyana mentioned that when they were planning for their drama, they could not single out a certain character in this story because according to them this story was about how families should live. Their picture was labelled family and the people were labelled as man and wife. The explanation provided gave the characteristics of a family they envisaged as reflected by phrases like ‘staying together’, ‘love’ and ‘no quarrel’. As much as the content of the story involved Masilo and Masilonyana quarrelling and ultimately making peace, the children felt that families should not quarrel. The following picture and accompanying explanation illustrate this point:
Figure 5.13: Example of a group picture by group 1

The accompanying explanation stated “xa niyifemeli funeka nihlale nonke ngoba ezinye ifemeli ziphela zilahlana ngoba akukho thando ebantwini kuphela kulahleka abantu. Akufunekanga nixabane niyifemeli ngoba iphela ingaseyofemeli umntu ezihlailela” (when you are a family, you should stay together, because some of the families end up abandoning one another, because when there is no love, people lose one another. You should not quarrel as a family, because you end up not being a family - each one on his own). Social relationships among family members are reported to facilitate the development of resilience in young people (Ungar, 2004).

One of the group participants said “lindenza ndizive ndonwabile ndinabo nabantu abandingqongileyo xa ndinengxaki ndizokwazi ukubaxelela ukubana nabo bakwazi ukundinceda. Ndiziva ndinabantu abandikhathaleleyo xa ndiziva ndikhathazekile ndibaxelele..”
(This story makes me feel **happy** and **having people around me**. When I am in trouble I can tell those people so that they could help me. I feel like I have people who care for me so that when I feel troubled I could talk to them). Caring and supportive relationships within families promote strengths among the youth (Werner & Smith, 1992).

These two stories seemed to have alerted the children to the importance of having a family and how families could enable their resilience. The data speaks to the life of OVC. Literature indicates that these children usually either live in institutions or with foster parents. Given the nature of families this group could be voicing out the type of a family ‘**they**’ hoped for: one that gives ‘love’, ‘empathy’, ’support’ and ‘care’. This view could be confirming findings that reveal that OVC are not well taken care of in institutions or by foster parents (Cluver & Gardner, 2007). This child’s message suggests that whatever children experience in their homes, they should know that, with hope people are ‘**rewarded**’ in life, just like the couple in the story.

### 5.4 MAKING SENSE OF CYCLE TWO DATA

The data presented above reveal that engaging children in a participative manner with the folktales can encourage resilience in a number of ways. For one thing, the folktales served to alert the participants to the strengths that individuals in these stories had which enabled them to survive in their difficult circumstances. The participants could then relate these characteristics to their own lives and situations. Secondly, participants were able to see how the role of the community, friends and families enables coping and there were indications that this understanding would encourage them to seek out help when they needed it.

Resilience as defined in Chapter Two generally denotes the ability to overcome hardships when faced with adversity (Masten, 2001). Moreover, there are protective factors that are found
within the individual, in the family, community and culture that facilitate the development of resilience. The data suggest that engaging with the folktales helped the children to understand what individual strengths promoted improved coping and how these strengths could be used to interact with protective resources within their ecologies.

From the children’s explanations, “hope”, “perseverance”, “friendship” and a “sense of community” were repeatedly mentioned. Literature reports that individuals who have an internal locus of control that makes them hopeful and able to think positively about themselves and others are said to be coping well in their adversity (Werner & Smith, 1992). Similarly, individuals with autonomy are not threatened by difficult situations as they can renew hope and try to be assertive in difficult situations (Boyden & Mann, 2005). Assertiveness (Ungar, 2008) was one of the strengths that were recognised by participant 2 who stated that ‘The story makes me feel happy. Even when Poison was ugly she didn’t give up, she stood up for herself and tell the other people that she can do more better than them’. Assertiveness is said to denote independent thinking and the ability to fight for ones rights (Theron, 2004), something which Instant Poison demonstrated.

Confidence was another individual characteristic that was identified by the children from the stories. Sinoxolo, the character in the story of Sinoxolo was regarded as ‘confident’ by participant 3. Individuals tend to be confident when they possess problem solving skills abilities (Kumpfer, 1999). In this story, Sinoxolo had to rise above her adversity. She grew up in the forest, raised by monkeys, who stole her whilst her mother was away. When she was finally reunited with her mother, she did not let her past experience define her future. She displayed confidence by entering an athletic competition in her community, which she won, and eventually married a prince in her village. I would imagine that this experience would resonate with the
lives of OVC whose past experiences have been traumatic and that creating a new identity and purpose in life would be a powerful lesson for them to learn.

The children’s articulations also revealed that they identified with the characters in the folktales with empathy (Kumpfer, 1999). Empathy is a resilience enhancing indicator, which is linked to good listening and communication (Kumpfer, 1999). Stories are reported to enable the listeners to understand their own problems, however, when they are listening to the stories, they regard the content of the story as not related to them but to the characters in the story (Arad, 2004). Hence participant 5, after relating the story of the boy and the goat to his life said ‘I feel sad for Saki’. Generally, the stories made the participants feel ‘happy’ and ‘strong’. Happiness is a positive emotion, which is related to resilience (Kumpfer, 1999) while to be strong suggests healthy development in the midst of adversity.

The children also seemed to have found inspiration from these stories (Iaquinta & Hipsky, 2006), as they were able to identify with the characters. When children engaged with the following stories: The Silver Tree, and Masilo and Masilonyana, they were able to voice out their views on the characteristics of a family that made sense to them. Both stories concerned families that had overcome their hardships and how they negotiated their pathways to resilience. As alluded to earlier on, the participants in the discussions were not happy with Masilo and Masilonyana, as they felt that families should not quarrel. In this story, these two characters, although they were siblings were fighting over possessions. In the story of the silver tree, the family remained hopeful and, as a result, was awarded with their heart’s desire, that of having a children. Studies show the importance of a family system in encouraging resilience (Werner & Smith, 1992; Walsh, 2006, Ungar, 2010). These stories therefore enabled the children to voice out their views on what a family was and what they regarded as the characteristics of a family. In
the light of the fact that these children had lost either one or both parents, being able to redefine the idea of family and talk about it would be a positive healing experience for them. It would also enable them to understand how they could develop loving relationships with others they might not be related to as a substitute family.

The following stories: *Mankepe, the singer*, *Bhuzane, the bee* and *the Silver tree*, the children identified the role that communities play in one’s life. When Mankepe was kidnapped by the cannibal her friends in the village came together and started looking for her. These friendships enabled Mankepe to cope with her adversity. The bee in the story of Bhuzane, could rely and trust the man, who eventually took care of him whilst the bee produced honey for the man. Mankepe could rely on the children who were her friends and whom she used to entertain. When she was in trouble, they in turn rescued her. The birds in the story of the silver tree could rely on the couple for food and in turn they gave the couple instructions which led them to have children. The children in relation to these stories referred to the interaction in these stories as ‘helping one another’ which according to participant 5 could be defined in the framework of ‘love and trust’ whereas other participants saw the action of help as leading to ‘blessings’ (participant 6) and ‘rewards’ (participant 10). It appears that the notion of help is reciprocal. Individuals who can rely on their friends and communities for support are able to manage stressful circumstances (Boyden & Mann, 2005). There was also an indication of the cultural factors which were evident in children’s articulations. Folktales are embedded with cultural messages (Ndofirepi & Ndofirepi, 2012). Cultural resilience factors such as Ubuntu (Theron & Theron, 2010) and cultural ethnicity (Utsey, 2007, et al.,) were indicated in the data. Participant 2 loved the story of Sinoxolo because “*she was the first black woman to join the army*” and
participant 7 alluded to the concept of Ubuntu as indicated earlier on. Based on these findings, I believe that teachers could use folktales to reach both their pastoral and academic goals.

5.5 **HOW CAN TEACHERS USE FOLKTALES?**

The data presented above suggest a number of ways in which teachers could use folktales to reach both their pastoral and academic goals.

5.5.1 **For pastoral purposes**

Data suggest that folktales can be used to build children’s **strengths**. The story of *Instant Poison* can be used by teachers to teach children about the importance of an internal locus of control (Werner & Smith, 1992), that is, by believing that they have a purpose in life and by believing in their personal strengths, they can achieve their destinies. The activities through this story could explore the strengths that children possess which can help them in life. They can learn, for instance, that Instant Poison’s beliefs in her own ability led her being able to save her community. Her personal qualities of **problem solving, perseverance, confidence, intelligence** and **clear thinking**, which are resilience enhancing factors (Kumpfer, 1999) are reflected well in this story. One of the participants seemed to like the fact that Instant Poison as a black woman joined and led an army. Traditionally, the army is a man’s profession; however, this story highlights the possibilities that life brings, the boundaries that human qualities can shake, and the strength of women.

When a teacher emphasises confidence in children’s abilities, the children will be more able to identify intrapersonal strengths even if they do consider themselves to be unattractive or physically endowed. This suggests that teachers could focus on what children bring into the learning situation, and not on their physical or social conditions, which for most OVC are not
enabling. Teachers could use this story to encourage the message of developing internal strengths and talents within a supportive and non-judgemental environment. In this way, children could be enabled through this story to reflect on how they could take steps to change their lives for the better. A sense of agency is a resilience enhancing factor (Theron, 2009). Teachers could also use the story of Sinoxolo to enhance children’s strengths instead of focusing on the negatives. Children could learn from this character in terms of how her confidence helped her to succeed in life.

Folktales can also be used to teach values. The story of the Silver tree can be used to teach values such as care, love, support, a sense of community and hope. Children can be taught to persevere in order to reach their destinies, which could be a reward for ‘not giving up’. This suggests that children need to be encouraged to not give up, in spite of the challenges they might find themselves in, because their social context will not change but through strengths ‘hope’, ‘pushing forward’, and ‘trying’ they can be ‘rewarded’ and change their lives to be better.

It appears that teachers could teach the significance of social networks that can enable people to help one another in times of need through the stories of Bhuzane, the bee and Mankepe, the singer. Helping other people is motivated by love, ubuntu, friendship and a spirit of togetherness, all indicators of resilience. The children’s articulations suggest a framework that will enable people to help one another, which is characterised by ‘love’, ‘trust’ and ‘working together’. A teacher can begin by building relationships amongst the learners by emphasising love, trust and collaboration through this story. This could be one way of dealing with this stigmatisation and discrimination that OVC suffer through in schools. Literature alludes to this stigmatisation which is sometimes brought about by the teachers, which increases the chances of OVC dropping out of school (Foster & Williamson, 2000). As a former teacher myself, I know
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that learners spend about seven hours at school each day and I imagine that if a school could become a place where children are ‘loved’ and ‘trusted’, their potential for success would be fostered.

When I asked the children during the focus group interviews, why they seemed to be struggling with drawing and writing about their lives, one participant responded that they were aware of who they were ‘poor’, ‘shy’, ‘scared to share their lives with a stranger’, ‘not having parents’ ‘scared to be judged’. This would provide an opportunity for teachers to discuss stigma and the implications thereof with the children, encouraging them to accept all people with love. At the same time, participant 2 seemed to suggest that she knew of ways in which they could overcome the stigmatisation of the ‘poor’ label, as she reached out by saying ‘children in this school could help that child (poor) by maybe visit his house to clean the home’. This to me suggests a sense of agency in the sense that as much as they were aware of themselves and how they are viewed by society, they could do something about their lives. Teachers could therefore encourage a sense of agency, which is a resilience enhancing factor (Theron, 2009).

The children’s articulations through the story of *Masilo and Masilonyana* and the story of *the Silver tree* can give insight to teachers in terms of the kind of families children need. This could be one issue that caregivers could be encouraged to do. In fact, a school as a community could practise such values and show the children that it cares. The messages learnt through this story could be used by teachers to share with caregivers ways in which they could improve their relationships with their foster children. They could also encourage children through this story to appreciate the extended families or caregivers who take care of them. Teachers could also encourage the skill of autonomy (Boyden & Mann, 2005) which is a resilience enhancing factor.
to teach the children that they should not be threatened by difficult situations, because they have
the ability to renew hope and not give up just like the couple in the story.

Teachers can also **gain insight into the children’s lives and thoughts** through the use of
folktales. For example, the comments that were made by some of the children in relation to the
story of *the cruel woman* suggest they could relate the story to a real-life context and are able to
make decisions about their lives based on the content of the story. In the focus group interviews,
some participants revealed that, initially, they had not been looking forward to the story-telling
sessions. They felt ‘*apprehensive*’, ‘*hesitant*’ and ‘*anxious*’. Some of the reasons for these
feelings were because of the ‘*message in one of the stories*’ which was apparently told during the
earlier sessions. According to participant 1, “*the witch in one of the stories is not doing good
things and there is nothing I can learn from that evil woman*”. Contrary to that, participant 2 felt
that although she was hesitant to attend the sessions, the same story about the witch made her
realise that she could ‘*choose not to be that woman in this story*’. In her own words, she said,
“As time went on, I realised that I could make some choices in life without being influenced by
others”. Although the content of the story depicted the cruel actions of the character, children
learnt beyond that, as reflected by participant 2. Teachers could use such stories, with caution; in
order to encourage children to be able to make good choices in life.

**5.5.2 For academic purposes**

Facilitation of a discussion: When children engage with the story, teachers could
facilitate a discussion by drawing on the interpretations such as those of participants 1 and 4 who
felt that this story made them feel happy in order to encourage children who feel sad about this
story since they can identify with it. Discussing the story could facilitate children’s **listening,**
talking and interpretation skills. In that way, the teacher would be creating a space not only for
building strengths but literacy skills as well. Listening and speaking are key to language development because “understanding what is said in a particular situation helps to provide important models for language use” (Gibbons, 2002).

Teamwork and cooperation: Through these stories teachers could teach children strategies of working together, that would foster a sense of building relationships and interdependence. For example, activities such as Jig-saw activities, Information gap and Information transfer activities (Cook, 1998) could be valuable. In order for the learners to complete a given task, they depend on one another. One learner has information which the other one does not have. Whilst they are learning collaborative skills, they could also be developing their writing and oral skills because they need to communicate information to one another and also providing answers to the task at hand.

Development of writing skills: The focus group interviews revealed that the children were happy to engage in the writing activities such as the draw and write technique. For instance, this view was captured in participant 6’s verbatim quote as follows: ‘I liked writing about my life. Maybe there were things that made me feel hurt and I did not know whom to share those things with. I wanted to cast this heavy load and talk about what was inside of me. I knew that if I wrote something down, somebody else would read it. There is a part of us that feel relieved when you share your hurts and it changes you and you become ok. I can share my problems with other people. There are people who care for me when I am in trouble. I like the fact that I could write about my life because there are many things that maybe that can change a person in life. Maybe by writing the other person is trying to help you’.
From this articulation, the writing opportunity that was provided during the data generation method helped the participant to air her views. However, the act of writing on its own suggests that teachers could ask the children to write about their concerns, hurts or feelings. In that way, they would also be developing their writing skills. The focus group interviews also revealed that some participants regarded the writing opportunity a safe space, as most of them ‘preferred to write than to talk’, as writing protected them from ‘being teased by others’, also protected them from ‘facing people by telling them about my past’.

Other participant felt that the writing activity gave him “the space to construct his identity” and to share about his life” and ‘to talk about his past’. As a result of these activities, they are able to think beyond, for instance, participant 2 suggested that ‘creating poems using the stories’ was one of the skills they were capable of doing. In his own words he said ‘Allow us to write poetry. Some of us are skilled in writing poetry. We could write poems that are related to the story. Poems could be in English or isiXhosa.’ As participant 2 stated, folktales could be used to write other activities such as poems which could develop children’s imaginative and writing skills.

Development of oral skills and assertiveness: Engaging with the stories seemed to have allowed the children to be oral and assertive about how they felt about certain practices followed in their communities, as one of the participants mentioned that she could relate to the content of the story, as she knew someone who had experienced a similar situation. Another participant argued strongly about how women should treat their children even if they are not theirs. This story could be used for debating purposes. By engaging in a debate children would not only address the moral questions but develop their oral skills and thinking skills.
The discussion above suggests that folktales can be used by teachers to reach both their pastoral and academic goals.

5.6 REFLECTION ON THE USE OF PEDAGOGICAL STRATEGIES AND MY LEARNING IN CYCLE TWO

As alluded to earlier on, the data generation methods that were used in this cycle were the draw and write/talk technique; creating a collage and write/talk; drama to elicit discussion; focus group interviews and drawings and field notes. In the next section I reflect on my learning in using these methods and to suggest ways that they could be better used by teachers.

5.6.1 Draw and talk/write

Looking back on the process of using drawings, I realise that it was not so easy to do in practice. Although I translated the prompt into IsiXhosa for ease of understanding, I soon realised that many children still had difficulty in translating the prompt into action. Some participants complained that they had never done such an activity before, however, with encouragement, they began to draw. I noticed that their drawings mostly reflected the story as participant 4 had done, but their narratives did not adequately explain how it related to their lives. This meant that I had to probe deeply to discover the feelings and the thoughts the story evoked. When teachers use this technique, they will have to ensure that they follow up the drawing activity with individual or small group processing.

The process of using drawings confirmed the significance of allowing children to either tell or write their explanations. When I told the children to choose how they wanted to explain their drawings, all of them indicated that they were going to write their explanations. However, I noticed that a few of them were not writing, so I asked them if they would agree to tell me about their drawings. Since I did not want to send a message that they could not write, I decided to ask...
everybody a few questions in relation to their drawings. This approach seemed to work, as the children who were initially hesitant to tell me clearly felt at ease when everybody had to tell me something about their work.

Drawings have an educative value, as children who cannot write are afforded an opportunity to explain their images verbally. This supports research findings that drawings serve as a cue for individuals’ thinking and a guide for their verbal expressions (MacGregor et al., 1998). Although I realised that working with children is not simple, I believe that teachers could use drawings in their classrooms for language development, as illustrated in Kendrick and McKay’s study (2004). They used a draw and talk technique with 5-6 year olds to understand their constructions of literacy. In other words, teachers could use drawings with young children who have limited language skills (Guillemin, 2004). Therefore, through their drawings and explanations; children can express their opinions in terms of the resilience enhancing factors that stories have.

5.6.2 Creating a collage

My assumption was that cutting pictures from magazines and newspapers would be an easy task to do, as the pictures were already there and the children simply had to select those they needed to use. Initially, I gave this task to the children as homework, since it was before the holidays, and I thought I was giving them enough time to do the work. To my surprise, when the schools reopened, I discovered that only a few of the children had done the task, with some stating that they had forgotten what the prompt was, while some, did not have time to attend to the task as they were on holiday. One of the children during the focus group interviews said ‘I was lazy to do the collage during the holidays. I kept on thinking about it, in case this activity
Another participant felt that ‘It was difficult to do the collage as some areas were hard but I managed because I even asked at home to help’.

A handful of children mentioned that they did not have magazines or newspapers at home; therefore, they did not attempt the task. This prompted me to supply them, with these, although initially I did not want to, in case my choice of magazines unduly influenced their choice of pictures. I placed the magazines and newspapers on each group table. I then instructed the children that they would have to work on their group’s magazines and newspapers, but were also allowed to check other tables if they felt they needed more variety. I explained the prompt again and then demonstrated how to create a collage. The following is an example of my collage.
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Figure 5.14: my example of a collage

I created this collage as an example of what a collage could look like. It was based on one of the stories that the children engaged with during this cycle of the research process. My explanation of the collage is ‘When I listened to the story I realised how important it is that one can at least have someone to trust in life. It makes me recognise that people who love me can help me when I need help’. My purpose with this example was to illustrate how one could put up pictures together to create a collage.
There were three questions that children had to respond to through their collage. One, they had to tell me how the collage related to the story, secondly, how the story made them feel and thirdly, how the story related to their lives. Since I was exploring how folktales could be used to enhance the resilience of OVC, I wanted the children to tell me how this story made them feel and related to their lives. For teachers to be able to support the needs of OVC, they need to understand about their lives and needs, hence the question, how did the story relate to your life? This part of the question was not explicit in the prompt for drawings but some children decided to indicate how their chosen story related to their lives.

Choosing to use a collage with children in this study is a strategy that teachers could use as a way of exploring issues in the classroom which children may struggle to express verbally, as also found in the study by Chikoko and Khanare (2012). For example, during the focus group interviews, one of the participants said ‘what I liked about the collage and the cutting of pictures is that I was able to talk about my past’. However, there were instances where participants refused to talk about their collage. This example illustrates one of the issues that teachers should be aware of when using a collage with children. It may happen that some of the children may not feel skilled enough in doing a collage and their feelings of inadequacy therefore may lead them to not talk during the activities. Or children may relate the content of the stories to their own lives and may not be comfortable to talk about it at that particular point in time. For instance, participant 1 during the interviews said ‘when I was cutting the pictures I cut a picture of a person- when I looked at that picture, I thought about my mom.’ Teachers need to be open minded in responding to children’s reactions during the activities. Literature warns against the assumption that these creative methods are easy to employ with children (Backett-Milburn &
McKie, 1999). Therefore, not wanting to talk may be an indication that they do not want to engage with the methods Williamson & Butler (cited in Backett-Milburn & McKie, 1999, 390).

As I observed the children during this process, I noticed that they were engaged with one another in terms of selecting pictures, phrases from magazines and even deciding on which newspaper or magazine to choose, even though they were working on individual collages. For instance, they would move from their tables to look for pictures that they thought could be in other children’s magazines. Others were able to offer pictures they thought would be suitable to illustrate the stories. Although they were writing individually, the process required that they cooperate and engage with one another.

Working collaboratively is one of the goals that teachers aim to achieve in their lesson plans (Echevarria, Vogt & Short, 2008). As illustrated in the examples discussed earlier on, using collage allowed the children to express their emotions, in other words, it served as a catalyst for them to think and do (Leitch, 2008). Therefore, teachers could engage the learners in a more authentic participation in the classroom. Through this process, they thought, talked, wrote and listened to one another, a process that would also develop their literacy skills. Those who do not want to talk about their problems could be encouraged to use a collage to represent their thoughts since in this study children’s emotions and voice were evoked through their engagement with stories.

The use of a collage to explore how the stories related to the children’s lives gave insight into the difficulties of using a collage with children. It appeared as if the children were not familiar with creating a collage and doing activities based on it. Since the findings of this study are not meant to be generalised, I believe that is not the case with all children. However, the use
of a collage helped to reveal how the folktales which the children worked on related to their lives, what values these folktales are teaching them and how they felt about these stories.

5.6.3 Drama

I asked the participants to decide from which of the stories in the pool they would like to enact scenes. In order to facilitate the process of selection, I reminded them of the stories they selected earlier before they engaged in drawings and collage. I asked them to write on pieces of papers which stories they would like to dramatise. Having read what they had written, the following stories: Umfazi okhohlakeleyo (The cruel wife), UMasilo noMasilonyana (Masilo and Masilonyana) and UNtulube (Ntulube) seemed to be their favourites. I asked them to divide themselves into groups, according to their choice of stories, and each group was to complete the framework (see Addendum A) as a guide for the creation of plays. I gave them three days to prepare for their presentations.

On the day of the presentation, I asked each group to gather so that I could record their discussion on how they wanted to present their scene. Since I wanted to learn their rationale behind the selected scene and characters, I probed as they were discussing. Our discussions took place after they had presented their scenes. My prompt was: Which characters did you use in your drama, and why? How do these characters make you feel? Afterwards they drew pictures of the characters they created and wrote explanations as to how those characters made them feel.

This was the most challenging session to me and my participants, as most of them had never been involved in acting. As a result, on the first day, after their presentations, I decided to workshop them on how drama is reflected on stage, and gave them another opportunity to perform. I mostly explained to them the importance of facing the audience, enacting the
character, being convincing on stage, being audible and confident (Podlozny, 2000). On the second day, they told me that they were ready to present their plays again. During their presentations of the drama, some groups decided to mime their scenes, whilst a narrator was telling the story. Others decided to verbalise the whole stories whilst some chose certain aspects of the stories only. They wore clothes which reflected their characters in the story, for instance, a mother would put on a ‘doek’ and a pinafore. Those who acted as animals were walking on their fours. As explained in Chapter Three, I was not interested in the visual data but I wanted the children to engage in an activity that is reported in literature to be enjoyable by the young people (Podlozny, 2000). Secondly, I wanted to use their drama as a prompt for discussion.

After the presentations, I engaged with them in discussions to tell me why they chose to reflect those particular scenes, which character or characters they were foregrounding in their scenes and why and how those characters made them feel strong (or not strong)? During our discussion, I noticed that what was common among the three groups was that their focus was not on rationalising why they chose to present their scenes in a particular way; instead they retold their stories. I did not want them to retell the stories, but to tell me why they chose certain scenes in the stories for their drama in order for me to learn the resilience enhancing factors that could be reflected by the characters or the story. In order to facilitate their discussion, I referred them back to the frameworks that they used to plan their scenes. However, this appeared to be a very difficult exercise for them. I then asked them to read or share with me what they had written in their frameworks, because the framework served as a tool to indicate the characters they used in their drama, why they used them, and whether or not those characters made them feel strong. Although they pointed out the characters they had initially selected, talking about those characters in a discussion seemed to be a challenge.
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After their discussions, other children asked me if they could choose between creating a collage and drawing, as a way of illustrating why they chose certain characters. Since this was supposed to be a group agreement, of the three groups, two presented their answers in a collage, whereas one group decided to draw. After my experience with the collage, I was hesitant to let them create a collage but since I wanted to explore the outcome of this process, I agreed. Besides, action research requires flexibility in response to emerging learning. The fact that the children were keen to do collages and drawings indicated to me that they enjoyed and wanted another opportunity to practise. In terms of analysis I examined their drawings and collages with accompanying explanations and used them as a basis for discussion.

Even though they were using drawings, the following example illustrates some of the challenges that I experienced during this phase of the data generation process. This group of children was at first not comfortable about engaging in a discussion, because when I asked them why they chose to portray their scene the way they did, none of them responded to my question. Since in their drama they had portrayed the first part of the story, where Ntulube refused to move until the boy sang to him, I asked why they chose to do so. One of the group participants said it was because they ‘loved the story’. Since they had chosen to draw instead of forming a collage, their drawing, as reflected in Figure 5.5.3 reflects the cow, uNtulube, the boy and two other figures.
Figure 5.15.: Example of a group drawing

When I asked them what those figures represented, they said the ‘cannibals’. This example highlights the challenges of facilitating a discussion that serves as a caveat for teachers who intend to use such methods to explore children’s insights about their lives in order to support them. As mentioned before, there could be various reasons why these children chose not to engage in the discussion.

However, I believe that using drama as a catalyst to understand how the characters in the stories made the children feel, revealed how educative this process might be. The children had to think, by completing the framework and being able to hypothesise by drawing conclusions about the story, identifying from the story what the problem was, and then choosing a scene that they would like to portray. That involved a lot of planning and engagement with one another. They had to agree or disagree on how to portray the scene and reach a consensus about it. This process reflected language use which suggests that the development of thinking and language use in their first language was evident in the process. The children had to talk and listen to one another. They had to read the writing frame and write. All these required language skills, which they had an opportunity to exercise.
The drama strategy taught me that it was a good way to build confidence in children, especially those who might be shy to express themselves in writing or orally. Since I used the focus group interviews as both a reflective exercise and means of data generation process, children confirmed through their drawings that drama allowed them to take on another persona and so was less threatening. The following examples illustrate this point:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Example of a drawing</th>
<th>Accompanying explanation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><img src="image" alt="Drawing" /></td>
<td>Her accompanying explanation said ‘<em>Lo mzobo ndimzobileyo ngumntu oncumileyo. Mna bendiziva mnandi kwezi activities besizenza ezinjenge mizobo, drama. Bendivuya kakhulu. Enkosi. Bendiziva kamnandi ngezi zinto ebezisenziwa apha kule class yethu ukufana nokuzoba nokuactor. Zindenze ndakhululeka kunakuqala ngezizinto bezithethwa apha kuba bendihlala ndizibuza ba kutheni mna ndinjena kodwa ndithe ndongena apha kule class ndaziva ncono kakhulu kengoku lomzobo ubonisa ukuvuya kwam bungakanani</em>’. (This picture is of a smiling person. I was <strong>feeling good</strong> when I was doing the activities such as <strong>drawings</strong> and <strong>drama</strong>. I was so happy. Thank you. I was <strong>feeling happy</strong> about these things that we did in this class such as <strong>drawing and acting</strong>. I felt so <strong>relieved and free unlike before</strong>. I used to ask myself why I was like this but the moment I joined this class I felt much better as <strong>this drawing is showing how joyful I am</strong>).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Example of a drawing</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><img src="image" alt="Example Drawing" /></td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Accompanying explanation</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Ndiziva ndimnandi ngapahakathi ingathi bendikledrama bendiyenza bendiziva strong very happy. Ndiva nam into kuba ndenza idrama and bendiyenza ngomdla kakhulu. Ngoku bendiyenza nyhani lapart yentaka. I was feel so strong ingathi iyandixelela into yokuba ndiyakwazi ukuyenza idrama ngendlela efanelekileyo. Bendingazazi ukuba ndiyakwazi ukuyenza idrama but ngeziactivity besizenza they show me that I can do the drama and my feeling show me that too. And I said with my mouth yes I can do it so that’s why I draw a person smiling because I was happy and smile.” (I feel good inside as if I was really acting. I felt strong and happy. As I was doing the drama I did it with enthusiasm. As I was playing the part of a bird, I was feeling so strong as if I knew exactly how to act. I didn’t know I could do drama but the activities that I did show me that I could do drama and my feeling show me that too.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 5.16: Examples of focus group interview drawings**

Based on my experience of working with the participants in using drama, I suggest that teachers should first teach them the elements that are important in presenting a scene. Before they engage in drama, I think they should be presented with an opportunity to think about what they would like to present. In my case, since I aimed to give them the power to decide on how they would like to present their drama, I engaged in a reflective discussion which did not provide a lot of input. I realised that children need to be probed a lot and they need to be given ample ways of expressing their thoughts such as drawings, collage and verbal or written explanations.
5.6.4 Focus group interviews

During the process of conducting interviews with children, I realised that it was not an easy thing to do. In terms of the facilitation, I aimed to have a discussion whereby the children would engage in a participative way, but I soon realised that was not the case. I noted in my diary the following thoughts which capture what was happening in the session.

Yesterday, the young ones in both focus groups were shy to speak. I am not sure whether it is because they are in the same group as the 12 or 14 year olds and therefore felt intimidated. I noticed that since the younger ones were giving short answers, I had to follow up with a question and affirmed their answers by thanking them for their contribution. However, as the interview progressed I noticed that they were beginning to open up. I am not sure whether they recognised that I also valued their opinions. I noticed that in both groups, although I posed questions in isiXhosa, the mother tongue of the participants, the older learners preferred to answer in English or code mixed and code switched, something which might have intimidated the younger ones. (12/08/11).

Although I planned to have a discussion with the children, I soon realised that in order for me to understand their perceptions on the process of engaging with stories, I should be flexible in approach by asking a direct question to an individual at a time and then finding out from the other child whether she or he agrees with that view. At first I would let them answer as they felt like, but I soon realised that if I do not direct the questions to the individuals, I might be faced with silence. I found the question ‘Is there anyone who would like to add something?’ not getting me a response to the question. In other words, I had to be clear and specific in my questioning. Although the 12-14 year olds were eloquent, sometimes, they repeated their views in different questions; however, I thought that was their own way of expressing how they felt. I therefore learnt that using focus group interviews could enable the participants to express themselves more.
I believed that the children could generate an interactive conversation, therefore my probing had to lead them to that direction of arguing contrary to each other on certain viewpoints. However, this was not an easy goal to achieve. I learnt that complementing the focus group interviews with drawings provided additional information which was not reflected in the interviews. By complementing the interviews with drawings and explanations or talk I wanted them to explore issues which the interviews could not represent. As such, the following examples revealed information which the children did not articulate in their focus group interviews. This indicates that there is value in focus group drawings as the data presented below affirmed the resilience potential of folktales. I indicated in Chapter Three that I used focus group interviews as a tool to reflect on the process of data generation and as means of data generation as well.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focus group drawing</th>
<th>Accompanying explanation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><img src="image1.png" alt="Drawing 1" /></td>
<td><em>My life has changed because I was so strange like when someone said ‘S, go and pour me water’. I mown and chick him/her but when I do those activities my life changed and I appreciate that thank you. And at school the other kids don’t like me. I always cry but when I got here everything change and at church I was quiet to people and my friend of my sister always swearing at me and I clap my sister. So all in all I’ve changed.’</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image2.png" alt="Drawing 2" /></td>
<td><em>‘I feel as if I’m a butterfly because a butterfly is beautiful and a hard working animal that stands for itself. Before I did these activities I was always down and I didn’t believe in myself but now I do. What made me draw a butterfly it’s because a butterfly may be small but where it goes it leaves a mark that is beautiful and it shows its...’</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
talent. I was afraid to show my talent but now I can show it to the whole world because it’s mine. God didn’t make a mistake by giving it to me and I thank him. I feel like a butterfly cause its free to do whatever it likes to do and every day I fly like it. A butterfly going high and high to prove that I can be someone in life.

“I am special’. The explanation is ‘After all the activities we did I realised that I am special and I am love. People used to say things that I did not like but now I tell them that I am special to other people and whatever you do or say will never change who I am. This is how I felt after the activities.’

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Figure 5.17: Examples of reflective focus group drawings</th>
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From theses example, it appears that the children learnt a lot from engaging with the stories. As a result their attitudes changed for the better. This was additional information which was not articulated by the participants during the interviews. Through these examples I learnt that teachers could recognise the children as active agents in the creation of their own worlds in terms of their different views on the stories and how the activities have contributed in their own lives.

5.7 CONCLUSION

The themes highlighted in this chapter suggest that folktales have a resilience enhancing potential. A story is a form of a text (Murray & Johanson, 1996). The South African government’s strategy to meet the challenges of the high prevalence of HIV and AIDS focuses on prevention by promoting life skills and HIV and AIDS education in schools (Department of
basic Education (DBE), 2011). Therefore teachers could use these stories to reach their pastoral and academic purposes. The methods used in this cycle revealed that they are valuable tools that could be used by teachers to encourage children’s positive coping responses. However, using these methods made me realise that they are not straightforward and teachers need to be trained in using them to ensure the maximum benefit for both pastoral and academic outcomes.

It appears that in both cycles One and Two, there was an indication that folktales have a resilience enhancing potential. In cycle One there was evidence of more positive sense of self and relations with peers. In cycle Two, there was evidence that folktales have impacted on the participants as they identified resilient attributes of the characters in the stories; how these characters interacted with their ecology (families, friends and community), and cultural elements (Ubuntu and ethnic pride) these stories confirmed which are resilience indicators.

5.8 SUMMARY OF CHAPTER

In this chapter I presented findings of cycle two. I first presented a brief overview of the second cycle of research. Then, I presented the raw data and discussed themes by controlling them against literature on resilience and OVC. Afterwards, based on the themes, I made suggestions on how teachers could use the folktales. Finally, I reflected on the process of data generation and my learning in this second cycle of the study. The next chapter will provide a summary of my study, recommendation and potential contribution to knowledge.
6.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I first present a summary of my study. Secondly, I explain how the data answered my research questions. Then, I reflect on the overall process and significance of what I learned during the study. Thereafter, I explain the methodological, theoretical and pedagogical contributions of my study. Finally, I outline the limits of this study and then provide recommendations for further study.

6.2 SUMMARY OF STUDY

The purpose of this study was to explore and describe whether and how folktales could be used to encourage resilience in children orphaned and rendered vulnerable by HIV and AIDS (OVC). The purpose of this study was driven by literature (see Chapter One) which documented that there was an increase in the number of OVC who were in schools and that teachers were struggling to provide them with care and support, in addition to their normal teaching load. I approached this study from a strengths-based lens by viewing the children not as victims of their circumstances, but as having the ability to overcome their difficulties. I also viewed the communities in which these children lived as having inherent strengths. Some of the cultural resources found in such communities were identified as the following: the rite of passage; Ubuntu, indigenous agricultural practices; and folktales. In this study, I focused on folktales, because, firstly, I believed that they were easily accessible; secondly, since they belong to a
genre of stories, they have the power to heal (Arad, 2004). I framed this study within a resilience framework that recognised that resilience was not an individual trait, but an outcome of interaction between children and their contexts (Luthar et al., 2000).

My research questions were:

- How can folktales enhance the resilience of children orphaned and rendered vulnerable by HIV and AIDS?
- How can folktales be used by teachers to reach both pastoral and academic goals?

In order to answer my research questions, my objectives were:

- To explore the resilience enhancing potential of folktales.
- To investigate ways in which teachers could use folktales to support OVC in a way that enhances the attainment of both pastoral and academic outcomes.

Based on a transformative paradigm, which incorporated indigenous ways of knowing, as explained in Chapter Three, I adopted an action research design that enabled me to embark on a journey of learning. I used folktales in two main ways. In the first cycle, I merely told stories to children in a children’s home setting and to those who lived with foster parents, in a teacher centred way, for the following reasons: I was interested to see if this was enough to encourage resilience; whether using stories this way would confirm their resilience enhancing potential; and whether they could be used in primary schools as a daily intervention that could be easily incorporated into daily teaching activities.

What I learned from this cycle alerted me to the potential for a more learner- centred way of using stories, and also led me to change the site to a school setting. Firstly, I learnt a lot about the children’s context, which confirmed my view that their context had enhanced their resilience
to an extent. That led me to believe that more participative approaches would allow their ability to enhance their own resilience to emerge, and since I needed a more stable base, I changed the site. Secondly, the realisation that the methodology I used to evaluate the storytelling-intervention caused ethical problems for me, given my transformative paradigm, meant that I had to establish how a more participatory approach could be used. Thirdly, I learnt that using indigenous language allowed the participants to reflect more deeply on issues; hence I believed that participative approaches would further enhance their engagement with stories.

In the second cycle, I employed the use of visual arts based methods (drawings, collage and drama) and conventional methods (focus group interviews, discussions and reflective notes). The purpose of this intervention was to find out how using stories in a participative way could encourage the children’s resilience and how they could be used as part of pedagogical activities in schools. My personal learning in this cycle was the following: firstly, using visual arts based methods was easier for children than talking in discussions and interviews. Therefore, the visual methods created a space for the children to share experiences about their lives and strengths. Secondly, I learnt that children were interested to learn in new ways, if given the opportunity. For example, during the data generation process, they were more interested in using drawings and collage than in expressing their views in a verbal manner, as they were used to. They also gained a chance to be listened to as they were engaging with the stories. During their discussions, they asked if they could answer my questions by using drawing or a collage approach, which indicates to me that they liked the visual methods. Finally, the participatory approach used in this second cycle suited my transformative ideals well, since I aimed to create a space for them to speak about their lives and link their experiences to the resilience enhancing aspects of the stories, such as trust, love, hope and perseverance.
In my analysis of data, I foregrounded the children’s articulations and perspectives that informed the findings in this study. In that way, I was able to determine the resilience enhancing or detracting factors in their lives as they explained them in relation to the folktales, and to make suggestions on how teachers could use folktales to encourage and strengthen the coping responses of OVC.

Similar themes that emerged in both cycles of this study, as explained in Chapter Five, confirmed the validity of my findings that the folktales were able to enhance resilient coping responses in children facing adversity. Through continual action and reflection, across two cycles, I gradually learnt how to attain my research aims. Since, in both cycles, children engaged with the stories (passively and actively), as explained in Chapter Three, the participatory expectation in action research was achieved.

This study was significant, because the findings suggest that teachers could use the folktales which are cheap and easily accessible- to support the positive coping responses of OVC in ways that can be easily integrated into normal school curriculum activities. Data generated in this study indicated, firstly, the resilience enhancing potential of the folktales; secondly, how folktales could be used by teachers to enhance the resilience of children facing adversity. In the next section, I explain how data answered my research questions.

6.3 ANSWERING MY RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In this study my research questions were:

- *How can folktales enhance the resilience of children orphaned and rendered vulnerable by HIV and AIDS?*

- *How can folktales be used by teachers to reach both pastoral and academic goals?*
6.3.1 How can folktales enhance resilience of children orphaned and rendered vulnerable by HIV and AIDS?

The meanings that children made about their lives after the story-telling intervention, in Cycle One, suggested evidence of an increased positive sense of self and appreciation of their friends. For example, the analysis of the drawings and accompanying explanations revealed more about their competencies; what they were capable of doing; their conceptions of themselves; and that their friends played a significant role in their lives.

After listening to the folktales, it appears as if the participating children were able to reflect on themselves and reveal inner strengths, which might have been prompted by the events in the stories, which showed how the characters in these stories interacted with and were influenced by their social contexts. As discussed in Chapter Four, characters in the folktales have to tap into their inner strengths to cope in their ecologies; they have to rely on friendships and other networks in their contexts in order to cope. My analysis suggests that the folktales impacted on the children’s emotions and the use of drawings and accompanying explanations allowed them space to think about and express their own strengths and feelings.

When the children engaged with the stories, I realised that, as discussed in Chapter Five, the stories encouraged their positive coping responses. The children mentioned that the stories made them feel happy and strong, since they communicated messages such as perseverance, love, hope, care, interdependence, friendship, trust, assertiveness, strong personal qualities, unity, sense of community, Ubuntu, giving, sharing resources, and a positive attitude. Some of the participants began to express their needs as they asserted that the kind of family they needed was one that would love, care, understand and support them. This suggests that folktales have messages that can be used to encourage children’s positive coping responses. These feelings
might have been prompted by how they viewed the interactions between and among the
individuals in the stories. The findings suggest that they admired the qualities of the characters in
the story; hence they related what these characters experienced, to their own lives.

I realised that listening and engaging with the stories, as indicated in Section 5.6, changed
how they initially viewed themselves. For example, there was an indication of the children
changing from doubting themselves to becoming confident, from having negative attitudes
towards other people to focusing on their strengths, which gave them hope for the future. They
‘opened up’ more about themselves and foregrounded their strengths, such as their capabilities,
their positive self-concept and self-identity. These findings suggest that engaging with and
listening to the stories enabled them to see their lives as meaningful and enabled them to see
themselves as taking an active role in their own lives. The findings also suggest that folktales can
be used by teachers to encourage children’s positive coping responses in a way that could be
integrated into the school curriculum.

6.3.2 How folktales be used by teachers to reach both pastoral and academic goals?

My field experience and findings gave me insight into how teachers could use the
folktales as a tool to encourage the resilience of OVC. Findings from the study suggest that, on
the one hand, the storytelling methodology could be used in a teacher-centred way to encourage
the resilience of OVC and, on the other hand, that teachers could engage the children through the
use of collage, drama and drawings. As discussed in both Chapters Four and Five on my
reflections on the storytelling and use of visual arts based methods, there is evidence that
teachers (and caregivers) could use the folktales to enhance the resilience of the children in their
classrooms. In the next section I will provide insights into my learning in the study on how
teachers could use the folktales.
This study revealed the elements of the context that are conducive for learning. Using the folktales in the children’s home provided insight into the significance of a conducive environment that would facilitate learning (Mercer, 1995). The findings in Cycle One revealed that the children at the home were generally happy, and enjoyed positive relations with their caregivers, peers and the community. Moreover, after the story telling sessions, they revealed their strengths, which I attribute to both the messages in the stories to which they listened and the influence of their interaction with their environment. In other words, through the story-telling approach that I employed in the children’s home, I came to understand that a more structured environment with a lot of social capital (Swartz, 1997) could support learning, such as that provided in schools. This study also showed that pedagogical approaches that engage the learners and create opportunities for them to air their views could enable teachers to encourage the positive coping responses of learners.

My informal chats with the caregiver at the children’s home and the teachers at the participating school revealed that children enjoyed listening and engaging with the stories; and their response to the stories confirmed this view. The teachers commented that children who attended the storytelling sessions, had developed more confidence in their classrooms. This suggests that when teachers use folktales, it is more beneficial to engage the learners in the learning process. Listening to a story is an engaging task, as children formulate their own imaginations and make decisions based on what they are listening to (Zin & Nasir, 2007). Engaging in drama to elicit a discussion, drawing and talking/writing; collage and writing/talking and discussions are tools that fully engage the learners in the learning process. This view supports Vygotsky’s (cited in Donald et al., 2010, p.55) mega theory of social constructivism,
which states that, by nature, knowledge is co-constructed and that individuals learn from one another.

A prejudice that teachers should avoid when working with folktales is the assumption that if the learners are of African origin, they will be familiar with the content of these stories. In my study, the participants grew up in townships in the urban areas; most of them were never told these stories by their parents, unlike myself, who grew up in rural areas and had the opportunity of listening to the stories. This assumption was challenged when I asked the children to recall the stories they liked best and those they would like to engage with. For someone who is familiar with the stories, recall would be easy. However, this was not the case, and as explained in my reflection in Chapter Five, I had to devise strategies to facilitate the recall process. When teachers want children to recall the stories to be used during a lesson, I suggest that they use a story-game (as explained in section 3.5.1), which is the recall strategy that I used in Cycle Two, which facilitated the recall process.

The process of using folktales also has an impact on teacher competence, since teachers themselves should be able to facilitate discussions (Mercer, 1995) and ask questions around the stories. A well-facilitated discussion will enable the learners to talk about the meanings these stories have for them, how they relate to their lives, and what lessons they can learn from them that make them feel strong (or not). The prompts that I used in order for the children to respond, determined the quality of information that the children wrote or spoke about. This was more evident during the focus group interviews, when some of the questions that I posed were not answered, due to their ambiguity (see Section 5.7 in Chapter Five). It is therefore important that when teachers want to support children by gaining insight into their lives and situations they should be competent in facilitating a discussion and an interaction by asking questions that elicit
talk and more input from the learners and also on how to handle feelings and refer them further, if needed.

The language that is used throughout the discussion and interaction with the children will largely determine the success of the learning process. In this study, I told the stories to the children in isiXhosa, which was their mother tongue. Although the written instructions were in English, I translated those instructions into the mother tongue. I allowed the children to write or speak either in the mother tongue or in English, which was the language of learning and teaching at their schools. I noticed that some of the children chose to write and speak in English, although it was evident that they were not fluent in English, in both their writing and speaking skills. However, the flexibility of using both languages during the research process provided insight into how language was used in the learners’ school context.

The post-intervention drawings and accompanying explanations revealed a change in terms of the writing skills children displayed. They wrote more sentences in the post-intervention data because they had an improved sense of self. This suggests that when teachers use the stories in the classrooms, they should provide more opportunities for writing, as the resilience enhancing potential of folktales seems to have evoked a desire to talk more about themselves. The ability to write seems to have been prompted by the use of the visual methods: drawings and collage. Teachers, therefore, could support the coping responses of the children through the use of collage and drawings, but caution need to be exercised in terms of how these are used. For instance, teachers cannot assume that images alone will reveal children’s opinions about the issue under discussion. I learnt that for one to understand the images, one needed to follow up with a conversation. In my study, if I had not discussed the images with their producers, I would
have misinterpreted their meanings; hence, the explanations that accompanied the images helped me to understand what the children were saying.

The use of folktales has implications for teachers in terms of accessing and reviewing texts. Literature shows that not all folktales have positive messages (Malimabe-Ramagoshi et al., 2008); therefore, it is important for teachers to select folktales that have resilience potential messages that would be helpful to the children. The fact that in this study the folktales that were used were first assessed by a panel of psychologists, social workers, and educators, confirms the importance of selecting those that would be most beneficial to children.

This study provided strong evidence that teachers could employ the folktales to support the resilience of OVC through telling and using more participatory methods such as collage, drawings and discussions. The process that needs to be taken into consideration, involves modelling what teachers want the children to do, providing clear instructions in a language that children would understand best, discussing children’s views, with the aim of gaining insight into their situations, thinking and opinions, providing relevant support based on what they have identified as a challenge in their lives, and selecting stories that would facilitate positive learning.

6.4 REFLECTION ON MY LEARNING

I consider understanding children’s social realities as the foundation for planning for the intervention or support that researchers or teachers intend to implement. Planning an intervention without basing it on the actual needs of the participants will not be effective. In this study, using folktales as an intervention suggested an opportunity for me to become aware of the children’s needs and to understand how they made meaning of their own lives, in relation to their interpretation of the folktales. This, in turn, provided me with insight that both confirmed and
contradicted literature about OVC. I found that the children in this study were generally happy and enjoyed good relations with their caregivers, in contradiction to literature that positions OVC as vulnerable to abuse by caregivers (UNAIDS, 2010). It was evident that OVC are exposed to risk factors, as discussed in section 1.1, and that such adversity is a necessary antecedent to the development of resilience, as confirmed by literature on resilience. As a former teacher myself, I now understand the role that was played by their ecologies in shaping their lives. I feel proud that my study could contribute to the discussions and debates taking in teacher forums around OVC.

Working with children on a one-on-one basis and actually witnessing them applying their minds to issues that affect them, made me realise the importance of engaging learners in learning. During the process of engaging with stories, children had to infer, make decisions, discuss, compare, write, read, listen and speak- a process that required the application of their cognitive and language skills. This confirms that children cannot be marginalised and assumed to not have a contribution in research. In my study, they had to think on their own how folktales related to their lives and what messages they could learn from the characters. The different and thought-provoking themes these children derived out of the stories suggested that all children could learn and think if guided well.

Using the different visual methods in order to access children’s thoughts and support their language abilities made me realise that there was a great need for teachers to apply these pedagogical strategies across the curriculum. On reflection, I realised that although I was a stranger to the children, they were able to speak to me and divulge details of their lives through the drawings and collage. This means, that if teachers want to gain insight into the children’s lives in order to support them, a solution could lie in the use of visual methods. I am mindful of the fact that children can air their views anytime when given an appropriate chance and
environment. However, in this study, children confirmed this view themselves during the focus group interviews; and therefore engaging with the stories through visual methods provided such an opportunity for them to talk.

I was excited to use traditional African stories (folktales) in this study, as it meant repositioning them in children’s literature. I am aware that nowadays these stories are in an adapted and animated form and that our children do not have access to the original oral version of these stories. This study will therefore bring back to the classrooms and schools literature in its authentic form. This means that schools who receive literature books later than the other schools could utilise the services of the community members who know these stories and were told them when they were growing up. The findings in this study reveal that telling stories to children enhance their positive sense of self, which means that if community members could be invited to schools to tell stories, children’s positive coping responses could be enhanced. This implies that schools could work in partnership with the communities, for the benefit of the learners.

Folktales can be utilised by teachers in order to develop the resilience of children. This means that a pastoral role can also be exercised as a part of the normal school curriculum. The findings in this study suggest that the mere act of telling a story could encourage children’s positive coping responses; meaning that all teachers could use them to enhance their pastoral role. The fact that children were able to reveal more information about themselves, in writing, after listening to stories and when they were engaging in different activities using the stories, suggests that their literacy skills were also improving. Using folktales, therefore, could be a resource that reaches both the pastoral and educational outcomes of teachers.
During the field work, I learnt that ethical issues were very crucial and needed to be taken seriously by any person who intended to engage in research with vulnerable groups. When children decided to withdraw from the study based on the reasons explained in Section 4.6, I experienced first-hand how important it was to commit to the ethical principles stated in the consent form. In my consent form, I stated that the children could withdraw from the study at anytime. I was confronted with the reality of being aware of ethical issues when doing research with children. Literature indicates that children sometimes feel obliged to take part in research, especially, when their gatekeepers have consented, whereas they may find the whole exercise boring (Backett-Milburn, 1999). Working in the field taught me the importance of committing to one’s ideals.

As indicated in my Chapter Three, I planned to conduct this research from a transformative lens, which led me to create opportunities for children to express their views. My experiences of story-telling methodology, as explained in section 4.5, taught me that a design that was not participatory, was not ideal. For example, in Cycle One of study, I planned to not form attachments with the children, since I wanted to ascertain the resilience potential of folktales. Although I explained how the process would proceed, the children still asked me a lot of questions about myself; they were concerned when I was not going to come the following week, as they still wanted to talk and engage. It was clear to me that working with children requires a lot of flexibility. I also learnt that ethical issues could be caused by not compromising the pre-and post-test design that I employed in Cycle One, however, I was uncomfortable at the lack of a relationship with the children.

Last, but not least, I embarked on this study with the desire and expectation that I would learn and grow as a teacher educator. I believe that the learning I gleaned from this study has
helped me to better educate pre- and in-service teachers on how to continue encouraging children’s resilience, whilst at the same time developing their literacy.

6.5 POTENTIAL CONTRIBUTION OF THIS STUDY

In this section I will present the potential contribution of this study in terms of the methodological, theoretical and pedagogical insights gained.

6.5.1 Methodological contribution

I believe that this study has contributed to the methodology of conducting research with children, in particular, a research tradition that upholds that children have a right to be heard and their views to be recognised. The visual methods that I employed in this study allowed for the generation of in-depth data on the resilience potential of folktales. The children’s perspectives contributed to the knowledge presented in this study. I used their articulations of drawings and collage as the first layer of analysis. Through this study, I was able to show that indigenous methodologies, such as gathering children round in a circle, whilst telling stories, could work best with children. Interacting with children in their mother tongue meant that their culture was respected and recognised. The lessons learnt in this study made methodological contribution to the ethics of working with children and the use of culturally appropriate resources in the field, namely folktales.

6.5.2 Theoretical contribution

This study has contributed to the social ecological perspective of resilience by confirming that cultural resources, such as indigenous African stories (folktales) could encourage the positive coping responses of vulnerable children. As such, the findings suggest that folktales have a resilience enhancing potential. I have provided evidence that one’s ecology can provide a
sustainable resource that could be used to enhance individual coping responses. Therefore folktales as a cultural resource found in African contexts, can be added in literature on resilience as a cultural protective resource that can \textit{buffer children against risk factors}. The lessons learnt from this study could make a theoretical contribution to the study of resilience; particularly, that the resources that can be used to enhance resilience, cannot be used outside the social context of the children. My study has confirmed the ecosystemic dimension of the resilience theory. The rich data I gleaned from the activities and drawings gave me insight into the lives of the participants, something, I was not originally aiming for. This data indicated the transactional interaction between the participants and their peers, local community and the school.

6.5.3 \textbf{Pedagogical contribution}

This study has contributed to the meaning making implications of using folktales, which can aid the pedagogical strategies used by teachers. The use of folktales in the classroom would mean that teachers have a cost-effective resource to utilise that is effective in promoting the strengths of vulnerable groups. This implies that teachers can make a difference in improving the quality of life for children, not only vulnerable groups, which could partly address the dangers of stigmatising such groups in schools. This means stories can be told and used with all children in the classroom. In terms of teacher education, this study suggests that using folktales could be an approach that could influence curriculum designers to promote folktales as children’s literature that could be taught at school in order to enhance the resilience of all children in schools.

6.6 \textbf{LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY}

I am aware that in this study there were certain limitations as stated below:

- The fact that I could not control the other variables, such as the context that might have contributed to children’s resilience means I cannot claim that stories alone
contributed to their resilience. However, the noticeable difference reflected in the children’s drawings and explanations after the story telling sessions, suggest that the stories encouraged the children’s resilience.

- In this study, some of the children presented their data in IsiXhosa, and I then translated that data into English. Although this indicates the authenticity of data, which is strength of the study, I acknowledge that some of the nuances and meanings that children were trying to put across may have been lost in translation. However, I used the services of another colleague, who is an expert in IsiXhosa, to verify my translation.

- In this study I used a small sample and did not intend to generalise my findings. However, I believe that what I have learnt and what the findings suggest shed light on how folktales could encourage the resilience of OVC.

6.7 **RECOMMENDATIONS**

In this study, the findings revealed that children perceive that folktales could encourage their positive coping responses. In that way, I was able to base my suggestions on how teachers could use these stories in their own classrooms, on my field experience of working with children.

6.7.1 **Recommendations for further study**

Although my objective was to investigate ways in which teachers could use folktales, I recommend that further studies be undertaken on how the caregivers could engage with the children through the folktales, besides merely telling them the stories. It would be interesting to find out how they view the experience of using folktales to encourage children’s strengths.

For future studies on folktales, I also recommend the greater use of other visual methods, such as storyboards and photo-voice as tools for the children’s engagement with the stories in
groups. The aim would be to find out if other methods would produce knowledge that was not articulated in this study.

I also recommend the use of collage and drawings as group methodology so as to enhance the co-operative and cognitive skills of children during the research process. The findings could reveal how children make decisions and the processes that are involved in reaching a decision in a group setting. The process of data generation could be filmed and recorded, so that both the researchers and the participants could contribute to the analysis.

In future studies that involve learners, researchers could work collaboratively with teachers in order to gain insight into how teachers think folktales could be used with children as a tool to enhance their resilience. There is a need to investigate more effective ways of enabling the teachers to use folktales across the curriculum.

### 6.7.2 Recommendations for teacher training

For the future training of teachers (in-service and pre-service), I recommend that visual methods, such as the ones employed in this study, should be incorporated in the curriculum as part of how they could use stories with the children in their classrooms. Teachers could be trained in using folktales as a resource for a holistic approach that could reach subject outcomes and also help to develop the resilience of the children.

### 6.8 CONCLUSION

In this chapter I stated what this study sought to illuminate by presenting the conclusions that I reached and the insights that I gained in the process of the study. I also outlined how my study contributed to theory, methodology and pedagogy. Moreover, I stated the personal insights and development that could benefit me as a teacher educator and a parent. I conclude this study
by emphasizing that stories such as folktales can have a long lasting effect in the minds of the listeners and can enhance the resilience of individuals as reflected in my discussion section. The following quote by Walter Benjamin (cited in Parkinson, 2009, p.143) encapsulates my view well.

“The value of information does not survive the moment in which it was new..A story is different. It does not expend itself. It preserves and concentrates its strength and is capable of releasing it even after a long time..It resembles the seed of grain, which have lain for centuries in the chambers of the pyramids shut up airtight and have retained their germinative power to this day”.

The quote suggests that stories do not get old; they have a long lasting impact. This was evident in my study as I told participants folktales that have been passed from generation to generation, some of which I listened to. Folktales therefore can be utilized by teachers to support children to better cope in adversity.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


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http://www.unaids.org


APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: Letter of information about the study

01 April 2009

You are invited to participate in a study looking at whether stories can help children to grow up well. To participate, you must be 9-14 years old and Xhosa speaking.

The purpose of this study is to see whether reading stories to you might help you to cope better with difficult things in your life.

What you will be asked to do: The study will involve four parts:

Part 1: You will meet me, the student-researcher and you will be asked to talk about your life. You will be asked to draw and talk or write about your life. As you are doing that, you may remember stressful times in your life, which may make you feel uncomfortable. A contact number will be provided after the study if you would like someone to talk to about your thoughts and feelings. The first meeting will take 1-2 hours. Your conversation will be taped. I will also talk to your caregiver.

Part 2: Once a week, for 24 weeks, I will tell you and about twenty nine other children a story. Each story will take about ten to fifteen minutes. I will arrange where and when I will tell you the story so that it suits you and the other children.

Part 3: When these 24 weeks are completed, I will return and again ask you to talk about your life. You will be asked for your opinions on growing up, and about your community, your friends, your family, and other relationships that are important to you. This will take 1-2 hours. Your conversation will be taped. I will also talk to your caregiver.

Possible risks and benefits: Because you will be read to in a group, confidentiality is not possible. However, only your first name or a pseudonym that you choose (e.g. Participant X / Harry Potter) will be used when referring to what you said, and we will keep specific details of where you come from confidential. Participation is completely voluntary and you can stop the study at any time, without consequences. If you become concerned with anything you said, you can let us know, and your interviews, or parts of these, will be destroyed. You may ask any questions you have before, during, and after the study.
Only I will know your full name. The research data and recordings will be kept for the foreseeable future (five years) in a secure location at Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University. I will also ask you if you are interested in being contacted again in the future should the research continue.

The only time I will have to inform someone of your participation in the study and provide them with your full name is if you are at risk of being hurt by someone or hurting someone else. In that case, I will explain to you that I must get you help from someone like a social worker, psychologist or the police, but I will let you know I am doing this.

I intend to publish information from the study in books and journals, as well as share parts of the videotape we make with people in educational settings and at conferences around the world so they can learn about children like yourself and what helps children cope. I will send you a copy of our final report when the study is complete, and I will come back to tell you and some of the adults in your community about what we discovered.

Questions/ Problems: If you have any questions or concerns before, during or after the study, please contact the student researcher or the research leader. See below a letter which confirms that this study has been approved by the university.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PHD student researcher</th>
<th>Research leader and Promoter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nokhanyo Mayaba</td>
<td>Lesley Wood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University</td>
<td>Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thank you!
Dear Dr Wood

READ ME TO RESILIENCE! A QUASI-EXPERIMENTAL PILOT STUDY AIMED AT THE EMPOWERMENT OF AIDS-ORPHANS

Your above-entitled application for ethics approval served at the October 2008 meeting of the Faculty Research, Technology and Innovation Committee (Education).

We take pleasure in informing you that the application was approved by the Committee.

The ethics clearance reference number is H08-EDU-ASE-024.

We wish you well with the project. Please inform your co-investigators of the outcome, and convey our best wishes.

Yours sincerely

Prof M M Botha
Chairperson: ERTIC
APPENDIX B: Assent Form to be signed by participants

If you agree to what I have explained, please place an “X” in the ‘yes’ boxes to show that you understand and agree with each statement:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Yes, I understand</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I understand the information about the study in the Information Letter. Any questions I had were answered.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I realize that participation is completely voluntary and that I can stop the study at any time. If I am uncomfortable answering any question, I may choose not to answer.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Because I will be read to in a group, my participation will not be confidential. However, I understand that my full name will not be used, nor will specific details of where I live be shared, when information from the interviews is used by researchers.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I understand that what I say may be quoted at great length in publications, presentations and the final report. If I become concerned with anything I said, I can ask for parts, or all, of what I said not to be quoted. I may also have deleted any parts of the interview I want deleted.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I understand that even if my parent or guardian consents to my taking part in the study, it is my decision whether I want to participate. If I do not wish to participate, or want to withdraw from the study at any time, my wishes will be respected without penalty. My parent’s or guardian’s consent does not make me have to participate.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>6. I understand that if something troubles me while participating, the researcher will provide me with information about community resources (e.g. a local psychologist) that might help me. I understand that I will be responsible for the payment of such a professional in the event that I should follow-up the referral.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I agree to take part in this study.

_____________________________________________ ______________________
(Research Participant’s Signature) (Date)

I agree to allow my child to participate

_____________________________________________ ____________
(Parent or Guardian’s Signature) (Date)

The study has been explained to the young person and this form signed voluntarily

_____________________________________________ ______________________
(Researcher’s Signature) (Date)
APPENDIX C: Letter to the parents/caregivers

Dear Parent/Guardian

My name is Nokhanyo Mayaba, and I am a PHD student at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University. I am conducting research under the supervision of Professor Lesley Wood. The Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (NMMU) has given its approval for the implementation of the project “Read me to Resilience” [HO8-EDU-ASE-024] and the proposed project has met the requirements of the Research Ethics Committee (Human) of the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University.

I am seeking your consent for your child to participate in the study. I will also seek the assent of your child. Only children who agree and whose parents/guardians consent will participate in the study. I ask that you discuss participation in this study with your child. The study will be used to explore the feasibility of telling cultural metaphoric stories as a medium to encourage resilience amongst OVC. Each participating child will be asked to write about their lives and then listen to a story. This will take approximately an hour to write a test and 15 minutes to listen to a story reading session which will be conducted over a period of 24 weeks to complete. All information obtained will be treated in strictest confidence. The children’s names will not be used and individual children will not be identifiable in any written reports about the study.

A summary report of the findings will be made available to you. Participants are free to withdraw from the project at any time without penalty. If a student requires support as a result of their participation in the survey steps can be taken to accommodate this.

Please discuss participation in this project with your child. To give consent for your child to participate, please complete the attached form and I will collect from you.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information.

Nokhanyo Mayaba

Researcher
APPENDIX D: Letter of invitation to the principals

My name is Nokhanyo Mayaba, and I am a PHD student at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (NMMU). I am conducting research under the supervision of Professor Lesley Wood. This research study has met the requirements of the Research Ethics Committee (Human) of the NMMU.

The research aims to explore and describe the feasibility of folktales or cultural metaphoric stories as a medium for encouraging resilience among young children who have been orphaned and rendered vulnerable by HIV and AIDS. This research is significant because it will provide schools and teachers with better understanding about the role that could be played by telling folktales or cultural metaphoric stories in fostering resilience.

When this study is completed, I will arrange with the local Department of Education to share the research findings with teachers. The stories will be reproduced and presented to schools from which participants came. The results will potentially inform South African education policy recommendations with regard to learner support.

Firstly, once a week for 24 weeks, learners will be told a story and permission will be sought from the learners and their parents prior to their participation in the research. Only those who consent and whose parents consent will participate. Each story that will be told to the children will take not more than 15 minutes. Thereafter, children will engage with the stories in different activities such as drawings, creating a collage, drama and interviews. The interviews will be recorded.

All information collected will be treated in strictest confidence and neither the school nor will individual learners be identifiable in any reports that are written. Participants may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. The role of the school is voluntary and the School Principal may decide to withdraw the school’s participation at any time without penalty. If a learner requires support as a result of their participation in the survey steps can be taken to accommodate this.
Once I have received your consent to approach learners to participate in the study, I will arrange for informed consent to be obtained from participants’ parents; arrange a time with your school for data generation to take place and obtain permission from participants.

Attached for your information are copies of the Parent Information and Consent Form and also the Participant Information Statement and Consent Form. If you would like your school to participate in this research, please complete and return the attached form.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information.

Nokhanyo Mayaba
Researcher
NMMU

---------------------------------------------------------------------
Principal  Signature
APPENDIX E: Focus group interview transcripts (cycle two)

GROUP 1
Thank you so much for agreeing to be part of this interview. As I explained to you, you are a focus group. I would like to hear your views about what we have been doing throughout the year. I am referring to all the activities that we did, storytelling, drawings, making of a collage, drama. As you know, I am going to record your conversation. Let’s talk about storytelling……..

How did the story telling session made you feel and how the stories impacted on your life?

Participant 1: We used to feel apprehensive because sometimes some of the stories did not give us good messages and we did not feel right about them.
Me: can you provide me an example of such story?
Participant 1: The witch in one of the stories is not doing good things and there is nothing I can learn from that evil woman.
Participant 2: At first I used to come to the sessions hesitantly, but as time went on I realized that I could make some choices in life without being influenced by others.
Me: What were those choices? What made you feel that way?
Participant 2: For example, from the story of the witch, I realized that I could choose not to be that woman in this story.
Me: Ok
Participant 3: As I continued coming to the story sessions I realized that there were lot of things that we were doing with the stories. That is when I saw a lot of talent in us. Some of us did not know what we could do with what we did in these sessions.
Participant 4: I did not know how the process of the story telling would be like. I thought I was going to feel bored but I learnt some lessons that I should treat life well. I thought this storytelling thing was going to end very soon.
Me: Then how did you feel that it did not just end with storytelling?
Participant 4: Some stories taught me that I should be cautious in life because there are lots of things that are happening in life.
Participant 5: I thought we would read something, then went to class without writing any activities. I felt happy we wrote about our lives.
Participant 6: I thought these story telling sessions were just going to disappear in vain. I did not realize that they were going to teach me something.
Me: How do you think these stories taught you something?
Participant 6: In the story “Bhuzane, the bee”, the person in the story cared so much about the bees. As their house burnt he cried so much, only to realize that the bees were safe.
Me: Thank you for sharing your thoughts on storytelling sessions.

**When you drew a picture about your life and explained what it meant, I noticed that some of you were really struggling to do the activity. What could have been the possible reason for that?**

Participant 2: What made it difficult is that if someone perhaps is poor so he/she would not be courageous to expose his/her situation although as children in this school we could help that child by maybe visiting his/her home to clean the house or whatever.

Participant 4: Some of us are shy because we don’t have parents at home so we know how it is at our homes, so we were not sure

Participant 5: Sometimes a person is scared of revealing his home situation..Its only fear my sister.

Me: Are you saying those were the reasons why some of you were struggling with writing in this activity?

Participant 1: Yes

Me: Thank you so much.

So, we also engaged in discussions, story games, drama and making of a collage, Which of these did you like and why?

Participant 1: I was lazy to do the collage during the holidays. I kept on thinking about it, incase this activity was going to help me, and then I did it.

Participant 2: I liked the discussion activity when we were interacting in a group discussion about our story of choice. I was happy to hear other people’s opinions.

Participant 6: I liked writing. Maybe there were things that made me feel hurt and I did not know whom to share those things with. I wanted to cast this heavy load and talking about what was inside. I knew that if I wrote it down somebody would read it. There is part of us that feel relieved when you share your hurts and it changes you and you become ok. I can share my problems with other people. There are people who care for me when I am in trouble. I like the fact that I could write about my life because there are many things maybe that can change a person in life. Maybe by writing the other person is trying to help you.

Me: Thank you for sharing. What about the drama activity?

Participant 4: Our story was about the cruel wife. I learnt that it was not right to treat your step sibling differently because one day you might need his help.

On reflection, what do you think we could have done differently or what do you want to say about this whole process of engaging with stories?
Participant 2: Allow us to write poetry. We could write poems that are related to the stories. Poems could be in English or isiXhosa. Some of us are skilled in writing poetry.

Participant 1: The stories taught us a lot. There are people who live like the characters in the story.

Me: anyone else who would like to add something?

(silence)

Me: Thank you so much for your time. I really appreciate everything that you had shared. If anyone feels distressed after you have shared this information, please feel free to talk to me or write me a note.

Thank you.
FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS

GROUP 2

Thank you so much for agreeing to be part of this interview. As I explained to you, you are a focus group. I would like to hear your views about what we have been doing throughout the year. I am referring to all the activities that we did, storytelling, drawings, making of a collage, drama. As you know, I am going to record your conversation. Let’s talk about storytelling……..

How did the story telling session made you feel and how the stories impacted on your life?

Participant 1: I felt happy

Participant 2: I was apprehensive because I didn’t know what was going to happen during the story sessions. I did not want to come. When others said we should dodge the sessions I was reluctant to because I was still curious to see what was going to happen

Participant 3: In these stories (silence) We were told stories at the beginning. As we were told stories there were others who were like us in class, who decided not to join the story telling sessions. I used to tell them, you know there is hope, maybe next year, you too could join the group. I encouraged them not to feel bad when others talk about moms and dads. I told them that there are other people who care and love you. There are people who can treat you as their own children. Do not lose hope maybe you will be successful or good things will happen in your life. That will end the anxiety and bitter feeling in one’s heart of losing one’s parents. I don’t know what to say, but out of the sessions I managed to encourage other children and told them not to lose hope so I learnt a lot from these sessions.

Participant 4: I felt happy when I was told the stories

Me: what made you happy?

Participant 4: These stories taught me that I should care for other people and to listen to their problems.

Me: thank you for sharing your thoughts on storytelling sessions.

When you drew a picture about your life and explained what it meant, I noticed that some of you were really struggling to do the activity. What could have been the possible reason for that?

Participant 1: It was not difficult

Participant 2: it was difficult because we had to expose how we felt inside, even if it was something that bothered me

Participant 3: What I experienced is that at the beginning the majority of us did not want to attend the sessions as time went on we learnt to accept that things have happened in our past. So when we were asked to write about our lives, we were actually pouring out what was hidden inside, so now I think most of us feel special. Although some people will not tell you that we are special to them, we know that there are others who love us. I’ve learnt a lot.
Participant 4: For me it was difficult because I was afraid of telling about my life at as I began to write, I felt free and decided to write everything about my life. Sometimes its not easy to talk to someone you don’t know and trust.

Participant 1; I was like that…I used to feel that if I talk about my life I would be judged

Participant 3: for me, it was better to write about my life than talking about it because I cant face telling someone else about my past. I was not feeling bad because I preferred to write about my life because nobody is looking or listening to you whilst you are writing. Nobody is going to judge you, you just write whatever comes to mind.

Participant 2; as K..said, it is better to write than tell because some children may tease you, but even though some may steal your book ..You don’t know that. You didn’t ask God for such life. For instance, if you have problems at home, you have t write something, that ..you are writing in your diary, so you could write everything.

Me : thank you for sharing how you felt about the story telling sessions. Remember, after I had told you the stories, we engaged in different activities

So, we also engaged in discussions, story games, drama and making of a collage, Which of these did you like and why?

Participant 2: You know when you are told a lot of stories, sometimes you forget which one was which, so when we were asked to focus on few stories, it made all the difference. But what could help is that when we come for story sessions we could bring pens and papers so that we can remember what the stories were all about.

Participant 4: I liked the drama because it made me feel relieved. I felt like a real actress. I really wanted to do drama and I felt I could really do it.

Participant 2; I liked the drawing activity. It makes me feel so strong. I like writing about my life and the act that I had to pour out everything that I felt about the story and how it related to my life. Sometimes when I felt I had done all, I realized that I have not and I continued writing.

Participant 4: It was difficult to do the collage as some areas were hard but I managed because I even asked at home how I could do it. They assisted me with the process.

Participant 3: what I liked about the collage and the cutting of pictures that made me feel strong was that I was able to talk about my past. For me it was all about encouraging other people about my past-that if you lose parents it is not the end of the world. You can go far and you can do more. So, I’m trying to say to other people, don’t lose hope. Hope is something that is always there when you need it and I don’t know what to say.

Participant 2: You are not alone here on earth, you can get help from other people, your neighbours because when you don’t have parents and living alone you can ask the lady next door
to help with homework when you don’t have parents or one could ask the neighbours if they could avail themselves to listen to my problems.

**On reflection, what do you think we could have done differently or what do you want to say about this whole process of engaging with stories?**

Participant 1: It’s been helpful in other things. I didn’t want to talk about other things but when I had the opportunity to write I could.

Participant 4: I’ve been helped in other things, for instance, in the collage, I cut a picture of a family. I really thought about my parents who were not here. I would think that if I was with my parents I would be like the people in the pictures. They would do all I need in life.

Participant 1: when I was cutting the pictures I cut a picture of a person- when I looked at that person, I thought about my mom.

Participant 3: The activities I did made me feel special. I realized that it was not the end of the world. The pictures I cut made me to remember about my past-about how my family life used to be like and how things used to be. For example, maybe we liked to play games or cooked together or go out to enjoy ourselves. The pictures that I cut from magazines made me feel strong and made me not lose hope again because when you lose hope you can do wrong things because you are saying, I can’t do this and that and that. All the activities made me feel strong and happy about myself.

Participant 4: I cut a picture of a family. I remembered that if I had a father, I would have a complete family.

Me: Thank you so much for your time. I really appreciate everything that you had shared. If anyone feels distressed after you have shared this information, please feel free to talk to me or write me a note.

Thank you.
APPENDIX F: Synopsis of the stories discussed in this study

The boy and the goat

This is a story about a boy named Saki who was an only child at home whose mother died as a result of a certain illness. Saki’s father eventually married and the boy was ill treated by his stepmother. For instance, he had to stop going to school and do all the chores in the house. This did not settle well with Saki especially that his father never attempted to rescue him from his wife’s bad treatment. One of Saki’s chores was to look after the cattle in the veld and while he was there, he used to cry bitterly as he was hungry and only allowed to eat leftovers with the dogs at home. One day his biological mother appeared in the form of a spirit and told him not to cry again as she was bringing food for him. She asked Saki to talk to his favourite goat and ask it to dish up for him. Saki followed the instructions and the goat dished all sorts of food as per Saki’s desires. From that day forward he never cried instead he got fatter and fatter and that left his stepmother wondering.

Bhuzane, the bee

There was a man who loved bees very much, but they did not trust him since they thought he was after their honey. One day, a big fire in the veld destroyed a lot of things including the bees hives and their honey. Fortunately, the bees survived and then left that place. The man felt so lonely without the bees. One day, one of the bees, Bhuzane, visited the man. They lived happily together. Bhuzane produced honey for the man to eat and sell, while the man took care of Bhuzane in his house and sang songs for him everyday.
Ntulube

There was a boy who liked his father’s cows, in particular, the one known as Ntulube. One day, when he was looking after the cows in the veld, the cannibals saw Ntulube and wanted to slaughter him for food. When they tried to forcefully lead the cow away from the boy and the other cows, the cow refused to move and they approached the boy to instruct the cow to move. The boy started singing and the cow moved. The cannibals then realised that this cow was going to give them problems and then forced the boy to come along with them. Eventually the cow was slaughtered, but before the cannibals could eat it, the boy began to sing and all the bones and the meat of the cow connected with one another. In that way the boy and the cow were able to escape from the cannibals.

Sinoxolo

This is a story of a widow who had one child named Sinoxolo. They lived in a cave since there was war in their country. One day when this woman left to look for food, she realised that on her return Sinoxolo was missing. After looking for her for a long time, she gave up, but one day, as she walking on the forest, she saw her child, playing with the monkeys. On close contact, they recognised each other, hugged and left together. When the war ended, they both returned to the village. Sinoxolo participated in one of the racing activities that was organised by the chief. She won the race and was awarded with presents. The chief also selected her to marry his son, which made her a princess.
**Instant Poison**

This is a story about a girl who was teased at school because of her ugliness. Although she was very intelligent, other students at school and in her village continued to torment her. She did not bother herself as she used to say” Even if you are beautiful, your beauty does nothing for me, I can do anything I want to do myself, there is nothing that I can’t do because I am ugly. I am far better than most of you’. At the end of her matric year, she passed in flying colours and joined the force. He was able to save her community by leading an army that was victorious. Her parents were very proud of her.

**Masilo and Masilonyane**

There were two boys who came from a very poor family as a result, everyday they had to embark on a journey to hunt for food. In one of those trips, Masilonyane discovered some wealth in the form of cows and his brother Masilo became so jealous of him .He hit him and believed he had killed him, then drove the cattle home pretending as if he did not know where Masilonyane was and that he has discovered those cows himself. Unfortunately a little bird saw him when he hit his brother and on his way home, it kept on tormenting him about the accident. Masilo tried to shoot the bird but missed everytime. Eventually when he reached home with that heard of cattle, his parents enquired about his brother and the little bird told them what happened. The parents then decided to follow the cow’s footprints back to where they came from and they found Masilonyane. Fortunately he was still alive. When he got home, he forgave Masilo and shared the cattle between them.
The Cruel Wife

This is a story which reflects how cruelty doesn’t pay at the end. The protagonist in this story was a first wife of a king who was jealous of the second wife because she had a child. As a result, one day she told the child and gave it to the animals to kill. Each animal in the yard decided not to kill the baby but took care of him until he was old enough. When that woman realised that the child was not killed she decided to burn the kraals, stys and all the places where animals are kept and then pretended that the fire was an accident. Unfortunately for her the animals had heard about his plan and took the child to a frog that stayed far away from that household. When the child was old, the frog returned him home and all the animals who were there verified the truth, and the second wife was chased away from the royalty. Since this child was a boy, he became the prince of that country.

The Silver Tree

This is a story about an elderly couple who had no children. They used to spend their time sowing seeds in the field, but every time they tried to sow their seed, the birds flocked down from the sky to eat it. They realised that what they were doing was a daunting task and felt so discouraged. On a particular day, they met a crow who said ‘Woman my friends are hunger, do not grudge them the grain. Feed it to them and good fortune shall be your reward”. After they left the bird they decided to do so and scattered the grain for the birds. Afterwards the crow approached them again with a set of instructions which they were to follow. They did as such and eventually had 8 children and silver tree which provided them with fruit and a lot of food for their children, family and birds.
APPENDIX G: Example of a story used in this study

MANKEPE A GOOD SINGER

Once upon the time in a neighbouring country of Lesotho there was a girl who was very intelligent whose name was Mankepe. This girl was a good singer. She used to entertain other kids by always singing to them. Other kids followed her everywhere she went just to listen to her music.

One day Mankepe was kidnapped by a cannibal who was staying in the veld. This cannibal smeared her with medicine and placed her in a small dark room. This cannibal told her that he wants to have a lot of food, so whoever would touch Mankepe would turn into an animal.

There was sadness in the village when Mankepe disappeared, other kids went out in search for her and looked everywhere finally they arrived at this house where Mankepe was hidden. They broke the door and found Mankepeng sleeping. Wow, they were very pleased and some held her hand and immediately they turned to animals.

The cannibal was very happy but those who never touched Mankepe ran away. The following day they went to the cannibal’s house holding fire, the cannibal was very scared of fire because it had a lot of fur in its body.

The kids from the village arrived with the intention of burning this monster. They arrived and made the fire and the cannibal went out or and ran away. The children ran after it and got hold of it. The cannibal begged the children not to kill it. And the children said they would release it provided all the children that were turned into animals could be healed.

The cannibal had no choice. It had to undo everything and Mankepe was set free together with those kids the cannibal turned into animals.

The children continued to listen to Mankepe’s music.
APPENDIX H

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME OF GROUP MEMBERS:</th>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STORY CHOSEN:</th>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SETTING (WHERE IT TAKES PLACE):</th>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHARACTERS IN THE PLOT:</th>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>PROBLEM AND WHAT CAUSED THE PROBLEM:</th>
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<tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM:</th>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HOW DOES THE STORY END?</th>
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</table>
APPENDIX I: Evidence of the process of data analysis of drawings

Example of data set

The following examples illustrate how the participants described their lives before and after the story intervention, which led me to interpret their articulations to mean that folktales had a positive influence on their self-concept.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre intervention data</th>
<th>Post intervention data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><img src="image1.png" alt="Pre intervention image" /></td>
<td><img src="image2.png" alt="Post intervention image" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ndizoba le picture ngoba ndandikhumbula utata wam ngoba wandishiya kodwa uThixo wayenam empilweni yam wandinika abazali. (I am drawing this picture because I was missing my father because he passed on but God was with me in my life and gave me parents)</td>
<td>I feel so happy. I look beautiful. I enjoy staying here. My hair looks beautiful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre intervention data</td>
<td>Post intervention data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Intliziyo yam ibuhlungu kwaye ingophela ngaphakathi kwaye asoze yophele ngaphakathi intliziyo yam.</strong> Ndifuna iberayithi kwaye bendikhalela loonto. <strong>Intliziyo yam ibingekho rayithi.</strong> My heart is sore and bleeding inside. I will not let it bleed inside. I want it to be alright, that’s why I was crying. My heart was not alright. Participant 18</td>
<td><strong>My picture is the same thing that I like myself. Myself is the body of my only. No one else make something to me.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image1" alt="Pre intervention image" /></td>
<td><img src="image2" alt="Post intervention image" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The picture that I drew is two houses and a girl who is breakfully and she cried so hard.</strong> Participant 6</td>
<td><strong>That was me. I was angry because SB was always grasp my full meat on Sundays and I asked who steal my food and no one respond me. I asked S told me SB and I fight with SB and that day he make me very angry.</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
My research questions in this study were:

- *How can folktales enhance the resilience of children orphaned and rendered vulnerable by HIV and AIDS?*
- *How can folktales be used by teachers to reach both their pastoral and academic goals?*

In my analysis, I was guided by the shared analysis approach which has been used in research with drawings (Mitchell et al., 2011 p 25). This approach entails that the analysis of drawings should be based on what the participants provide as explanations for their drawings. When I read the drawings, I regarded the accompanying explanations of drawings as the first layer of analysis (Mitchell et al., 2011; De Lange et al., 2012). Secondly, I read the data through the social ecological theoretical lens (Ungar, 2011) since I wanted to determine whether my data would shed light on the context in which participants in this study lived which may either enhance or hinder their resilience.

I analysed these accompanying explanations by using thematic analysis as suggested in Braun and Clarke, (2006, p. 16-23). I first translated the explanations that were written in isiXhosa to English. I used the services of a critical reader trained in English and isiXhosa to verify my translations. I then read and familiarized myself with the data. Since I aimed to compare my pre and post-intervention drawings, I first grouped the pre-intervention drawings and explanations according to their semantic content (Braun & Clarke, 2006) as illustrated in the examples above. I then coded the data as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data extract from the participant’s explanations</th>
<th>Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participant 12</td>
<td>Unhappy feelings which indicate a low self concept</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was missing my father he passed on</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 18</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My heart is sore and bleeding inside. I want it alright, that’s why I am crying.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I drew a girl who is breakfully and cried so hard</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I then read through what each participant wrote in his or her post intervention drawing. I then coded the post explanations as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data extract from the participant’s explanations</th>
<th>Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participant 12</td>
<td>Positive feelings which indicate a sense of confidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel so happy. I look beautiful. I enjoy staying here. My hair looks beautiful</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 18</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>My picture is the same thing that I like myself. Myself is the body of my only. No one else make something to me</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>That was me. I was angry because SB was always grasp my full meat on Sundays and I asked who steal my food and no one respond me. I asked S told me SB and I fight with SB and that day he make me very angry</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Since I was guided by my research questions I compared the pre and post drawings and explanations, paying particular attention to the explanations. I then realized that in the post drawings and explanations the content indicated a change in terms of how participants described their lives. I then named this change as ‘positive self concept’, which became a subtheme of an identified theme, namely: “an indication of a positive sense of self”. I then wrote my report which included the data extracts and I interpreted this data in relation to the resilience theoretical framework. I wrote an argument which explained how folktales enhance the resilience of OVC and how teachers could use them to reach both their pastoral and academic goals.